

REPORT ON ARCHIVAL TRAINING, 1968

The resolutions of training that were adopted by the Archives Section in June, 1966, included provision for an annual report by the Executive. This year the task is comparatively easy. The most important event was the summer course at Carleton University. It is described fully in the following report by Professor Douglas Wurtele director of the course:

Dear Dr. Smith:

The following is a report on the course in Archival Principles and Administration given this past summer at Carleton University in response to a request by the Archives Section of the C.H.A.

A total of 33 students registered for the course, which ran from 2 July to 2 August; of these 31 attended, and 29 passed the examination and are being sent certificates. The geographical and professional breakdown of the 31 is as follows:

Newfoundland	1	Archival Institutions	
Nova Scotia	2	including university	16
Prince Edward Island	0	archives	
New Brunswick	2		
Quebec	6	Libraries proper	11
Ontario	12		
Manitoba	3	other	4
Saskatchewan	1		
Alberta	3		
British Columbia	1		
Yukon and N.W.T.	0		
	<u>31</u>		<u>31</u>

In addition, perhaps twice as many more inquiries, including several late applications, were received that did not lead to registration.

Publicity for the course was disseminated with somewhat wider scope than for the previous courses, and if the local historical bodies and their various media had also been circularized extensively the number of registrants would no doubt have been even greater. As it was

the optimum number was probably attained.

The course, running a week longer than hertofore, was designed to achieve a suitable parity between lectures, workshops, practical assignments, and demonstrations. While the results seem to have been an improvement over those attained before, there is still room for much improvement. The more extensive pool of expert personnel now available at the Public Archives, combined with the new technologies recently developed, undoubtedly supplied the main reason for the improvement in the quality of this course over the previous ones. In the way of further improvements, further use of the workshop method and the round-table discussion might be made and less use of formal lectures. In some cases, duplicated lecture outlines might be helpful. One question that always arises is the extent of Records Management, with concomitant Records Centre desmonstration, to be offered. This time, for the first occasion, the students were given optional further work at the Records Centre, following an initial compulsory instruction for all the class, with the choice of some other specialized branch. Most elected the other specialties, and some found even the relatively small amount of compulsory instruction in this area excessive. Perhaps consideration should be given on future occasions to making this option even more flexible.

The main reason for the success of the course was the superb cooperation extended at all levels by the Public Archives staff. Every division and section involved in the course -- and most of them were -- brought to it the highest possible degree of enthusiasm and expert knowledge. All the students expressed their gratitude and admiration in this regard. Without making invidious distinctions, let me merely add here that the contribution of Mr. Gordon and his staff was exceptionally commendable.

In every other respect, I am glad to say that my work as director of the course was greatly facilitated by the willing and efficient cooperation of the many other branches that become involved in an operation of this sort. The chiefs and staffs of the PAC library and the University library gave much help; the General Services side of the University administration provided the best possible facilities for classroom and transportation needs; the University book store also played its part with efficiency and cooperation.

If the Archives Section requires any further data from me about the course, I will be only too happy to do what I can.

Yours faithfully,

(signed) Douglas Wurtele
Assistant Professor

The Archives Section has good reason to be grateful to Prof. Wurtele for the capable manner in which he arranged and conducted the course. Glowing reports from the participants attest to his professional competence and inspiring leadership. The course compares favorably in quality and content with similar courses given anywhere.

Another of the resolutions adopted in 1966 provided that the summer course at Carleton University should be given in alternate years if the demand seemed to warrant it. Professor Wurtele has expressed his willingness to conduct a course in 1970 and the Department of History approves in principle but it will be feasible only if assurance can be given that at least 30 persons will register for it. Professor Wurtele and the Carleton Administration would have to know definitely by September of this year. All persons who are interested in participating in a course in Archival Principles and Administration in the summer of 1970 are urged to notify Prof. Wurtele as soon as possible.

It is recognized that archival training is a field in which Canada can make a significant contribution to other countries. In November, 1968, under the auspices of the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History, the Public Archives of Canada conducted a two-week seminar on archival principles and administration. It was attended by senior officials from 15 Latin American countries. As a direct result of the seminar an Archives Section of PAIGH was formed and it has been designated as a regional branch of the International Council on Archives. The number of archivists from developing countries who come to Canada for training in archival administration and records management continues to increase. Assistance is provided usually by the Canadian International Development Agency. In the last year the Public Archives of Canada has provided training for periods up to three months for archivists from Ghana, Tanzania, the Philippines, Trinidad and Tobago. In the last year the Records Management Branch of the Public Archives conducted two courses for senior records managers.

