

SHORTT AND DOUGHTY:

THE CULTURAL ROLE OF THE PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA

1904 - 1935

BY

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Surveying the growth of European historiography, Lord Acton noted that the French Revolution underlay the unprecedented interest in the past that arose in the Nineteenth Century. The Revolution, disrupting the social and political order, confronted men with the basic issue of change and continuity. "Those who lived through it with intelligence," he wrote, "had a larger experience, and more intense, than other men have ever had."⁽¹⁾ The Revolution and the whole of man's historicity required examination and explanation. But, to Acton, the Revolution also left in its wake the basic resources permitting the evolution of the critical study of history: public archives. By a decree on June 24, 1794 (7 Messidor 2) the Assemblée Nationale made the Archives Nationales a state system of repositories and proclaimed that "Every citizen is entitled to ask in every depository...for the production of the documents it contains."⁽²⁾ Throughout the nineteenth century, the emerging historiography was closely allied with the potent forces of nationalism and liberalism⁽³⁾ and the establishment of

¹ As quoted in Herbert Butterfield. Man on his Past (Boston, 1960) p. 67.

² As quoted in Ernst Posner. Archives and the Public Interest (K. Munden, Ltd., Washington, 1967) pp. 25-26.

³ John Higham; Leonard Kreiger; and Felix Gilbert. History (Englewood Cliffs, 1965) pp. 322-323.

This paper was presented at a special meeting of the Canadian Historical Association held in Ottawa on June 5th, 1972 to mark the centennial of the Public Archives of Canada. It's a much abridged version of a thesis of the same title presented to Queen's University in November, 1973. Microfilm copy of the full thesis will be available in the immediate future from the National Library.

state-run archival repositories followed in their train as they spread through Europe. John Stuart Mill emphasized the connection by pinpointing as the strongest factor generating a sense of nationality the "identity of political antecedents; the possession of a national history, and consequent community recollections; collective pride and humiliation, pleasure and regret, connected with the same incidents in the past."(4) As national consciousness evolved, the availability of archival material for the study of the collective past of the nation was one manifestation of a government's interest in fostering that consciousness.

Within the Canadian context, historians found the government of the new Dominion receptive to arguments for the establishment of a public archival repository. D'Arcy McGee in 1865 voiced the opinion of many of his contemporaries that "Patriotism will increase in Canada as its history is read."(5) Only four years after Confederation, a petition supported by the Quebec Literary and Historical Society pointed out to the federal government that

authors and literary inquirers are placed in a very disadvantageous position in this country in comparison with persons of the same class in Great Britain, France and the United States in consequence of being practically debarred from facilities of access to the public records, documents and official papers in manuscript illustrative of the history and progress of Society in Canada.(6)

Acting on this petition, the House of Commons in the spring of 1872 voted \$4,000 for the Archives and Douglas Brymner,(7) a Montreal journalist, was appointed Dominion Archivist on June 20th. His instructions to "gather, classify and make available for researchers, the Canadian records" were general and vague. Yet during the ensuing thirty years, until his death in 1902 at the age of 78, Brymner was to prepare a solid foundation for a national Canadian Archives.

Under Brymner, the Public Archives of Canada laboured to locate and acquire the basic records for the historical study of Canada. After an initial acquisition of 1,100 volumes of documents related to the activities of British military forces in Canada, Brymner and his few assistants copied and calendared official records and private papers in London and Paris concerning the administration of the Canadian colonies. Slowly, copies of the Haldimand and Bouquet papers arrived in Ottawa, followed by Colonial Office

4 John Stuart Mill. Utilitarianism, Liberty and Representative Government. (London, 1910) p. 360.

5 As quoted in Carl Berger. The Sense of Power (Toronto, 1970) p. 93

6 Duncan McArthur. "The Canadian Archives and the Writing of Canadian History." Presidential Address. Canadian Historical Association Report, 1934. p. 7.

7 See: D.C. Harvey. "Douglas Brymner", Canadian Historical Review, Sept. 1943, for a full biographical article on Douglas Brymner and his work.

records, the Moreau St. Mery Collection and official records pertaining to New France. Though the annual budget never exceeded \$12,000 and averaged much less, Brymner was able to accumulate some 3,155 volumes of material and published detailed calendars for most of these in his annual reports.

However, it required several decades before the influence of this expanding archival collection became noticeable in Canadian historiography. The recognition Brymner did receive for his work came at first from the growing body of professional historians in the United States during the 1880's. Justin Winsor in his Narrative and Critical History of America (3 volumes, published 1884 to 1889) paid tribute to "the remarkable service done" by the Public Archives.(8) Brymner accepted an invitation to address the American Historical Association and participated on their Historical Manuscripts Commission. Despite the hopes of Canadian nationalists for a truly national history, the historiography of late nineteenth century Canada remained largely sectional. The serious and critical historical writing which was done restricted itself to local or provincial themes while the romantic works of both English and French Canadian historiography had little need for more than rudimentary source material.(9) On the one hand, the Public Archives were too remote, inconvenient and its collections largely irrelevant to the serious researchers intent on tracing the growth of their own localities without a broader sense of a Canadian community. On the other hand, the heroes of the Loyalist tradition and the French survival were didactic symbols clothed but loosely in historical fact.(10) Changes could be seen in the last six volumes of William Kingsford's History of Canada published between 1892 and 1898 which unlike the first four relied extensively on the Q series and the B series in the Public Archives. But the full realization of the potential of the Canadian archives depended upon the gradual professionalization of Canadian historical writing which became increasingly apparent in the 1890's. At Queen's University, Adam Shortt in the early years of the decade shifted the emphasis of his courses on political economy to Canadian history and began his annual summer pilgrimages to the Public Archives. In 1895, both McGill and the University of Toronto appointed historians familiar with critical historiography to chairs in history with C.W. Colby at McGill and G.M. Wrong at Toronto. The latter in 1898 offered a course placing some

8 John H. Archer. "A Study of Archival Institutions in Canada." Unpublished PH.D. dissertation. Queen's University, Kingston, 1969. pp. 76-9.

9 See: Kenneth N. Windsor. "Historical Writing in Canada to 1920", in: Carl F. Klinck (ed.) Literary History of Canada (Toronto, 1966) pp. 220-4.

