The Bibliographical Control and Acquisition of Provincial Government Publications in Western Canada: The Challenge Facing the Bibliographical Society of Canada

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Introduction

When I was invited to address the Bibliographical Society of Canada, I was asked to talk about the bibliographical control of government publications in Western Canada in general, and, more specifically, about the recent application of automation to the bibliographical control of Alberta government publications. I *shall* deal with that topic, but only as a starting point for discussing two other topics: first, whether Alberta's experience in developing an on-line bibliographical database is applicable elsewhere, and, second, how bibliographers and librarians might encourage governments and the private sector to cooperate in using a new application for micrographics to assure continuing access to all government publications.

My paper is *not* a discussion of what documents governments should release, and when; I leave that debate for others, and will concentrate instead on what we as librarians and bibliographers do with the documents that *are* released.

The Bibliographical Control of Western Canadian Government Publications

How easy is it to learn what the governments of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia publish? In general, retrospective finding aids are good, and the prospects for timely and comprehensive coverage of current output using traditional methods are more encouraging than they were even last year. There is at least one major retrospective bibliography of each government's publications, and every provincial government publishes, or, in the case of Alberta, is committed to *resume* publication of a regularly-produced catalogue or checklist. In fact so encouraging is the trend, on the surface at any rate, that if it continues, one can foresee the day when reasonably complete and current coverage of Western Canadian government publications will be taken for granted.

Here's a quick look at the specifics of the Western Canadian situation, especially relating to bibliographies of current output.

Manitoba

There are several guides to Manitoba provincial publications.

The province's Department of Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Affairs publishes a monthly checklist called *Manitoba Government Publications*; it took over in 1975 from the Manitoba Legislative Library's *Manitoba Government Publications Received in the Legislative Library of Manitoba*, which was published three times a year from 1970 to 1974. Retrospective aids include *Canadiana* and Marjorie Morley's *A Bibliography of Manitoba from Holdings in the Legislative Library of Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Legislative Library, 1970).

Manitoba publications were included in Micromedia's ProFile Service beginning in 1973.

Saskatchewan

Until a year ago, Saskatchewan was rich in retrospective finding aids, but relatively poor in guides to current output. The best known of the retrospective bibliographies is Christine MacDonald's *Publications of the Governments of the North-West Territories, 1876-1905, and of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1905-1952* (Regina: Legislative Library, 1952). There are two retrospective aids to Royal Commission documents. The first, produced by the provincial archives, is called *Guides to the Records of All Royal Commissions Appointed by the Province of Saskatchewan* (rev. 1968; Regina, 1969). The second, *Royal and Special Commissions, 1907-1946; Royal Commissions and Special Committee Reports, 1945-1972* (Regina, 1972), was prepared by the Saskatchewan Legislative Library. On the other hand, information about current publications could be got only from *Canadiana* and from the *ProFile Index* until 1977 when the Saskatchewan Legislative Library published the first *Checklist of Saskatchewan Government Publications* (for 1976 imprints); I am unaware of its intended publishing frequency.

Alberta

There are three major retrospective finding aids for Alberta government publications. The first is Joseph Forsyth's *Government Publications Relating to Alberta: A Bibliography of Publications of the Government of Alberta from 1905 to 1968, and of Publications of the Government of Canada Relating to the Province of Alberta, from 1867 to 1968* (Tylers Green, High Wycombe, Bucks., Eng.: University Microfilms, 1972. 8 vols. on microfilm.) The second is Christine MacDonald's aforementioned *Publications of the Governments of the North-West Territories, 1876-1905, and of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1905-1952*. The third is Christine E. Backhaus' *Royal Commissions and Commissions of Inquiry in Alberta, 1905-1976* (Edmonton: Legislature Library, 1978). Alberta government publications are included in *Canadiana*, and in Micromedia's *ProFile Index* (the latter from 1973). The government itself

began recording current output in 1974 when its Public Affairs Bureau produced the *Publications Catalogue* for 1973 imprints; that catalogue, which has been produced irregularly since then, will be examined more closely later. (An earlier work called *Catalogue of Alberta Government Publications*, produced by the Queen's Printer, appears not to have lasted beyond two issues dated March 1954 and June 1955.)

More recently, the compilers of the *Publications Catalogue* prepared a specialized *Periodicals Publishing Record* dealing with Alberta government periodicals and serials. The first edition, for 1976, appeared in 1977; its future is undecided.

