

Section 2.—Directory of Sources of Official Information for All Departments (Dominion and Provincial)

In previous editions of the Canada Year Book, this Chapter on Sources of Official Information has been taken up, for the main part, by detailed lists of publications issued by the Dominion Government Departments and the Provincial Government Departments. Such lists as these were of value to readers since the Year Book was the only place where publications of this kind were brought together. The rapid increase in the number of printed reports, bulletins and maps that has characterized all publicity efforts in recent years has made it increasingly difficult to spare the space in the Year Book to carry such detailed listings.

Moreover, since the Year Book lists have been prepared and published on a Departmental basis, they have been less and less convenient to the reader as the lists have increased in length. For instance, several Departments issue reports that can be classified under the broad heading of Agriculture—among these are the Department of Agriculture, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and the National Research Council, not to mention the Northwest Territories and Yukon Administration which administers all the resources of those areas.

Without a subject cross-index, it is very difficult for the reader, unless he works carefully through the individual lists (which requires much time and labour), to know just where to go for information he desires under a certain subject heading. Again, the space that can be spared for individual lists does not admit of setting out the material in easily readable form. The size of type as set up in past editions was much too small for convenient reading and revisions could be made only once a year at best although, as a rule, such lists are subject to very frequent change.

The King's Printer, Ottawa, now publishes an Official List of all Government publications printed from type. This list, which may be obtained free of charge, is revised at regular intervals and is classified on a subject basis, as well as being adequately cross-referenced. Moreover, most Federal and Provincial Departments that put out near-print publications (either in mimeographed or rotaprinted form) issue lists of these free to the public and very often such lists include the printed publications published by the same Departments, and available through the King's Printer. Such individual lists are far more up to date and are listed and classified for more convenient reference than space in the Year Book will allow.

Apart from the question of publications, however, there is a growing volume of inquiries received from the public relative to all manner of subjects. This also makes it desirable to devise some means of guiding the public to the source of information on specific matters. Very few people are acquainted with internal government organization and it is not surprising that inquiries have very often to be routed and rerouted several times before they get to their intended destination.

For these reasons, it is now felt that this Chapter of the Year Book can best fill its function by serving as a Directory by means of which the reader is led to the basic sources of information in a particular field. With this in view, the following subject analysis of Federal and Provincial sources of information has been prepared.

To make best use of this Directory, it is necessary that the reader understand broadly the differences in function between Federal and Provincial Departments and their separate fields of work. For instance, the inquirer who seeks information on forestry may direct his correspondence to either the Dominion Forest Service