10 See: Carl Berger, op.cit., pp. 89-99 and Ramsay Cook, "The French Canadian Interpretations of Canadian History: Journal of Canadian Studies, May 1967, pp. 4-5.

emphasis on Canada.(11) Another requisite for the professional study of history emerged during the decade with the appearance in 1895 of the first issue of the Bulletin des Recherches Historiques followed two years later by the first annual volume of the Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada.

These developments were slow and meant little in terms of increased support for Brymmer's work. "In the early nineties the interest in archives was only beginning," G.M. Wrong recalled and enthusiasm for exploring the Canadian archives "had hardly yet reached the universities."(12) Without strong pressure from the academics little was done for the Archives. Brymmer had done yeoman's service in laying a solid foundation for the Public Archives, but after his death in 1902, it remained for his successor, Arthur Doughty together with his close colleague and advisor Adam Shortt, to link both intellectually and in practice the requirements of the evolving professional historiography with the wide-spread vision of a national, unifying history. Drawing on and in large part sharing this vision, they led the federal government, through the programmes of the Public Archives to provide active assistance to the emerging historical profession.

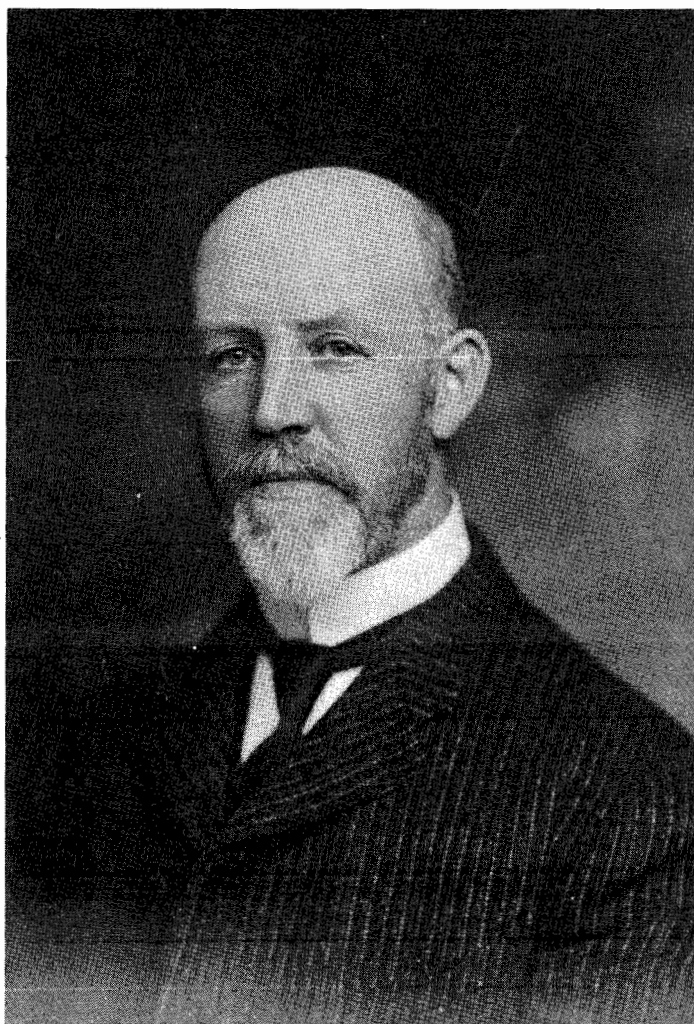
The names of Adam Shortt and Arthur Doughty are inextricably intertwined in the bibliography of Canadian history and in the development of the Public Archives. They came from different backgrounds and there is no evidence that they met before Doughty became Dominion Archivist. Yet, sharing similar views on the social and cultural importance of historical writing and the consequent need to make archival resources generally available they became firm friends and allies.

Adam Shortt was born in Kilworth, Ontario in 1859. He entered Queen's University at the age of 20 intending to prepare himself for the Presbyterian ministry, but on graduation in 1883, decided instead to pursue graduate work in philosophy, chemistry and botany at the University of Glasgow. He returned to Queen's in 1886 to lecture in science and assist Dr. John Watson as a tutor in philosophy. His first association with teaching in social science should have been temporary when late in 1887, Principal Grant asked Shortt to teach the second term of a course in political economy which was proving quite unsatisfactory and "then bury it decently." Shortt recalled "I agreed to teach if I could get two weeks start over the Christmas holidays and see what I could do."(13) His interest stimulated, Shortt proceeded to attack the subject with zeal. Instead of burying it he revived it. By April, he had been appoint-

11 R.A. Preston. "Breakers Ahead and a Glance Behind", Presidential Address. Canadian Historical Association Report, 1962. pp. 8-9.

12 G.M. Wrong. "The Beginnings of Historical Criticism in Canada: a Retrospect, 1896-1936" Canadian Historical Review. March 1936, pp. 6-7.

13 Andrew Haydon. "Memo obtained from Dr. Adam Shortt in personal interview, August, 1928". Adam Shortt Papers, Brock University, p. 2.



Adam Shortt
1859-1931

(photograph courtesy Queen's University Archives)

ed lecturer in Political Economy and three years later, in April, 1891 became the first John A. Macdonald Professor of Political Science. As his familiarity with the subject increased, Shortt's courses came to concentrate less on economic theory and increasingly on an historical approach to the analysis of society.(14) Largely self-taught in this field, Shortt lacked the advanced university training his historical contemporaries were receiving in Europe and the United States. Yet in his critical handling of primary source material, in his emphasis on checking the facts in newly opened archival material, in his non-partisan approach and in his ability to construct sound historical monographs few have flawed him. He had absorbed the tenets of the historical profession as expressed by Lord Acton whom he referred to "as having much the truest conception of history among modern writers."(15)

Through his many research trips and contacts in the United States, Shortt was certainly influenced by his colleagues there. He shared with the successive presidents of the American Historical Association in the first decade of this century a belief in the practical social value of the study of history. He deplored the fact that "notwithstanding the records of history or the shorter experience of a single generation, the mass of mankind are still largely the creatures of the hour."(16) "The man who is not interested in what preceded him in this world," Shortt told the Dominion Educational Association, "will have little interest in what will follow him; he who is not interested in his ancestry will care little about his posterity, and will have no conception of what is of permanent value. The man who does not court the muse of history is fit for strategems and spoils, or, to put it in a modern phrase, is the man who works a political pull and graft."(17) In Shortt's view each individual was important and to take an informed part in public life each had to be conscious of where his intelligent self-interest lay. While denying the possibility of laws of social development, Shortt believed that certain guiding principles could be derived from a study of the past. These he often presented by means of a judicious use of historical parallels, comparing, for example, pre-World War I railway construction and economic expansion with "a very similar range of experiences from the decade from 1850 to 1860."(18) The past was also

14 W.A. Mackintosh. "The Teaching of Economics at Queen's under Adam Shortt, 1889-1908". Unpublished typescript. W.A. Mackintosh Papers, Queen's University Archives, p. 2.

