

# Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association Rapport de l'assemblée annuelle de la Société historique du Canada

Report of the Annual Meeting

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Volume 39, numéro 1, 1960

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/300429ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/300429ar>

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### Éditeur(s)

The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada

### ISSN

0317-0594 (imprimé)

1712-9095 (numérique)

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### Citer cet article

Willms, A. M. (1960). The Role of the Public Archives Records Centre in Federal Records Management. *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association / Rapport de l'assemblée annuelle de la Société historique du Canada*, 39(1), 104–117. <https://doi.org/10.7202/300429ar>

# THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC ARCHIVES RECORDS CENTRE IN FEDERAL RECORDS MANAGEMENT

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The Public Archives Records Centre was created to help solve a records management problem, and it would perhaps be best to begin by outlining the extent and size of this problem, to show what other efforts have been made to resolve this problem and then to discuss the role of the Records Centre.

It appears to me that this records problem has two main aspects: first, the great size and wide scope of records management and second, the lack of recognition or interest shown in this activity.

In terms of staff, floor space and office equipment records management is undoubtedly the biggest of the five main administrative services<sup>1</sup> in the federal government and it probably is also the most neglected of these services. Other administrative services have received a great deal of attention and have been developed in techniques and equipment to keep pace with the expanding functions of government, but not so records management. Staff members at the secondary level of government management are simply not interested. Senior management people, at the deputy minister level, have shown sporadic interest over the years, resulting in the appointment of four investigating bodies, two of them royal commissions, to look into government records.

The reports of these investigators invariably painted a gloomy picture. The commissions of 1897 and 1912 pointed out the deficiencies in records management and made recommendations, but half a century later the Massey Commission concluded that: "...an examination of the present situation leads us to the melancholy conclusion that they (the earlier commissioners) labored almost if not altogether in vain ... the truth about Canada's public records system must still be an embarrassment to all Canadians..."<sup>2</sup>

In the last forty years Canada's population has doubled and the functions of its federal government have increased more than the population. As a result the number of federal civil servants has been

<sup>1</sup> Personnel services, financial and accounting services, purchasing and accommodation, statistics and records management.

<sup>2</sup> Report Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1951, p. 113.

multiplied by four<sup>3</sup> and the number of other federal employees has increased still more. In this same period new methods of communication have been developed. The typewriter became popular, then the dictating machines and the automatic typewriter came into use, along with all types of duplicators which are hatching records at a terrific rate; the punch card and its electronic masters make feasible great accumulations of statistical records and photocopy methods permit large scale duplications. In modern administration everyone feels he must be completely informed and reports, memos and circulars are flying about in such profusion that the operational staff often find themselves seriously hampered by this blizzard. The population "explosion" is but a feeble thing compared to the records "explosion". This is illustrated in American experience. In 1912 the American federal civil service produced 55 letters per man per year; in 1953 they produced 533 letters each and in the meantime the number of civil servants had multiplied six times, thus the amount of letter-writing in the American government almost multiplied by sixty in forty years and there is no doubt that the production of forms, reports, returns and memos kept pace. The whole United States federal budget in 1912 was less than one billion dollars and the Hoover Commission report claims that in 1953 the paperwork budget alone amounted to approximately four billions.<sup>4</sup>

The most recent survey of Canadian federal records estimates that about half a million cubic feet are produced each year in the Canadian federal government. That is, the records produced would fill our records centre completely every seven or eight months. Fortunately over half of the amount created is destroyed but the accumulated records are well over two and a half million cubic feet in volume. The maintenance of this backlog and of the current accumulation is costing the federal government over 27 million dollars annually in salaries and about five million dollars in floor space, while the replacement cost of records equipment is at least another twenty million dollars. In other words our federal government is apparently spending some 35 million dollars annually on records keeping, and this is only a small part of the cost of paperwork.<sup>5</sup> Obviously this is a big business and it is rapidly increasing in size, for, not only is the blizzard becoming thicker and more furious but this year's snow banks are piled on the accumulations of previous years and the summer sun makes little impression on this mountain.

<sup>3</sup> Salaried employees of the Federal government in December 1919 41,825, in December 1959 156,230. D.B.S. figures.

<sup>4</sup> Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government—*Task Force Report on Paperwork Management*, January 1955, pp. 1 and 14.

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Records Management Survey Committee, 1959, pp. 29, 32, 43 and Appendix D.

