

to the filming of records, and institutions need, therefore, have no apprehensions on this score.

This great conference will have allayed any doubts which may have lingered about the capacity of the Church of Latter-Day Saints to carry out its programme, and anyone who is approached by members of the Church to discuss a project for his own area can expect that, if an agreement is reached, it will be on very generous terms and honoured absolutely.

Ed.

CONFERENCE COVERAGE: PRAIRIE ARCHIVISTS' MEETING

Regina

October 18th, 1969

Fifteen archivists from various repositories in the Prairie Provinces assembled in Regina on 18th October 1969 -- the first regional meeting of its kind in Canada. The purpose of the meeting was to enable archivists who could not always attend the annual conferences of the Canadian Historical Association's Archives Section, to meet with one another and to discuss common professional, technical and regional matters of interest. In attendance were:

- 4 from the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan
- 3 from the Provincial Archives of Manitoba
- 1 from the Provincial Archives of Alberta
- 4 from the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Archives, Calgary, Alberta
- 1 from the Chancery Office, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton, Alberta
- 1 from the Archives of the University of Alberta, Edmonton
- 1 from the Archives of the Canadian Rockies, Banff, Alberta.

An agenda, stemming from brief talks held in Calgary on 1st March, 1969, during the Conference on Western Canadian Studies was drawn up and circulated in advance of the meeting by the Provincial Archivist of Alberta. Bearing in mind the common wish that a meeting would be as informal as possible, no papers were prepared in advance, but for each of the main topics for consideration, one delegate was requested to chair the meeting so as to provide some direction to discussions. Out of five special topics proffered on the agenda, two had to be omitted owing to shortage of time. Discussions were so fluent and relevant that the meeting unanimously agreed that it was more profitable to explore fewer topics in depth than to skim over others simply because they were on the agenda.

The morning opened with welcoming remarks by Allan Turner on behalf of the Saskatchewan Archives Board and his colleagues from Regina and Saskatoon. He chaired most of the morning session when a representative from each institution spoke of the main features of his repository, methods of budgeting and operating, programmes in hand and proposed, and staff matters. These résumés were interspersed with many questions and comments: members were impressed by the variety of organizational arrangements respecting the protection of archives in the prairie region and there was a general agreement that stemming from the experience of each office,

there were developments to be achieved - and avoided. References to the work of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Archives in preparing teaching kits laid emphasis on the need for a still closer rapprochement between the schoolroom and the archives office.

When the discussions moved to consider prairie facilities for documentary repair, John Bovey (Provincial Archivist of Manitoba) took the chair. A little repair along traditional lines, using chiffon, had been carried out in the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Archives, and in Manitoba a laminating machine had been used with indifferent success in restoring clippings in scrapbooks. Virtually nothing was done in the other prairie offices. The R.C.M.P. laboratories in Regina or Winnipeg were prepared occasionally to assist in unrolling or unfolding badly creased and friable documents. Reference was made to special arrangements for repair of particularly significant maps by the Public Archives of Canada on an ad hoc basis. The type of equipment used in the Federal Archives was far too expensive for any individual prairie office to consider installing, but it was hoped that new European techniques would eventually reduce the cost of laminating machines. Much discussion centred around the need to train more people in documentary repair in Technical Colleges, Rehabilitation Centres and Vocational Schools for partially handicapped people. There seemed little purpose in setting up repair shops to meet the obvious needs of one's collections unless there was a supply of trained or even semi-trained repairers. The chairman of the meeting encouraged members to exchange information on the subject, to make use of the Repairers' News Sheet issued by the Society of Archivists in the United Kingdom, and to press paper manufacturers and allied research organizations to pay more attention to the production of durable paper for record purposes. Allan Turner (Provincial Archivist of Saskatchewan) offered to explore through the Prairie Economic Council, the possibilities of establishing central facilities on a cost-sharing basis. The meeting warmly endorsed the idea, and asked Mr. Turner to advise members of the results of any negotiations.