15 Letter, Adam Shortt to R.L. Borden, 10 February, 1921. Adam Shortt Papers, Queen's University Archives.

16 Adam Shortt. "Current Events". Queen's Quarterly. October, 1902. p. 210.

17 Adam Shortt. "The Educational Value, from a National Point of View, of the Canadian Archives" summary Proceedings of the Sixth Convention of the Dominion Educational Association. (Toronto, 1908) p. 79.

18 Adam Shortt. "Railroad Construction and National Prosperity: an historic parallel." Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada. Series III, 1914. pp. 295-308. Passim.

- Continued on Page 10

a testing laboratory for social theories, presenting

the outcome in failure or success of the numerous and varied experiments which communities have made Not only therefore does a properly conceived presentation of historical facts afford an indispensable basis for the satisfactory answer to any intellectual questions which arise, as to the growth, and present structure of modern society, but it affords the only satisfactory data for testing the relative truth of the rival analyses of industrial and political theories of the present day, and the consequent value of practical economic and political programmes which depend upon the soundness of these analyses.(19)

It was through this historical empiricism, communicated to and understood by a large segment of Canadians that Shortt hoped Canada would be saved from the "wild phases of economic and social doctrine."

Historical study, to Adam Shortt, was vitally important to the development of a Canadian nation. He recognized as had Mill the tie between history and nationalism and referred in his diary to "the necessity for a thorough presentation of the facts of history which will give at once unity and inspiration to the people of Canada."(20) A recurring fear in his writings was that of sectionalism: the sectionalism both of the new immigrants in Western Canada(21) and that of French Canadians in Quebec.(22) A

18 Continued from Page 9

see also:

Adam Shortt. "Some Aspects of the Imperial Problem". The Canadian Magazine. Vol. XVIII. February, 1902. pp. 323-331.

Adam Shortt. "Britain's Treatment of Canada" Addresses, The Canadian Club of Toronto. (Toronto, 1914) pp. 65-74. Passim.

Adam Shortt. "The Relation Between the Legislative and Executive Branches of the Canadian Government" The American Political Science Review, vol. 7, May 1913, pp. 181-196.

19 Adam Shortt. "The Significance for Canadian History of the Work of the Board of Historical Publications" Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada. Series III, 1919, pp. 103, 104, 105.

20 Adam Shortt. Unpublished diary. 27 January, 1908.

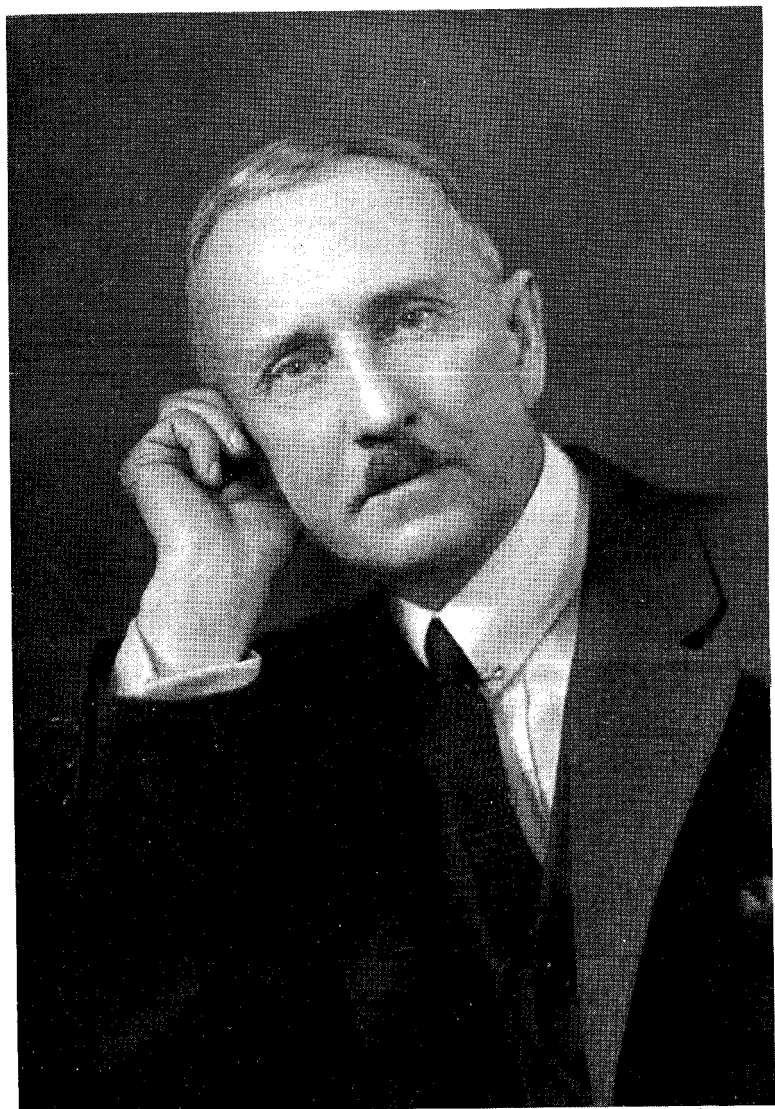
Adam Shortt Papers, Queen's University Archives.

21 See for example:

Adam Shortt. "Some Observations on the Great North West". Queen's Quarterly, vol. 2, January, 1895. p. 194.

Adam Shortt. "Current Events". Queen's Quarterly, vol. X, October, 1904, p. 236.