Despite the size of government paperwork, an activity which affects very closely the work of almost all civil servants, there is remarkably little thinking or research being done in this field. Little has been written about records management in Canada. There have been a few articles in business magazines, some mimeographed procedure manuals and some commission reports but that is about all. Until last year there was practically no data available on the overall size and cost of records management, nor were the details of departmental records procedures generally known. There is no research being done on systems or equipment unless the individual registries do it and this is very unlikely since they usually consider themselves under-staffed and overworked. There is little training being done, although the Civil Service Commission conducted two one week courses some years ago, but even on these records management courses almost half of the time was devoted to such general topics as personnel supervision and rating. Universities are giving a good deal of attention to administration; they are differentiating between public administration and business administration and are teaching many courses on such skills as bookkeeping and accounting and on such detailed subjects as personnel psychology, but, except for a few hours in the Archives course held at Carleton University last summer, there is not, to my knowledge, a single university lecture being given in Canada on records management.

There is some question whether records management is a proper course for a university calendar. Many of our universities are resisting the further incursion of training in subjects which are primarily skills. That there are many such courses on the curricula now probably does not justify the addition of another such subject, nor is the fact that it is being offered successfully in American Universities much of an inducement. The truth is, however, that most Canadian universities probably have not heard of records management and if they have heard of it they have not thought twice about it. When they do realize the need for this training they might consider putting it in their extension courses.

Another area of records keeping in which neglect is obvious is in the security classification of records. Records once classified in one of the five security classifications remain in that group until declassified by the originator or some other senior officer. Senior officers have no time to devote to what they conceive as the dull and unimportant operation of reviewing old files. As a result we have thousands of cubic feet of classified records some dating to before the Second World War which must be kept secure although many of them are as secret as last night's weather forecast. The Americans have developed some automatic declassification procedures but we have not had the time or the interest to think seriously about this.

This general disinterest and neglect has been very obvious in departmental central registries. The low quality of staff, the poor working conditions and the resulting low morale have been notorious. One young civil servant put it quite graphically: "An assistant clerk is at the bottom of the civil service scale, but if he is posted to central registry he needs a ladder to touch the bottom."

Though the picture of federal records management is a sad one we are quite optimistic about the future. When one is at the bottom it is easier to go up, and indeed there are many indications that the ascent has begun. There has been improvement in many departments in recent years due more, I think, to the initiative of the clerical classes than to help from the upper echelons. There have also been some major developments in this field since the Second World War and while some of them have not yet borne obvious fruit we expect results in the next few years. The Archives Records Centre would be among the major developments, but before beginning the main topic it would be appropriate to mention three other developments.

The first of these was the appointment of a Public Records Committee in 1945. This senior committee has the Secretary of State as chairman and the Dominion Archivist as vice-chairman. The secretary is an official of the Privy Council office and representatives from five or six departments, along with two representatives from the Canadian Historical Association, are the members. The terms of reference of this committee are wide and vague. They are summed up in one sentence of the Order in Council: "The duties of the Committee shall be to keep under constant review the state of the public records and to consider, advise and concert with departments and agencies of government on the organization, care, housing and destruction of public records."<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately the committee has lacked the staff to use these very wide powers effectively and it has concerned itself mainly with the screening of departmental recommendations for the destruction of records and with the control of microfilming costs. There is a movement afoot now to appoint a permanent secretary to this committee and to increase the scope of its activities.

The second major development in records was the creation of the Records Management Association of Ottawa in November 1952 on the initiative of the records officers of the Department of National Defence. The aims of this association were defined as being: to promote the study of records management including central registry procedures and office methods and procedures; to standardize terminology and filing equipment; to devise methods of training staff in records

<sup>6</sup> P.C. 6175, September 20, 1945, para. 3.

management; to stimulate the retirement of records; and to encourage co-operation between departmental units. This association holds monthly meetings and it has accomplished some of its objective. It has set up a library of records forms containing more than 2,000 forms in use in federal registries, it has set up a schedule for the retention of housekeeping records which was published by the archives and which serves the departments as a guide for the preparation of their own retention schedules, and its meetings serve as a clearing house for records information and give members the opportunity to discuss their problems with other departmental officers. But there has been some tendency for meetings to alternate between friendly social affairs of the Rotary Club type and the grim, determined atmosphere of the union meeting demanding higher salaries. Its members have not yet made any major contribution to records management such as research or publication.