A great deal of attention has been given to training in other countries in the last year. Charles Kecskemeti, Secretary of the

International Council on Archives, circulated to 53 institutions in twenty-one countries a questionnaire on professional courses. The results were incorporated in a report entitled La Formation Professionnelle des Archivistes. Courses at universities and special archives schools range from one year (the post-graduate course at the University of London, for example) to seven years (at l'Ecole des Chartes in Paris). The report implied that archival training in the United States, consisting of short courses such as summer institutes and single courses at universities, is inadequate. It deplored admission to the archival career without prior professional training.

Yet a listing which is being prepared by the Committee on Education and Training of the Society of American Archivists (of which your Chairman is a member) includes nearly 200 courses of various kinds provided by 150 institutions. Most of them come under the heading of records management and business procedure, but many are full time courses in archival administration which are given for credit by universities at the graduate or undergraduate level. In addition, several universities have internship programmes. Yet the present state of archival training in the United States is regarded as unsatisfactory by the Society of American Archivists. An entire issue of the American Archivist (April, 1968) was devoted to a discussion of the problem. The large attendance at a panel discussion on training at the annual meeting in Ottawa indicated the extent of the realization of the need to improve professional training.

The Kecskeméti report and the surveys and discussions in the United States lead one to the inevitable conclusion that training in archival administration and records management in Canada is inadequate. Training in the form of the summer institute at Carleton and the internship programmes at the Public Archives and some provincial archives are good as far as they go. But do they provide a satisfactory basis for the development of a distinct profession? Should Canadian universities play a more active role in archival training? Obviously there must be a direct relationship between demand and supply and it is possible that the limited number of positions for professional archivists in this country does not warrant the establishment of university courses or training schools. At present the only university course is that given at Laval University. Yet the subject is of such great importance to archivists that it demands the attention of the Archives Section, which is dedicated to the promotion of the archival profession in Canada. It is hoped that an increase in membership to include most of those who are engaged in archival work and a survey of the state of the profession will indicate what can and should be done to ensure that archival training receives the attention it deserves. The need was expressed in a recent letter from Professor John Archer, a member of the 1965-66 committee:

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"We are slowly moving towards a Canadian archival methodology. We need a teaching base where we can inculcate professional techniques and a professional attitude. This would at once strengthen the archives section and immeasurably strengthen the archival profession in Canada".

- Wilfred I. Smith

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were scheduled at the same hour. Which one to chose? The ideal solution is for each institution to send a four-man (or woman) delegation, but few Canadian archives can afford that solution. Yet again, paradoxically, the staff of the small, unspecialized archives, simply have to be concerned about a wide variety of specialized subjects, such as church records, business records, government records, preservation techniques, automation, oral history and photography. Staff members of larger institutions with specialized departments perhaps do not feel the same compulsion to try and take in something of everything. When a conference like that of the S.A.A. concludes one is left hoping that the bulk of the three out of four papers one did not hear may soon be published someplace by someone.

Personally I found the papers on "special subject collections" particularly interesting, and indeed frequently entertaining. Particularly so was John A. Popplestone, Director of the Archives of the History of American Psychology at Akron, Ohio, who described himself as "the attic keeper of America's mind" (!) if I remember accurately, and opened an interesting exchange on acquisitions policy and methods. The other three speakers, Howard Applegate of Syracuse University on "Industrial Design Collection", Tino Balio of the University of Wisconsin on "Theatre Research Collection", and Rudolph J. Vecoli on the "Immigration Studies Collection" at the University of Minnesota also gave illuminating accounts of their activities and plans. The only pity, from the Canadian point of view, was that "fellow Canadians" who could have most benefited from exposure to these talks were not attending the conference, e.g., psychologists, designers, the Canadian Manufacturers Association, representatives of the theatrical world and the ethnic societies.

The workshop on Preservation Methods was well presented and I found Robert Wagner's paper on the "Preservation and Restoration of the American Film Heritage", which aptly included a film on the dangers of old nitrate stock, the new machinery for the restoration of damaged film, and the production of safety film copies, particularly informative. In the aftermath of this presentation it is encouraging to hear that the Public Archives has begun to build up a

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