22 Adam Shortt. "L'Avenir des Canadiens-Français". Le Nationaliste, Montreal, 8 Octobre, 1905, p. 1.



Sir Arthur Doughty
1860-1936

(photograph courtesy Queen's University Archives)

due primarily to a lack of the relevant source material. Once the full records of the past were accessible and detailed monographs written to explore these records systematically, "ultimate history", as Doughty referred to it, could be written.(26) Doughty's prime concern as Dominion Archivist was to locate and make these records available.

When Doughty arrived in Ottawa in May, 1904 to assume his new duties the Government was already tending towards a policy of strengthening the Public Archives. Lord Minto whom Doughty had met in Quebec in 1899 continued his interest in historical writing and after Brymner's death wrote a blunt letter to Laurier calling the attention of the government to "what I can only call the most lamentable disregard for the historical archives of the Dominion."(27) With this vice-regal prod, Sydney Fisher, Minister of Agriculture responsible for the Public Archives introduced supplementary estimates in the Commons for the Archives and obtained an order-in-council(28) implementing the recommendations of an internal Departmental Commission which had reported on federal government records six years before.(29)

The process of change had begun but it remained for Arthur Doughty to give this change a continuing thrust and a philosophic basis. His extensive annual reports for 1904 and 1905 indicate that he made a thorough review of all aspects of the Archives work and gave careful consideration to developing long range programmes. In these reports, Doughty rehearsed at length the importance of historical study and quoting Lord Acton and the British Historical Manuscripts Commission emphasized the changing requirements of scholars who "are turning their attention towards the construction of history on scientific principles."(30) He stressed that to write this new history, historians required access to both official records of government and the private papers of individuals. The holdings of the Public Archives as they then stood, Doughty termed "inadequate, either for the purposes of general history or of constitutional archaeology, not only in their number but in the nature of their contents."(31) He considered that it would be an "act of statesmanship" and a "noble and patriotic work" for the federal government to assist. "It is no longer possible," Doughty advised, "to leave research entirely in the hands of the individual since this task has been for a long time accepted by great countries as the duty of the State."(32)

The reports outlined a broad cultural programme for the Public Archives; a programme which Doughty with the assistance of

26 Canada. Report of the Public Archives for the Year 1904 (Ottawa, 1905) p. xliii.

27 Letter. Lord Minto to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 19 January, 1903. Laurier Papers, op.cit., pp. 69288-69294.

28 P.C. 2018. Dated 7 December, 1903.

29 Excerpts from this report are published in P.A.C. Report, 1904, p. x.

30 P.A.C. Report, 1905. p. xliii.

31 Ibid., p. xliii.

32 Ibid., p. xv.

common historiography and historical tradition would do much to give Canadians a unity and common approach to national issues. But above all, historical study, in its broadest sense encompassing all aspects of the life of society, provided a suitable education for informed citizens, enabling each to take his rightful place in national life.(23) This historical study required both access to archival records and dissemination of the information they contained, implying, in Shortt's view a Public Archives with an active publications programme.

Doughty's views on the rôle of history were not as clearly articulated as those of Shortt, yet there does appear to have been substantial agreement between the two. Arthur Doughty was born in Maidenhead, England in 1860. He attended English public schools and New Inn Hall, Oxford before emigrating to Canada at the age of 26. He worked briefly for the Legal and Commercial Exchange of Canada in Montreal until he was able to turn his leisure time interests in art, music and drama into full-time work as a drama critic for the Montreal Gazette. In 1896 Doughty entered the Quebec Civil Service, as private secretary first to the Minister of Public Works and then to the Provincial Treasurer. He became joint Librarian of the Legislative Library three years before accepting the appointment as Dominion Archivist in 1904.

Doughty's views on Canadian historiography were formed in the Quebec milieu. His own special research interests were in the history of Quebec City and the 1759 campaign. However, in the broader national context, he saw the divisive rôle competing French and English interpretations of the past played in contemporary affairs. He recalled that in 1899, the Governor General, Lord Minto, "obtained a collection of text-books in use in each province and after an examination of them, he called my attention to their diversity and to their manifest errors. He asked me what could be done to bring about a better state of affairs."(24) A year or two later, Doughty took up this matter in a meeting with Sir Louis Jetté, Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, the Hon. Thomas Chapais and several others. He emphasized that existing historical literature was a "barrier to progress". With each province having responsibility for their own text books, school histories from which "children derive their knowledge of the country," were "frequently at variance and...written upon narrow lines which develop racial prejudice."(25) Differing interpretations he considered as being

23 See:

Adam Shortt. "The Nature and Sphere of Political Science". Queen's Quarterly, vol. I, p. 100.

Adam Shortt. "Aims of the Political Science Association", in Canadian Political Science Association, Papers and Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting, Ottawa, 1913. p. 18.

24 A.G. Doughty. "The Preservation of Historical Documents in Canada". Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada. 3rd Series, vol. XVIII, Section 2, 1924, p. 63.

Letter, A.G. Doughty to Sir George Foster, 6 November, 1918. P.A.C. R.G. 37, Letterbooks, vol. 2. pp. 429-430.

25 Letter, A.G. Doughty to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 4 August, 1906. Laurier Papers, microfilm, Queen's University Archives, p.112651.

Adam Shortt would follow for the next thirty years. The first necessity was to expand systematically the acquisition of archival material by seeking out official records and private papers on both sides of the Atlantic to be obtained for the Archives or copied. Doughty stopped the publication of calendars and recommended instead the publication of important documents in full. He proposed and began work on a guide to all collections of papers relating to Canada wherever they were located. Such a guide would serve to direct priorities in the copying programme and would provide a basis for "a national history, based upon the most ample documentary evidence", a work he urged upon the universities in co-operation with the government to mark the Quebec Tercentenary in 1908. To meet the convenience of researchers he also asked that the Archives be opened one evening a week during the winter.

This constituted a very ambitious programme. It received the cautious approval of the government. In his first two years, Doughty travelled to England, France, Mexico and through the southern United States searching for material and arranging to have copying done. Preliminary reports on archival collections in the Maritimes, and parts of Quebec were prepared and plans were made to do the same in the west. The first of the new series of publications, the well known Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1759 to 1791 was begun with Adam Shortt. To house the federal records being transferred to the Archives and to allow for expansion, contracts were let for a new building on Sussex Street to be completed late in 1906, and Sydney Fisher increased the estimates for the Archives 75%, to \$20,000.