The third development in records was the appointment in January 1959 of a committee to survey the field of records management, collect data and statistics which would assist the Public Records Committee in planning its long-term development and to make recommendations in this field. The committee worked for fourteen months using questionnaire forms, visits to agencies and departmental and inter-departmental conferences to gather information. The headquarters and the larger field offices of fifty-two departments and agencies were surveyed. The committee's report was completed in February of this year and its recommendations are now in the hands of the Public Records Committee.<sup>7</sup> The report provides a much-needed fund of information on records management but at the moment this information is still in the restricted category. Whether this report will bring improvements into the sphere of federal records management remains to be seen. There are some fears that it may be just another report, the fourth of a series, its sharper edges smothered under the gentle drapes of bureaucracy with their soft folds of compromise, inertia and forgetfulness.

To discuss the role of the Records Centre it would be best to begin by tracing briefly its prenatal evolution over the last ninety years. Its origins could probably be traced to the appointment of the first archivist in the federal government in 1872 as a clerk, at a salary of \$1,200 per annum, in the Department of Agriculture. It was thought that the archives would not require the full time occupation of one man and so the minister was to employ Mr. Brymner, the new archivist, both "on the Public Archives Services, and at the same time on a preliminary inquiry for the getting of information on Agriculture, for both of which services the fitness of Mr. Brymner inspires him with full

<sup>7</sup> Records Management Survey Committee Report 1959.

confidence".<sup>8</sup> Undoubtedly Mr. Brymner fulfilled these expectations and we hear little more about federal records until the 1890s. In 1890 the Post Office department drew to the attention of the government that "there was in several of the Departments a large quantity of vouchers and other documents, many of a routine character, which were useless and not only encumbered the vaults and record rooms, but formed a source of danger in case of fire".<sup>9</sup> After some correspondence with the Imperial Treasury and other public offices in Great Britain, an Order in Council was issued which provided that each government department should report on its records holdings to the Treasury Board and that these should be reviewed with the aim of destroying valueless material. Evidently little was done until the fire in the West Block of the Parliament buildings in 1896 again drew attention to this matter, and then the Deputy Minister of Finance, the Auditor-General and the Under-Secretary of State were appointed a commission "to examine into and report to the Treasury Board as to the state of the records in the several departments".<sup>10</sup>

The commission was impressed by "the lack of any community of plan among the several departments for the arrangement and preservation of their records"<sup>11</sup> and maintained that "no reform can be permanent or effective which does not provide for concentration and unity of control". They made two main recommendations: that "the older and more valuable documents" — referring to both manuscripts and departmental records — "be brought together in one place and committed to the custody of one person, under whose control and supervision they should be classified and arranged"; and "the erection of a suitable fire-proof building to be known as the Records Office".<sup>12</sup> These recommendations resulted some seven years later in the erection of the archives building on Sussex Street and in the combination of the positions of Archivist and "Keeper of the Public Records" in one person whereas previously these had been divided between the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Secretary of State. In 1912 a royal commission was appointed to survey again "the state of the records of the different Departments of the Dominion". Like its predecessor this commission condemned existing conditions in sharp language: "Some better plan than the present policy of drift must be devised if the public records are to be rescued from their present unsatisfactory condition. The undersigned, having given their best consideration to the subject, are of opinion that no reform can be permanent or effective which does not provide for concentration and unity of con-

<sup>8</sup> P.C. 712, 20 June, 1872.

<sup>9</sup> Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the State of Public Records 1897, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

trol.”<sup>13</sup> The commissioners’ first and main recommendation was the construction of a Public Records Office for the storage of departmental records not in current use. Immediately after the construction of this building all “records, books, papers, plans, etc.” over twenty-five years old were to be transferred to this Records Office. Provision was to be made in this building for the examination, segregation, storage and destruction of records. In the 1920’s Dr. Doughty, the Dominion Archivist, considered the creation of a records storage building in Nova Scotia. But nothing was done.

Many years later the Massey Commission practically repeated the recommendations of 1912, adding a few of its own. Like the earlier commission it favored the enlarging of the existing archives building and providing for systematic transfer of inactive records to the archives. The Massey Commission was suspicious of the creation of a distinct records building as a half-way house between the departments and the Manuscript Division of the Archives. Their distrust was probably shared by departments who had participated in an unfortunate experience with centralized records storage just before the Second World War.

In March 1939 the Department of Public Works opened a records storage building on the grounds of the Experimental Farm in Ottawa to receive departmental records. Departments were allocated space in the building and each department transferred its own records, retaining responsibility for arrangement, shelving and reference service. This arrangement lasted only a short time as the building was soon required for more urgent war purposes, but even in the short life of this idea it became obvious that serious difficulties would arise from the lack of central control.

