

7.5 Public archives and library services

7.5.1 The Public Archives

The Public Archives was established in 1872 and now operates under the direction of the Dominion Archivist by authority of the Public Archives Act. It serves a dual role. As a research institution, it is responsible for acquiring from any source all significant documents relating to the development of the country and of value to Canada, and for providing suitable research services and facilities to make this material available to the public. As an essential part of the government administration, it has broad responsibilities in regard to the promotion of efficiency and economy in the management of its records.

The Historical Branch comprises four Divisions. The Manuscript Division contains manuscript collections and public records. The manuscript collections include private papers of statesmen and other distinguished citizens, records of cultural and commercial societies, and copies of records relating to Canada and now held in France, England and other countries; public records consist of selected records of all departments and agencies of the Government of Canada. The Picture Division has charge of documentary paintings, water colours, engravings and photographs relating to people, historical events, places and objects; it also has an extensive collection of films and sound recordings. The Map Division has custody of thousands of maps and plans pertaining to the discovery, exploration and settlement of this country and its topography, as well as a large collection of current topographical maps of foreign countries. The Library contains more than 80,000 volumes on Canadian history, including numerous pamphlets, periodicals and government publications.

Although documents in the Archives may not be taken out on loan, they may be consulted in the building, and a 24-hour-a-day service is provided for accredited research workers. Reproductions of available material may be obtained for a nominal fee on request and many of the documents in the Manuscript Division are on microfilm which may be obtained on interlibrary loan.

The Records Management Branch assists departments and agencies in the setting up and operation of their records management programs. Its service also includes recommendations and advice on scheduling and disposal of records. At the Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver records centres, it provides storage, reference service and planned disposal of dormant records on an economical basis. Other regional centres are being established in major cities across Canada.

The Administration and Technical Services Branch, in addition to an extensive conservation and restoration program, provides a technical and advisory service on microfilming to government departments and agencies. Microfilm work is done for departments at cost. It also provides a full range of services to the National Library.

Branch offices of the Public Archives are located in London, England and Paris, France. The Archives also administers Laurier House as a historical museum.

7.5.2 Library services

7.5.2.1 The National Library

The National Library was formally established on January 1, 1953 by Act of Parliament. On the same date it absorbed the Canadian Bibliographic Centre, which had been engaged in preliminary work and planning since 1950. The Library is now governed by the National Library Act, 1969 which broadened the powers of the National Librarian to whom is assigned the responsibility of co-ordinating government library services. The Act established a National Library Advisory Board consisting of 15 members.

The book collection now consists of more than 400,000 volumes, supplemented by microcopies of more than 100,000 additional titles. Newspaper files formerly in several locations have been brought together and now form the largest collection of Canadian newspapers in Canada.

The Library compiles and publishes *Canadiana*, a monthly catalogue of publications relating to Canada. It includes bibliographic descriptions of trade publications, official publications of the Government of Canada and the ten provinces, and films, filmstrips and phonograph records produced in Canada, in addition to works by Canadians and material on Canada published abroad. More than 24,000 titles were included in 1972. Retrospective bibliographies are planned or in progress, with *Canadiana, 1867-1900*, now being reviewed for publication.