By the summer of 1906, Doughty, discouraged and disheartened by the slowness of the growth of the Archives and by the lack of competent assistance, hesitated on the verge of resignation. He placed the alternatives before the Prime Minister:

It appears to me that we have arrived at a stage where, with an accurate knowledge of the state and use of public records, and of the requirements of the spirit of the age, two courses are open to us - either to allow the archives to remain a practically useless branch of the public service, or make it, as it may be made, an important factor in the development of our national life.(33)

Doughty summarized and repeated the arguments advanced in his annual reports. He made no secret of his intention to resign and the reaction from the parliamentary opposition, the press and his academic colleagues showed that his arguments for an active cultural archives programme had struck a responsive chord. In July, when Sydney Fisher moved supplementary estimates for the Archives, the reply from a normally parsimonious opposition was praise for Dr. Doughty and criticism of the government for not providing him with adequate support. Robert Borden commented that

33 Letter. A.G. Doughty to Sir Wilfrid Laurier. 6 August, 1906. Laurier Papers, op.cit., p. 112650.

Parliament and the government would be making no mistake in placing at the disposal of Dr. Doughty a very liberal vote and giving him a pretty free hand as to the manner of carrying on his work.(34)

C.F. Hamilton, Ottawa correspondent of the Toronto News published at length the opposition comments noting that "the public men who have an eye for anything higher than the mere material things have suffered a real scare lest Dr. Doughty should be lost to the public service."(35) The historians at the universities were also fully conscious of the importance of the changes Doughty was attempting to implement. In an article on "Patriotism and History", C.W. Colby referred to the neglected state of the federal archives and urged "the time has come to render it cultural in a broad and national sense."(36) Both G.M. Wrong and Adam Shortt pressed the case for an expanded Archives on the Prime Minister and discussed with him the best methods of establishing ties between the Archives and "the educational life of the country."(37) Laurier's reply to Doughty was brief but marked a turning point in the development of the Public Archives:

I am ready to cooperate with you and your minister in everything that you will recommend in the line of ideas you express.(38)

This commitment was honoured by Laurier and his successors over the next quarter century. Until the Depression curtailed expenditures, successive governments and governors-general worked with Doughty and his close associate Adam Shortt in developing the Public Archives as the first active cultural arm of the federal government. The link between history and nationalism was firmly fixed in the public mind and the encouragement of a national historiography through the Public Archives constituted a cultural extension of the National Policy. As the Toronto Globe editorialized in 1907.

The surest basis of national feeling is found in interest and pride in the past, and the sooner Canadians study and understand the complex movements involved in their origin, the better for their ambition to be a nation.(39)

34 Canada. Debates of the House of Commons, 7 July, 1906, p. 7374.

35 C.F. Hamilton. "House Studies Archives Branch," Toronto News, 9 July, 1906.

36 C.W. Colby. "Patriotism and History" Proceedings of the Canadian Club Toronto for the year 1904-1905. (Toronto, 1905) Vol. 2, p. 113.

37 Letter. Adam Shortt to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 17 September 1906. Laurier Papers, op.cit., p. 113791-2.

38 Letter. Sir Wilfrid Laurier to Arthur Doughty, 21 August 1906. Laurier Papers, op.cit., p. 112660.

39 Toronto Globe. Editorial. "The Champlain Society". 31 October, 1907.

The physical growth of the Public Archives following Laurier's assurance of support can be simply measured. In February 1907, Fisher introduced estimates more than doubling the Archives budget and by 1931-32 the budget had risen to \$139,000. The collection, with the almost legendary collecting instincts of Doughty and to some extent Shortt, expanded more than a hundred-fold; and by 1933 was outgrowing its quarters on Sussex Street which had been opened in 1906 and expanded in 1926. More difficult, though, is the measurement of the less tangible influence of the various programmes inaugurated by Doughty and Shortt.

The first step in the implementation of Doughty's proposals was the formalization of the advisory rôle played by historians at the universities with regard to federal archival matters. Acting on Doughty's recommendation, the government appointed an Historical Manuscripts Commission in April 1907 to advise the Minister of Agriculture and "to cooperate with the Dominion Archivist in collecting, arranging and rendering accessible those original sources from which alone an adequate knowledge of Canadian history can be gained."⁽⁴⁰⁾ The Minister and the deputy-minister of Agriculture, Arthur Doughty, Adam Shortt, C.W. Colby, G.M. Wrong, Abbé Auguste Gosselin and J. Edmond Roy consented to serve on this commission without remuneration. Amongst the first tasks this new body set itself was the consideration of the internal administrative organization of the Public Archives and the classification system in use. Little progress was made on the latter problem but on the first, which Colby considered necessary "to relieve the Archives Branch from the incubus of political appointments," the results were positive. A report drafted by Fisher and Doughty on the reorganization of the Archives was adopted in 1908, dividing the Archives into three divisions, library and maps, manuscripts, and publications, and making provision for hiring three division heads.⁽⁴¹⁾ Duncan McArthur joined the Archives as head of the Manuscript Division providing Doughty with competent assistance.

The question of greatest continuing concern to the Historical Manuscripts Commission was that of the publications of the Public Archives. The Order-in-Council establishing the commission had directed that it

consider the question of publishing, under the care of competent editors, such historical materials, as, in the interest of historical science and the development of national spirit should be committed to print.

Doughty had already discarded the idea of continuing to publish calendars and in 1905 had arranged with Adam Shortt to edit jointly a volume of Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada 1759-1791. The choice of topics was a fortunate one for it indicated the usefulness of the Archives in the study of the background to one of the principal contemporary issues. With this

⁴⁰ P.C. 788 dated 17 April, 1907.

⁴¹ Minutes of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, 14 February, 1908. Public Archives R.G. 36.5

successful example in mind, the Historical Manuscripts Commission resolved to begin a series of documentary publications on selected topics

so as to render accessible to the public and scholars at a distance the chief material for the study of the more important movements and episodes of Canadian history. (42)

The intention was both to stimulate public interest in history and to assist historians at universities by providing primary source material for their students to study. Fears of conflict with provincial rights in the field of education led the federal archives to restrict its rôle to the publication of selected documents without interpretation. (43) The Public Archives was authorized to commission historians to compile and edit the volumes. By the end of World War I a number of volumes had been issued dealing with a variety of topics: documents relating to Constitutional History, 1791-1818, the Red River Settlement, early exploration, the War of 1812, early Canadian Northwest legislation, and the journals of Francis Laroque and Alexander H. Murray. Historians such as L.J. Burpee, Duncan McArthur, E.A. Cruikshank, H.P. Biggar, and Chester Martin worked in the preparation of these.