During the war a great volume of records was created in Ottawa and immediately after the war both Treasury Board and the Public Records Committee were concerned with the problem of economical storage. Then, in 1948, Dr. Lamb came to Ottawa as the Dominion Archivist and in his first year in office he outlined plans for a records office to be designed on much more economical lines than the archives building — to be more warehouse than library or archives.<sup>14</sup> This was the idea of a half-way house rejected by the Massey Commission.

Since the Dominion Archivist and Treasury Board were agreed that economical storage was required, about 1953 a small storage building was erected in Tunney’s Pasture, in Ottawa West, near the river. The need for government offices was so acute at this time, however, that the storage building was commandeered to house

<sup>13</sup> Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the state of the Records of the Public Departments of the Dominion of Canada, 1914, p. 13.

<sup>14</sup> Public Archives Report for the year 1949, p. VIII.

government staff even before it was completed. It now houses the government's Central Pay Office.

A year later, in 1954, construction was begun on a much larger building also in the Tunney's Pasture area. This was completed late in 1955 and from January 1956 was known as the Public Archives Records Centre. It is a good sized building with 35 storage rooms plus offices, sorting rooms and workrooms. A storage area of over three and a half acres is provided and this space will hold shelving totalling over 66 miles in length.

The Centre started out with two main purposes: first, to offer safe, economical storage for the vast number of dormant files found in the central registries of all government departments. These files, no longer required for day-to-day use, fill expensive office space and obstruct the efficient working of a records unit.

Secondly, the Centre tackled the great accumulations of dead records stored away in offices, basements and attics in Ottawa and Hull. This material was often quite disorganized and had to be sorted before it could be listed or assessed for retention or destruction. We readily believed one departmental representative when he told us that his men had moved the records with shovels. In one storage shed we found records piled in dusty heaps and when we sorted them we found that they had originated from thirteen different departments and agencies. We found that the only way we could sort these records was by piling them in long rows on the floor from which we could then proceed with a winnowing process. Some 5,200 cubic feet were involved here and many weeks of hard work was required. On the other hand we found one accumulation from which some 4,600 cubic feet could be sold for scrap after a few hours of time spent preparing a submission to the department concerned and to the Public Records Committee. Some of the records accumulations which we found had been stored in expensive accommodation during the war and the government had merely continued to pay the rent. Thus in the first year we cleared out a bowling centre, a dance hall and a floor above a row of shops on Rideau Street. This last expensive space had been rented only to be left two thirds empty. The records housed there had apparently been forgotten, for we had a difficult time finding a key for the doors.

If the first justification for the existence of the Records Centre is economy, and certainly this is its principal value in the eyes of Treasury Board, then its early years amply justified its creation. In the four years we have cleared over 100,000 square feet of expensive floor space, we emptied 7,500 filing cabinets—expensive pieces of furniture—and we freed 16,800 transfer cases which have a replacement cost of over ten dollars. These savings were most striking in

our first year when we cleared almost an acre of floor space, but the savings are continuous for not only is our space cheaper by half than space in downtown Ottawa but we store records much more compactly than departments usually do. The cost of our shelving plus containers is between one fifth and one sixth the cost of filing cabinets. There are also savings in staff costs. These are very difficult to assess mathematically but they are nonetheless considerable, for one man can service far more records when they are centralized, organized and listed. There is of course a cost in the cleaning, organizing and transfer of records, but our costing shows that the first year's savings in storage costs just about pays for this work, especially on the larger accessions.

If economy is the first justification in the eyes of Treasury Board we, as archivists and historians, feel that there is another valuable service we render, in that we safeguard the retention of historical material. Individual departments lose sight of their old records. Thus when the Department of External Affairs installed a new communications system in the basement of the East Block they found three rooms full of old records. Among these were financial records of the provinces of Canada going back to 1835. Their existence had long been forgotten. In the past there was always the danger that in such cases an efficient administrator would save time and money by discarding these dirty old deposits out of hand; now he merely picks up the phone and calls the archives or the Records Centre. Moreover with the consistent removal of dormant and dead records from his premises the departmental records officer is able to assess what he has and attempt to schedule current records so that there will be less danger of valuable records being destroyed inadvertently. Furthermore the Centre gives some protection against fire. Departmental storage is sometimes very vulnerable. One of the larger departments houses its dormant records on Sparks Street squeezed between a dry cleaning establishment on one side and a restaurant on the other, both notoriously vulnerable to fire. At the Records Centre we have very strict fire precautions and our equipment is designed to give maximum security.

