

DR. WILLIAM KAYE LAMB: "HISTORIAN'S FRIEND"

The Great Depression of the 1930's would seem to have spawned a remarkable group of editors, archivists, librarians and administrators in scholarly fields. I suppose that the Western Hemisphere was in such an unholy mess that the trained minds of the time felt that an extra effort was necessary to raise the level of human understanding. There is little question that trained and talented scholars made that extra effort to locate and make known what source materials were already available. They did a great deal more. They set up new patterns and accelerated the development of existing plans for the collection of source materials, for their dissemination, for controls over them and for the ready retrieval of such materials. They made possible a life-long educational process for the individual, not one or thirty, but of thousands. Some of the products of that pre-computer age were the huge and continuing author, subject and union catalogs of books in book form; checklists of newspapers, of serials; guides to archives and historical manuscripts; to motion pictures; microfilm collections and the like. These were the men who largely planned the vast publication programs which are making the papers of leading men available. Many actually edited such papers according to the new standards.

No one could possibly list all such contributors to the improvement of access to the written heritage of the past, such men as the historian, Robert C. Binckley, who headed up the Joint Committee on Materials for Research; Luther H. Evans, who directed the Historical Records Survey and went on to become Librarian of Congress and Director-General of UNESCO; Clarence Carter, Editor of the Territorial Papers, who set a pattern for modern scholarly editorial projects; Verner Clapp, who headed up the Council on Library Resources, Inc., to mention but a few.

William Kaye Lamb during his 35-year working span (so far) was their peer. As a matter of fact, his was often a more difficult task. The Canadian way of getting things done is different than that of his U.S. and European compatriots. Dr. Lamb had to, and did, keep his "cool". There is an appropriate time to do a particular thing in the Canadian milieu. Kaye Lamb above all other things had a prescience that was phenomenal. He knew when the greatest possible step forward could be made, and he had the courage to take it.

His second great contribution was that he provided not only national leadership in the archival and library professions, but international leadership as well. His accomplishments will make "writings" throughout the world more accessible.

Canadians will undoubtedly remember Dr. Lamb for his many

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specific accomplishments during his 20 years in Ottawa, when he changed the orientation of the Public Archives of Canada into a service organization for the Government while increasing the collections and services for scholars. He put Records Management in Canada on a going basis and initiated a series of Records-Centres. He established a Central Microfilm Unit for the Government and systematically filmed major foreign records series relating to Canada in the Public Record Office and the Archives Nationales as well as the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company. The collections of the Manuscript Division, the Map Division, the Picture Division were greatly expanded as were the services on the Collections. First priority was given to the publication of guides to the collections, but near the end of his service, the first volumes of major series of planned source publications were published or in press.

Dr. Lamb will also be remembered as the founder and first Librarian of the National Library which started with nothing and by the time of his retirement held something approaching a half million titles. More important, however, was the publication on a monthly basis of Canadiana, the national bibliography, and the formation of The National Union Catalogue which lists the holdings of some 280 Canadian libraries (ca. 10,000,000 entries) and which is hooked up for reference purposes by Telex with 50 Canadian libraries and with the Library of Congress and some 80 other American libraries by TWX. And finally, more than any other single individual, he was responsible for the beautiful but marvellously practical National Library and Archives Building, which grew out of 1956 plans into the completely occupied building in 1967.

William Kaye Lamb was born in New Westminster, British Columbia, in 1904. His father, Alexander Lamb, had come to British Columbia from Scotland in 1888. His mother was of Scottish descent. He attended public school in New Westminster, and high school in Vancouver. He took his B.A. with first class honours in history at the University of British Columbia in 1927 and his M.A. at the same University in 1930. He was awarded a Nichol Scholarship for three years of postgraduate study in France in 1928. He spent the academic years 1928-29, 1930-31 and 1931-32 in Paris where under the direction of André Siegfried he studied at the Ecole Libre des sciences politiques as well as at the Sorbonne and at the Collège de France. He received his doctorate at the University of London through the London School of Economics in 1933. Harold Laski was his thesis supervisor and J. B. Hammond, his outside examiner.

Dr. Lamb was appointed Provincial Librarian and Archivist of British Columbia in the fall of 1934. In 1936 he was appointed to the additional task of Superintendent and Secretary of the Public Library Commission. In 1937, he founded the British Columbia Historical Quarterly and edited it until 1946.

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He received his appointment as Librarian, University of British Columbia in 1940 and held the post until the end of 1948, during a period of vast expansion in the Library and University.

Dr. Lamb was appointed Dominion Archivist in the fall of 1948, and took up the Ottawa post late in that year. In addition he was made responsible for preparations leading to the establishment of the National Library. When this materialized, he was given the additional appointment of National Librarian as from 1 January, 1953. He carried on this dual role until late in 1968 when on 21 November he left Ottawa with Mrs. Lamb to spend the winter on the Riviera. His formal retirement became effective on 15 January, 1969.

During the twenty years in Ottawa, Dr. Lamb made contributions of such magnitude that we will not know their full import for many years to come. A vigorous, active, friendly, unflappable man, Dr. Lamb has been hard at work in recent months bringing to publication stage longtime editorial projects which he has had to set aside from time to time in the interest of archival and library administration. We can rejoice in, and find profit from, his "busman's holiday".

- John Andreassen

"OTTAWA 1968 - SOME PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS"

By John Bovey, Provincial Archivist of Manitoba

on the occasion of the Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists at Ottawa, September 30 - October 2, 1968.

(NOTE: Because the conference has been reported in depth in the American Archivist, a personal viewpoint was felt to be appropriate here. Ed.)

This meeting of the Society was the first I had ever attended, and I suspect that most of the Canadian delegates were in the same position. Thus the conference had a somewhat paradoxical character, for while the majority of American delegates were strangers to Canada, the host Canadians were personally strangers to the visiting organization. Perhaps this fact even contributed to a generally stimulating and interesting conference.

My greatest and most lasting impression of the event was simply the sheer bigness of the United States of America as reflected in the number of American archivists present; their wealth in respect to holdings, equipment and budgets; the variety and often high degree

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