Closely related in spirit though without official connection with the work of the Archives and the Historical Manuscripts Commission was Shortt and Doughty's most famous endeavour, the twenty-three volume series Canada and Its Provinces. This impressive work which appeared during the years 1912 to 1917 has recently been termed "the monument to the professional study of history," (44) and indeed the editors' instructions to their many contributors echoed those of Lord Acton to historians writing for the Cambridge Modern History. Yet, while Canada and Its Provinces stands as a visible monument to the achievements of our historians up to the First World War, W.A. Mackintosh more accurately caught the intentions of the editors when he referred to it as "one of those important works which are not likely to be models for the future but which really create much of the future". (45)

Planning for the series began in 1909, the year after Shortt moved to Ottawa as a Civil Service Commissioner. That summer, Shortt travelled through the West to establish procedures for civil service competitions. He used this opportunity to contact possible contributors and in September the two editors signed an agreement

42 Ibid. 9 November, 1907.

43 Letter. A.G. Doughty to A.B. Copp, 16 March 1922. P.A.C. R.G. 37. Letterbooks, vol. 15, p. 2-6, and Letter A.G. Doughty to Lord Willingdon 14 December, 1928. P.A.C. R.G. 37. Letterbooks vol. 19, p. 257-8.

44 Kenneth Windsor. "Historical Writing in Canada to 1920" in Carl F. Klinck, (ed.) Literary History of Canada (Toronto, 1966) p. 225.

45 W.A. Mackintosh. "Adam Shortt, 1859-1931" CJEPS May 1938. pp. 173-4.

with the dynamic publisher, Robert Glasgow. Originally, only twelve volumes were planned, but as writing progressed the work expanded to twenty-three volumes in twelve sections. This was perhaps the most ambitious publishing venture in Canada to that time, and in 1911, a group of prominent Canadians joined with Glasgow Brooks and Company to form the Publishers Association of Canada Ltd., with a subscribed capital of \$250,000. The announced object of the Association was

to open up a profitable market for the literary output of Canadian writers and investigators, and thus to stimulate an important department of labour which it is desirable to encourage in Canada.(46)

The several editions of Canada and Its Provinces were successful in both financial and historical terms. Impressive for its magnitude, level of reliability and breadth of subject interest, the series has enjoyed a lengthy and useful life. A brief history of the project published in 1914 noted that

More directly,..., than to any general causes, the work is due to a new influence that has gone abroad within recent years from the Dominion Archives at Ottawa, animating students and writers, and arousing Canadians generally to the importance of historical work.(47)

Coordinating the preparation of Canada and Its Provinces placed Shortt and Doughty in close contact with historians across the country. In 1912, the Historical Manuscripts Commission was reorganized to give it a broader base with the addition of Sir Edmund Walker, the Hon. Thomas Chapais, R.D. Gosnell, Archdeacon W.O. Raymond, Archdeacon W.J. Armitage, W.L. Grant and Chester Martin. After the passage of the Public Archives Act of 1912, the Commission, like the Archives, was placed under the Secretary of State. The Commission continued to devote its attention to the matter of publishing volumes of historical documents. Doughty sought their advice regarding material best suited for publication and suggested that a board be appointed within the Commission to supervise the selection and editing of the material. At the last meeting of the Commission for which minutes survive, in January 1915, the members approved a resolution establishing a publications committee to prepare a systematic publications programme for consideration by the Commission. The idea of an enlarged document publication programme appealed to the Prime Minister and Sir Robert Borden asked Shortt whether he would be interested in leaving the Civil Service Commission to devote his full time to this work. Shortt was in agreement with this suggestion and prepared a lengthy memorandum outlining a broad publications programme designed to assist "the steadily increasing number of students, alike at home and abroad, who are awakening to the importance of a first hand

46 As quoted in an announcement for Canada and Its Provinces (Toronto, 1914) p. 5.

47 Ibid., p. 3.

knowledge of Canadian history."(48) Pressure of wartime matters delayed the formation of the Board until, late in 1917, in Shortt's words, "when the reconstruction of the Government came up the position to be vacated in making the change became of considerable interest to some of (Borden's) colleagues."(49) In very quick order Adam Shortt became chairman and sole paid member of the Historical Documents Publication Board, associated with the Public Archives but reporting to the President of the Privy Council, and W.J. Roche, Borden's Minister of the Interior took Shortt's place on the Civil Service Commission.(50) The other members of the Board were Arthur Doughty, G.M. Wrong, C.W. Colby, and the Hon. Thomas Chapais.

In his first annual report Adam Shortt produced a comprehensive programme for the publication of documents relating to virtually all aspects of Canadian development. The original volume of Constitutional Documents, 1759-1791, was to be revised and republished and volumes were planned on the constitutional history of Ontario and Quebec, the Maritime provinces and the West. Other volumes would deal with early settlement, external affairs, militia and defence, municipal development, Indian relations, church and state, literature and art, public finance, currency and banking, trade, transportation, agriculture, the fisheries and industry.(51) This was a grand and long term programme but it was one which by its size contained the seeds of its failure. Shortt hoped that by mapping out this large field, he would only have to examine his sources once, noting and having copied all relevant material and designating it for a particular volume. As his notebooks attest, he made many trips in Canada, the United States and England to examine newspapers and archives. His assistant, Arthur Lower, prepared a calendar for the Montreal Gazette down to 1841 and copied material in Ottawa and elsewhere. Notes accumulated, but with a meticulous insistence on locating and noting all material germane to Canadian history, Shortt was able to publish little. The revised version of the Constitutional documents, two volumes on Canadian Currency Exchange and Finance during the French Period and a third on Currency, Exchange and Finance in Nova Scotia, which appeared after his death in 1931 were the only publications of the Board of Historical Publications. It was an overly ambitious undertaking and without a large staff and rigid terms of reference for each volume, it was impossible. Adam Shortt's own interests shifted slightly and from 1926 on was concerned mainly with obtaining, sorting and identifying two major collections of business records for the Public Archives: those of Baring Brothers and of Glyn Mills. Economic historians in Canada and the United States

48 Letter & memorandum Adam Shortt to Sir R.L. Borden 7 May 1915. P.A.C. R.L. Borden Papers. p. 103609-13.

49 Letter. Adam Shortt to E.R. Peacock 19 January 1918. Q.U.A. Adam Shortt Papers.

50 P.C. 2739 dated 3 October 1917 and diary R.L. Borden 1 & 2 October 1917. R.L. Borden Papers.

51 Canada Sessional Papers. "Report of the Historical Documents Publications Board". No. 101. 4 March 1919, p. 8, and Adam Shortt. "The Significance for Canadian History of the Work of the Board of Historical Publications". op.cit., p. 107.

hailed these acquisitions and Shortt worked on these until his death.