The Records Centre is not only a dormant records depository with full reference service but we hope to help and advise in the introduction of good dormant records procedures in departments. These procedures require a continuous transfer of records from the active areas in the central registries to dormant storage and from there to the archives or the trash can. Such a system is best set up by copying or adapting the American idea of records scheduling. This means that the retention periods of files are predetermined, each type of files is allotted a life span. This life span will vary with the activity and content of the files. A file may need to be kept for six

months or it may be scheduled for indefinite retention. This scheduling is a relatively new concept and some departments need help and advice to set this up, others must reduce the bulk of their records before they can begin implementing new systems. The Records Centre staff is anxious to help the departments and since we are in contact with thirty-four departments and agencies we have quite a large field of influence.

One of our services to the departments which we are just beginning is the storage of departmental essential records outside the Ottawa target area. This is an Emergency Measures function and a part of emergency planning assuring that the records most needed by the departments or their representatives will be available in the case of war or other emergency.

These are then the three functions of the Records Centre: to Treasury Board it is a means of effecting economy, to the historian it is a salvaging operation and to the government departments it is a service.

The procedures at the Records Centre are relatively simple. A government department with records to transfer may contact the Dominion Archivist or one of the archivists at the Centre by phone. The accessions archivist then visits the department and if necessary explains the services we give. If we have had no contacts with that particular department we usually invite the records officer and any other departmental officials who are interested to visit us and inspect our facilities. When the department decides to transfer the records to us the accessions archivist examines the records to secure a general description including the major subjects covered, the inclusive dates, the method of arrangement, file numbers, security classification and so on. He completes a Transfer Request Card and arranges a time for the transfer. On this pre-arranged date the Records Centre personnel take their equipment to the department and jointly with departmental staff clean, arrange, box, label and list the records. We have a large industrial type vacuum cleaner and a fumigation chamber for use when necessary. The full boxes, containing one cubic foot of records and weighing between fifteen and twenty-five pounds, are then transferred to the Centre. We have three motor trucks: two are the panel type and are used mainly for reference service and one is a large stake truck for this transfer Centre.

Subsequently the department receives from us two items:

- (a) the completed Records Transfer Request card which is signed by departmental personnel and returned to us. This constitutes the authority for the transfer; and

- (b) a Shelf List which provides a general description of the records transferred, their location in the Centre and the number or name of the first and last file in each box. This Shelf List is the primary finding aid for these records.

We include in our definition of records such items as ordinary files, ledgers, letter books, maps, plans, charts, microfilm and punch cards and we are equipped to handle all these.

Personnel files, which are primarily the records of each individual employee of the government of Canada, are treated differently from the normal type of general or subject files. They have been accumulating in Ottawa since 1867 and there was in 1957 a backlog of well over a million of these files. Two years ago the Records Centre started their accession and by the end of this year this operation should be completed. This task involves locating all the files of each former government employee, and each man is likely to have a file at the Civil Service Commission, one in the Superannuation Branch and one in every department in which he worked. We put all these files of each individual into one file folder, and this folder is indexed for information and for disposal purposes. This whole operation will probably clear some sixty thousand dollars worth of filing cabinets and convert a cost of between ten and twenty thousand dollars for floor space annually to less than twenty-five hundred dollars annually. It also helps to bring to light the files of historic figures in the government service. Thus one of our clerks discovered the file of Grey Owl disguised under his real name, Archie Bellaney. We also retain the files of higher appointees such as deputy ministers, commissioners and so on. These historic files will eventually be deposited in the Manuscript Division. This transfer of personnel files will be a continuing operation with departments sending us annually the files of employees who left the government service three years previously.

All records at the Centre continue to belong to the originating department. They are departmental records deposited with us when they have become dormant, that is, when their reference activity has become infrequent — a rough measure of dormancy is less than one reference per file drawer per month. Eventually the bulk of these records will become dead, that is their departmental reference will cease entirely. Then they should be transferred to the Archives. When a long period of retention is anticipated we advise the departments that it is more economical to microfilm the records and the archives offers the facilities to do this filming. As you know microfilm has many limitations and therefore not all departments agree to filming, and even more often they cannot make up their minds how long the records will need to be kept.