British Columbia

British Columbia is impressively endowed with bibliographical research tools.

In 1971 Boston's G.K. Hall published the British Columbia Provincial Archives' *Dictionary Catalogue*. Other retrospective works are Barbara Lowther's *A Bibliography of British Columbia: Laying the Foundations, 1849-1899* (Victoria: University of Victoria, 1968), and two works by Marjorie Holmes: *Publications of the Government of British Columbia, 1871-1947* (Victoria: King's Printer, 1950), and *Royal Commissions and Commissions of Enquiry under the 'Public Enquiries Act' in British Columbia, 1872-1942: A Checklist* (Victoria: Queen's Printer, 1954).

Current publications are recorded in *Canadiana*, the *ProFile Index*, and in the British Columbia Provincial Library's *British Columbia Government Publications: Monthly Checklist* (Victoria, 1970-).

The foregoing suggests that Western Canada is well served by traditional bibliographical research tools. Each province has at least one retrospective bibliography; each publishes a catalogue of its current output, and each is served by a private sector microform publishing and indexing service. But is the situation really as good as it seems to be? Leaving retrospective bibliography aside for now, let's analyse the governments' catalogues of current output.

To begin with, what should a catalogue of current government publications do? The literature of government publications librarianship suggests that, to be of practical assistance to a user, a catalogue of government publications must include *all* government publications, it must appear often enough to permit the identification of publications while the information they contain remains useful, and it must be easy to use. In short, it must be comprehensive, current, and usable.

How comprehensive are Western Canadian government publications catalogues? Alberta's is likely the most comprehensive, because it is compiled from data received by the government agency responsible for purchas-

ing all Alberta government printing. Because the other provinces' catalogues are compiled from publications received in each province's Legislature Library, the chances are good that their catalogues are not comprehensive.

How timely are these catalogues? Again, the answer is mixed. The British Columbia and Manitoba lists are produced monthly. The Alberta catalogue, although seemingly intended to be produced quarterly, is in fact irregular; the last edition appeared in mid-1977; however, even quarterly production would not likely meet the highest standards of timeliness. I am unaware of plans for continuing production of Saskatchewan's catalogue; to date, two annual editions – for 1976 and 1977 – have appeared, along with an addendum for 1976.

Are these catalogues easy to use? The format of the Alberta catalogue has been criticized, but it *does* provide multiple access to the publications listed. Access is available through corporate author, personal author, title, series, and key-word. It can also accommodate any desired cumulation pattern. The contents of the Alberta government's *Periodicals Publishing Record* are accessible by corporate author, title, and subject.

The catalogues of British Columbia and Manitoba do not cumulate, and access is available only through corporate author. Access to the Saskatchewan catalogue is also restricted to corporate author.

The analysis reveals that, while initial impressions are very encouraging, the Western provinces' official catalogues are, at best, of mixed quality. In fact, when looked at objectively, not one of these traditional bibliographies meets more than one of the three criteria of excellence.

Is there an alternative available? I think there is, and a look at Alberta's experience might suggest what it is.

The Development of the GAP – Government of Alberta Publications – Database

Six years ago, the bibliographical control of Alberta government publications, whether retrospective or current, was nonexistent. Yet one year ago this June, Alberta, in addition to having a first-rate retrospective bibliography and a catalogue of current publications, enjoyed the dual distinction of being the first jurisdiction in Canada to have an on-line catalogue of its publications, and the latest province to have a virtually complete record of its publications since joining Confederation.

The background to those events is worth recounting in some detail.

The appearance in 1972 of Mr. Forsyth's *Government Publications Relating to Alberta* was a turning point in that it was the first significant bibliography devoted to Alberta government documents. The Alberta government, unfortunately, did not take the hint and use its appearance as a cue to begin producing a provincial publications catalogue.

Instead, the passage of two years and the repeated lobbying of the Alberta

Library Association (as it was then known) were required before the Alberta government took action. Nor was the battle won even when, in the spring of 1974, the government's Public Affairs Bureau simultaneously published the first two issues of the aforementioned *Publications Catalogue* (one for 1973, the other for the first quarter of 1974), because they were distributed with a questionnaire designed to discover whether there was sufficient interest among the catalogue's recipients in having the Bureau continue the venture.