During the 1920's, Shortt continued to assist Doughty in maintaining close contact between the Archives and the universities. The formal bodies, the Historical Manuscripts Commission and the Board of Historical Publications met several times in the early part of the decade but after 1923 were no longer summoned. No deliberate policy decision seems to have been taken; rather the advice these bodies provided now came on an informal personal basis from the growing number of researchers visiting the Archives.

Closer relations with the universities were established through a summer course offered at the Public Archives. This began in 1911 when the Archives established scholarships of fifty dollars a month to enable senior undergraduates nominated by their universities to spend three months in the summer pursuing their research in Ottawa. This programme to give advanced training in research continued throughout the war. By the early 1920's, though, Doughty began to question the effectiveness of the scholarships noting that

students were sent here who were not particularly interested in history but were going into other professions. It would appear that in the past, there have been few students in the universities who intended to take up history as a profession.(52)

In 1921 when the Civil Service Commission ruled that competitions were necessary for these summer positions, the programme was terminated.(53) It was replaced the following summer by the School of Research in Canadian History organized at the Public Archives by the Department of History of Queen's University. This was planned as a post-graduate course in Canadian history, counting as a credit in the M.A. and Ph.D. programmes at Queen's but open to students from all universities. As Doughty explained to his minister in establishing this course, Professor Morrison of Queen's

realizes that a large number of men taking post graduate courses, go to the larger universities in the United States because they are better equipped than Canadian universities for the purpose. He wishes to counteract this custom as much as possible.(54)

The course was presented as a combination of lectures, seminars and directed research supervised by one or two faculty members from the university and drawing on the experience of Shortt and Doughty. The course continued on an annual basis until 1940.

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- 52 Letter. A.G. Doughty to Percy Nobbs. 29 March 1922.
P.A.C. R.G. 37 Letterbooks, vol. 15, p. 23.
53 Letter. A.G. Doughty to Rev. Louis Rheaume. 13 April 1921.
P.A.C. R.G. 37 Letterbooks. vol. 14, p. 323.
54 Letter. A.G. Doughty to A.B. Copp. 1 February 1922.
P.A.C. R.G. 37 Letterbooks. vol. 14, p. 612.



Dr. Doughty in his Office, 1910
(photograph courtesy Public Archives of Canada)

Extending full cooperation for this course was but one way the Public Archives assisted the growing historical profession in the 1920's. For more advanced researchers, the Public Archives presented a warm, friendly atmosphere conducive to research and discussion. Each summer, historians from universities across Canada came to Ottawa to delve into the new materials Doughty was placing at their disposal. "The Public Archives became, for a whole generation of young scholars," Chester Martin reminisced, "the clearing house of Canadian history."(55) This was their meeting place, to research, to argue, to discuss, to plan new publications and to renew their enthusiasm before returning to their winter vigils teaching Canadian history, often alone, at scattered universities. Shortt and Doughty were usually readily available for advice and guidance and did their best to assist. An attempt by Doughty in 1920 to establish a system of grants to assist researchers failed,(56) but for those unable to come to Ottawa he answered their questions at length and established liberal policies regarding the use of the photostat. The Archives also undertook to publish the annual reports of the Canadian Historical Association from 1926 to 1933.

Shortt and Doughty very deliberately attempted to spur the universities to place greater emphasis on Canadian history. In the mid-1920's they submitted a general plan of Canadian history to several universities with each subdivision of the plan furnishing a title for a monograph. They hoped that with some organization, more students would be interested in historical work and that the monographs produced in a systematic way would form the basis of a new history of Canada based on all available source material.(57) Little resulted directly from this scheme but the importance of stimulating original research in Canadian history was repeatedly brought to the attention of the universities. Even an old ally like G.M. Wrong received a curt note from the Dominion Archivist:

I have often thought that your students might have made more use of the Archives, and because they seem to be indifferent, we have not had a very good opinion of the university.(58)

Doughty's early interest in school textbooks and his dismay at the dull and lifeless way in which history was being taught led him also to explore ways in which copies of archival material could be made available for use in school classrooms. Following a suggestion by Dr. J.C. Webster in 1922, the Archives prepared several series of glass lantern slides which could be borrowed by teachers. Doughty believed that "The pictures in this department

55 Chester Martin "Fifty Years of Canadian History" in the Royal Society of Canada. Fifty Years in Retrospect 1882-1932. (N.P., N.D.)

56 Letter. Adam Shortt to W.S. Wallace 13 July 1920 Adam Shortt Papers Q.U.A.

57 Letter. A.G. Doughty to Dr. Trueman 9 March 1925. P.A.C. R.G. 37 Letterbooks. vol. 17, p. 65-9.

58 Letter. A.G. Doughty to G.M. Wrong 8 October 1924. P.A.C. R.G. 37 Letterbooks. vol. 16, p. 387-8.

have done more than anything else to start people investigating about Canada."(59) As part of his acquisitions programme Doughty sought out paintings of Canadian scenes and personalities, and encouraged C.W. Jefferys and others to sketch historic events to arouse the imaginations of school children and the general public.