Records at the Centre are never destroyed without the approval of the department concerned. If the records are scheduled for destruction, we remind the department when destruction is due and ask for permission to destroy. For records which are not scheduled, and this is true of the bulk of them, different methods of approach may be used. We keep frequency-of-reference statistics and periodically we review our holdings and if records are used very infrequently we may ask departments to review the possibility of destroying them. If a department decides to destroy records we get their written authority and then prepare the necessary submission to the Public Records Committee. This Committee assesses the material for its value to others than the originating department and especially for its value to historians. As soon as authority is given for disposal our staff make arrangements for transfer to the contractor who takes the government's waste paper, or, in the case of confidential or security files for burning or pulping.

Since the opening of the Records Centre the reference service has been developing steadily. We give three types of reference service. The first and most popular service is the loan of files to the departments. The departments call for these files by telephone and we draw and deliver them. To this end we have two panel trucks doing three or four scheduled runs a day from Tunney's Pasture to the departments as required. Then if we receive urgent calls we may make special deliveries. In our normal service we undertake to deliver a file to the departments within three hours of receiving a call and we seldom fail to meet this undertaking. When the department staff has used the file their records people may have our truck pick it up and return it to the Centre or they may want to incorporate it in their current records. Two or three times a year we send out a slip informing departmental central registries which files they have drawn and asking them if they intend to retain these. When this slip is returned to us we keep it in case the files retained in the department are again requested from us. Supplying files on request is our main reference service but we also supply information from the records as required. This may mean merely checking the spelling of a name or the figures in a birth date or it may mean a major research. We attempt to limit our research to about two hours per query. When more time is involved we offer our third reference service, namely the provision of study materials and study room. We have several search rooms and these are frequently occupied.

As the volume of our holdings increases and as these holdings become more up-to-date so our reference services must expand. Our loans are now averaging more than 200 files per day and research occupies one man's time about four hours per day.

Ideally our staff should have training and experience both in departmental records service and in archives procedures. Hitherto our senior staff have been university graduates in history with archives training. They have had to get their records experience vicariously. Fortunately most of our senior clerks have central registry experience, though they have no archives training. This has meant that archivists and their clerks learn from each other. It is very important that our staff keep in close touch with departmental records staff. This is possible through their work contacts, through membership in the Records Management Association and by full participation in any records training or conferences that are held. This is most vital with our senior staff but even the clerks who come to us from school and are promoted within the Centre will have to be attached to departments for central registry training and experience.

Our interest in the departments is good salesmanship. We must sell our services by adapting ourselves, our equipment and our methods to departmental needs, as far as this is practical, and sometimes by helping departments to adapt themselves to us. The easiest and best way we can fulfil our functions is by gaining and keeping departmental approval and confidence.

What is the future of the Records Centre? Predictions of this nature are speculative even though they may be based in part on the experience of other countries in similar circumstances. First, it is probable that the federal government will soon find it expedient to establish more records centres, beginning in such large cities as Montreal and Toronto and eventually extending to the Maritimes, the Pacific Coast and the Prairies. This will take a few years or perhaps a few decades but with the continuing expansion of paperwork this economical storage and safeguard for valuable papers must be provided. The Americans and the Australians have already adopted this policy of providing records centres for large concentrations of government employees.

Secondly, it is likely that federal departments will attempt to build their own records centres. Strong deputy ministers will insist on having their own complete records services and they will probably justify them on the grounds that some American departments have their own centres, forgetting that these departments had their own centres *before* the archives provided such facilities, and that more and more these departmental centres are being transferred to the archives. If these departmental records centres are built they may eventually be centralized under the archives for the sake of economy and efficiency.

A third prediction is that for at least another decade the records centres will be playing a major role in Emergency Measures planning

giving adequate storage and service on essential records outside the so-called "target areas". Should the cold war continue for this decade or longer then records centres in Canada and the United States will be relocated completely outside the target areas. The idea of a nuclear war is so horrible and so fantastic that it is very difficult to foresee what role we would play in actual wartime.

It seems almost certain that provincial and municipal governments in Canada will eventually adopt some form of dormant records storage and that the first Canadian experiment of this kind, our Centre in Ottawa, will be examined. Indeed one large city has already made tentative inquiries in this matter. Cities and provinces will probably look very closely at some American equivalents, but if they decide to proceed with this idea they will probably consider it more patriotic to use a Canadian model for their public justification of a records centre.

Lastly, the existing Records Centre will continue to expand its services to the departments, particularly in giving advice and help on dormant records procedures, helping to train records staff and adapting its own procedures and equipment as required. Unless it does this it will not be fulfilling completely its three main functions.