Everyone concerned breathed more easily when, in the autumn of 1974, the Bureau decided to continue publishing the catalogue. The format then adopted was the computer-produced key-word-in-context (KWIC) index referred to earlier; the first issue in that format appeared in the spring of 1975.

Even though there was a commitment to publish the catalogue, not all was well with it. The catalogue's founders apparently intended its frequency to be quarterly, with annual cumulations; in fact, publication has been irregular, and there are only two annual volumes: for 1973, and for 1976. Furthermore, there are now two gaps in the catalogue's coverage: first, the recording of 1975 imprints was left for a later date in an effort to produce a catalogue that was as current as possible; second, production of the catalogue has languished from the latest issue (January-June 1977, published in mid-1977) to the present, while a replacement for a departed staff member was recruited. The fact that a librarian filled the position on May 1 lends credence to the Alberta government's assurances that the catalogue will continue to be published. More of that later.

A third gap in the provincial bibliography, and the steps taken to eliminate it, unexpectedly became the origins of the country's first on-line bibliographical database of government publications.

When librarians in Alberta began to receive the *Publications Catalogue*, they turned their attention to attaining their secondary bibliographical goal, that of eliminating the five-year gap between the coverage of the Forsyth bibliography and that of the *Publications Catalogue*. The Alberta Legislature Library got the ball rolling by using a provincial government job creation grant in the winter of 1976 to photocopy relevant cards from an Alberta government libraries' union catalogue maintained by the Legislature Library. The photocopies were given to the Public Affairs Division's¹ Bibliography Section (the office that compiles the *Publications Catalogue*), which used a similar government grant to expand the research to other Edmonton libraries thought likely to hold those publications. When the research was completed, the Alberta Research Council's Information Systems Division volunteered the equipment, programmer time, and computer resources to permit the Bibliography Section to convert the research results into machine-readable form.

Thanks to the Alberta Research Council's involvement, a project that had

begun as an exercise in traditional bibliography became the country's first on-line bibliographical database of government publications. The GAP database (GAP means Government of Alberta Publications) was born, and in need of upbringing.

At the same time as the data conversion was being finished, the project's scope broadened enormously when the Information Systems Division enlisted the financial support of the Alberta Research Council's Library and its Alberta Oil Sands Information Centre to take the first step in transforming the database from an experimental project of limited extent, to an on-line catalogue of all Alberta government publications. The Bibliography Section contributed the wages of a researcher who, with Mr. Forsyth's authorization, input into machine-readable form that part of his bibliography that recorded Alberta government publications. The researcher followed that work with visits to all the publicly-accessible libraries in Edmonton and Calgary identified as holding those publications in order to update the known locations data and to add publications that might have been missed. That work was finished in August 1977.

Project staff reported the results of their work in September 1977 at the annual meeting of the Western Canada Chapter of the American Society for Information Science.² They had a great deal to be proud of. After only some nineteen months of full-time and part-time research, editing, and inputting, they had created a database comprising 7,000 bibliographical records of Alberta government publications dated 1905 to 1972, with up-to-date locations data for publicly-accessible libraries in Calgary and Edmonton. Moreover, the database was available for on-line inquiry through either the University of Alberta or the Alberta Information Retrieval Association.

Subsequent developments have been equally exciting. After the Banff conference, the Alberta Information Retrieval Association (which operates under the aegis of the Alberta Research Council) convened two meetings of what was called the GAP Task Force to outline the future of the database. Representatives included staff from the public libraries of Calgary and Edmonton, the Alberta Legislature Library, the Universities of Alberta and Calgary, the U of A's Law Library and Faculty of Library Science, and the Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board.

The meetings had several important results. Subject access to the records in the database is to be improved and CODOC-style identification numbers will be added to each record. (CODOC means Cooperative Documents System; one of its features is a shelving aid arrived at through applying an alphanumeric identifier to each bibliographical record.)

Furthermore, plans were made to bring the GAP file up to date, and to maintain it. When last worked on, the database contained records for publications dated 1905 to 1972. Work has already begun to research and input

bibliographical data and holdings information for documents dated 1973 to 1977 inclusive. At the same time, the Bibliography Section will begin the ongoing addition of bibliographical data relating to current publications, beginning with 1978 imprints. Bibliography Section staff have already begun investigating the production of forthcoming editions of the *Publications Catalogue* as a product of the database.