To Arthur Doughty, his efforts to encourage and popularize the study of Canadian history were an integral part of his ambitious and successful acquisition policy. Doughty aimed to make the Archives "a treasure house of Canadian history" and he construed "archives" in the widest possible sense, gathering into his collection portraits and paintings, statuary and artifacts, war trophies and medals, maps and charts, together with the official records and private manuscripts. Many items acquired for the Archives by Doughty are now in the National Gallery, the National Museums and the National Library, but his best known acquisitions, the papers of English and French colonial officials relating to Canada form an essential part of our pre-Confederation source material. Beginning with his first trip to England in 1904, Doughty, carrying letters of introduction from Lord Minto and Lord Strathcona, met with his first successes. His personal charm, his sense of humour and his infectious belief in the importance of his work won him entry to many of the parlours and drawing rooms of British and French aristocracy. Few could withstand his blandishments and in 1923 and 1924, he helped organize these descendants into Canadian history societies in England and France. Doughty confided that "Probably the greatest benefit to Canada (from the formation of these societies) will be in the papers that will be eventually handed over to us."(60) The Durham papers, the Murray papers, the Grey-Elgin correspondence, the Northcliffe Collection, the Monckton Papers and the Townshend papers to list but a few, all came to Canada through his unflagging persuasive abilities and his willingness to pursue every clue.

Within Canada, Doughty's acquisition policies were pursued with no less vigour. Gradually he developed a network of regional offices from which the work of tracking down papers and copying local archives was conducted. In the years following World War I Doughty had on staff in the provinces a district archivist for the Maritimes with offices in Halifax and Saint John, an associate archivist in Quebec and another in Montreal, an agent in Ontario, and various representatives in Western Canada. At one point, in 1922, Doughty very seriously considered the possibility of a joint federal-provincial archives building in the Maritimes to house the records relating to those provinces.(61) He cooperated with the

59 Letter. A.G. Doughty to J.L. Ralston 3 November 1928.
P.A.C. R.G. 37 Letterbooks. vol. 19, p. 224-5.

60 Letter. A.G. Doughty to I.F. Brooks 1 February 1924.
P.A.C. R.G. 37 Letterbooks. vol. 16, p. 148.

61 Letter. A.G. Doughty to W.C. Milner 24 October 1922.
P.A.C. R.G. 37 Letterbook. vol. 15, p. 214.

Letter. A.G. Doughty to J.C. Webster 2 November 1922.
P.A.C. R.G. 37 Letterbooks. vol. 15, p. 219.

Letter. A.G. Doughty to W.F. Ganong 29 September 1927.
P.A.C. R.G. 37 Letterbooks. vol. 18, p. 299.

established Quebec and Ontario archives in exchanging photostatic copies and assisted Nova Scotia and New Brunswick near the end of the 1920's in establishing their own provincial repositories. Doughty hoped, though, to have at Ottawa at least copies of all material of possible national significance.

With regard to the preservation of the official records of the federal government, Doughty's programme was less of a success. In his first years as Dominion Archivist, under the provisions of a 1903 Order-in-Council many pre-Confederation records were transferred to the Archives. By 1912, the Historical Manuscripts Commission was concerned enough about the lack of continuing co-operation from federal departments to recommend the appointment of a Royal Commission to examine the state of federal records.(62) The report of this Royal Commission in 1914 recommended the establishment of a Public Records Office as part of the Public Archives, but the building planned to house the non-current records of the departments was cancelled with the outbreak of war. In the early 1920's Doughty returned to this idea hoping to have a simple secure, records storage building erected. The addition which was built in 1926 to the Public Archives on Sussex Street made little provision for Federal records but was needed for the other collections and to accommodate the growing number of researchers. The appointment of a Public Records Commission in 1926 to advise the government on all matters relating to the preservation of its records with Arthur Doughty as its paid chairman was less an expression of concern about the state of the records than a device to raise Doughty's salary to retain his services.(63) In 1929, a memorial signed by numerous academics was presented to the government supporting Doughty and requesting access to federal records later than 1867.(64) Little though was done by the time the Depression curtailed the activities of the Public Archives.

The policies and programmes of Shortt and Doughty were crippled by the financial stringency of the Depression and by the deaths of those who had worked to implement them. The work of the Board of Historical Publications was wound up after Adam Shortt's death in 1931. Between the first of January 1931 and the thirty-first of December 1935 the Archives lost through death or retirement twelve of its members, six of whom were senior personnel. Only one of these archivists was replaced and no new positions were created.(65) Financial difficulties even forced Doughty to stop using the photostat and to revert to manuscript copying for researchers. Regional offices were closed and the Archives gradually lost its national presence.

The work of Shortt and Doughty, however, was not in vain.

62 Minutes. Historical Manuscripts Commission. op.cit., 16 October 1912.

63 Letter. J.C. Webster to Sir R.L. Borden 6 July 1926. P.A.C. R.G. 37 Doughty's correspondence vol. 143. And P.C. 748 dated 12 May 1926 and P.C. 749 dated 12 May 1926.

64 "Notes and Comments". C.H.R. June 1929, p. 97-8.

65 P.A.C. Report, 1935. p. v.

Under their inspiration and direction, the Public Archives went far beyond the traditional record preservation rôle of a national archives. Through a vigorous acquisitions policy, extensive publications, advanced courses in history, encouragement for the universities, and above all by attitudes and policies which facilitated the work of students at all levels of sophistication, Shortt and Doughty took the initiative, gained the support of successive governments and led them through the Public Archives to assist in fostering the development of the Canadian historical profession. Many of their policies were inspired by the work of Dr. J. Franklin Jameson at the Carnegie Institution in Washington. But what was left to a private institution in the United States became the "duty" of the Canadian government. Shortt and Doughty linked the requirements of the professional historiography to the general vision of a national, unifying Canadian history and by so doing made a dynamic Public Archives programme a cultural equivalent of the economic programmes of the National Policy.

Shortt and Doughty received many well deserved tributes in their lifetimes but two best capture their aspirations and signalize the success of their policies.

In 1932, A.S. Morton at the University of Saskatchewan wrote to Doughty:

Sometime without naming the University of Saskatchewan you might mention in your report that the teaching of Canada's history is being transformed in this institution by the material which the Archives has placed at its disposal in one way or another. (66)

The Ottawa Journal published the following editorial on the Public Archives:

Nothing more interesting is to be seen in Ottawa. It can be sampled by anybody; no official place here or elsewhere is more free from red tape; the hospitality of the Archives building is open and wide. The Dominion Archivist seems to be obsessed by the idea that he is a public servant, that his great charge is public property, and that the public ought to be made welcome to see what they have got in the Archives. (67)

66 Letter. A.S. Morton to A.G. Doughty 9 March 1932.
P.A.C. R.G. 37 Doughty's correspondence vol. 166.

67 Ottawa Journal 17 October 1931.