A discussion on oral history was launched with a statement by the chairman, Jim Parker (Archivist of the University of Alberta and member of the Canadian Historical Association's Archives Section's Oral History Committee). He expressed hopes that the Committee would fulfil its promise of bringing oral historians, interviewers and archivists together, and that Miss Chisholm would be able to prepare a report on methods and techniques. If the Committee failed to serve a useful purpose within the next two years, however, the Canadian Historical Association should consider setting up a full scale Oral History Section. Alan Ridge (Provincial Archivist of Alberta) suggested that if a union list of interviews were to be compiled across Canada, consideration should be given to obtaining data in such a form that it could readily be fed into a computer. The meeting noted that tapes of interviews with many oldtimers and eminent people in the region were prepared by local radio stations and the C.B.C. Methods of securing the best of these for permanent preservation in an archives office needed to be worked out. The meeting agreed that a session on oral history should be provided during the annual conference of the Archives Section in 1970.

Sheilagh Jameson (Archivist of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute) chaired the discussions on photocopying services and remarked on the increasing demands for such services. Members from each office described the photocopying facilities available in their own institutions. Difficulties in copying ciné films had been experienced, and it appeared as though the

nearest processing laboratories were in Vancouver or Toronto. Selected nitrate films might be offered to the National Film Board on the understanding that prints be supplied eventually. Requests for Xeroxing, photostating or reproducing by a 3-M machine ought to be considered on their merits. Archivists should take into account the wear and tear on their records, and whether some clients abused the services by demanding unreasonably large quantities. The chairman touched on the experience of the Glenbow Archives in its dealings with companies such as the Calgary and Regional Educational Television Company and Canawest in assisting in the preparation of historical and educational films.

The business meeting, when the day's discussions were appraised, was chaired by Alan Ridge. There was agreement that the informal atmosphere had paid dividends and that an occasional assembly (not more than once a year) in one or other of the Prairie cities would be of continuing value. There was no wish to set up a formal organization, and certainly no intention of breaking away from the Canadian Historical Association's Archives Section. On the contrary, members felt that such regional meetings complemented the work of the Archives Section, and enriched their professional knowledge and experience. There seemed little point in scheduling a meeting in 1970 because archivists would be gathering in Winnipeg for two other conferences, in Calgary for one and probably in Regina for another during the year. The next assembly was, therefore, contemplated for the first half of 1971 and plans would be made some four months in advance. Invitations would be accorded to archivists from adjacent states or provinces if the programme warranted it. Members confirmed that they would be pleased to cooperate in the compilation of a directory of Canadian archivists and repositories and would be ready to advise the Hon. Editor of additional names to be approached. The question of a course being held at Carleton University in 1970 was still unresolved and John Bovey, as Chairman of the Archives Section, was asked to get in touch with the Acting Dominion Archivist and Dr. Wurtele. With regard to the Section's annual meeting in Winnipeg in June, 1970, members agreed with the idea of having a panel discussion on business archives and records. Representative speakers should be drawn from the professional institutes of chartered accountants and secretaries and from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

Before concluding the business meeting and the day's work, Mr. Ridge paid special tribute to the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Turner on the eve of the conference and to the generosity of the Saskatchewan Archives Board in entertaining members to an excellent luncheon. The congenial atmosphere created by Allan Turner and his colleagues throughout the meeting and during the tour of the storage and research facilities on the top floor of the new Library Building on the Regina Campus, served to make the occasion thoroughly enjoyable. At short notice, Georgette Barrass of the Glenbow-Alberta Institute Archives agreed to take the minutes of the meeting. Without her meticulous record which has been circulated to all repositories represented at the meeting, the compilation of this brief report would have been virtually impossible. Acknowledgment of her work is accorded with sincere gratitude.

Alan D. Ridge  
Provincial Archivist of Alberta

An informal meeting of provincial archivists with the Acting Dominion Archivist was held in the Public Archives of Canada on March 2nd-3rd, at which matters of common interest were discussed.