As soon as the retrospective input is completed and the current input underway, the GAP database will cease to be a project and will become an everyday fact of life for researchers throughout the country, partly as the result of a commitment from the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information to include the database in its CAN-OLE (Canadian On-Line Enquiry) service.

GAP and the Bibliographical Society of Canada

Does the arrival of that moment have any real bibliographical significance? To information scientists, that question would verge on the blasphemous; to bibliographers, it's perfectly normal to question the validity of a development that might not be anything more than a technical accomplishment. After all, bibliography is bibliography, whether the tools employed are a quill pen and an index card, or a terminal and a disk pack.

My response is that there *is* bibliographical significance to the birth of the GAP database. My purpose in relating the story of that birth is less to narrate events than to suggest ways that the Bibliographical Society of Canada might become a participant in the story. A powerful bibliographical research tool has been born; I believe the Society should play a role in its upbringing, and in its siblings' upbringing. Nor do I think my belief is farfetched. After all, the Bibliographical Society of Canada, the work of information scientists notwithstanding, remains Canada's chief repository of expertise in all matters bibliographical. Yours is the most logical organization to turn to with a plea for objective and unhurried guidance – for guidance relating to the future of the GAP database itself, and for guidance on the potential for projecting the Alberta experience onto the development of similar databases in other jurisdictions.

The suggestions I'm going to make about how the Society might become involved in the development of these new bibliographical tools are urgent; on-line databases are not only here to stay, they are growing in number. GAP, even though only recently born, already has siblings. The City of Calgary and the Alberta Department of the Environment are using the GAP database's file definitions and its records' data elements to save programming time in the development of their own on-line databases. The Bibliographical Society of Canada would do well, therefore, to play a role – and soon, too – in assuring that the *bibliographical* databases are built on sound principles.

What should that role be? Let me make the first of my promised two departures from the topic given me by suggesting a course of action that the Bibliographical Society of Canada might follow in investigating the use of on-line databases to eliminate the most pressing problems of the bibliographical control of government publications.

A good place to start is with the GAP database itself. Fortunately, not a lot remains to be done with GAP. Work is already underway to bring it up to date, to improve the subject access to its contents, to print ongoing catalogues from it, to expand the locations data, and to make it available on-line to researchers across Canada.

The Society might encourage enhancements of those plans. For instance, the GAP database possesses the flexibility to produce specialized printed or microform products such as lists of publications bearing a particular imprint, or a particular corporate or personal author, or key-word; especially exciting is GAP's potential to give any library a book catalogue of its holdings of Alberta government publications. The Society might make recommendations on exploiting that flexibility.

But those enhancements are only details. The principal role that an interested, outside organization such as yours might play in the future of on-line government publications bibliography relates to the establishment of standards and the encouragement of their use.

In that regard, the Bibliographical Society of Canada might comment on the wisdom of establishing other databases whose records are formatted as GAP's are. The key word in automation today is standardization. Perhaps the format of the Alberta records might become the standard format – or the beginnings of the standard format – for on-line bibliographical government publications records. Then again, perhaps adopting established MARC communications formats might be the best approach to take. The Society could do no more important work than to study format standardization and make a firm recommendation about the best course of action to take.

Once again, this is not an academic suggestion – the need is urgent. Bibliographical databases are growing in number. Two databases modelled after GAP have already been mentioned; three other on-line databases are the Bibliography of the Queen Charlotte Islands, Boreal Northern Titles, and the Yukon Bibliography.³ The field is growing rapidly; there is an urgent need for a prestigious organization to make recommendations about standardization to assure compatibility.

After recommending standards for on-line databases, the Bibliographical Society of Canada might direct its powerful lobbying skills to encouraging other provincial governments – perhaps those in Western Canada first – to follow the Alberta example and to begin inputting both current and retrospective data as the first step in the creation of compatible on-line government

publications databases. The long-term results would be revolutionary, and would go far toward achieving immediate, comprehensive, and up-to-date access to government publications information. If it chooses to become involved, the Bibliographical Society of Canada will have contributed to the development of a database – or several compatible databases – of government publications having the potential to accommodate multiple data entry, sophisticated on-line inquiry, and a wide variety of printed and microform products.

Moreover, the development of on-line government publications cataloguing will give government publications librarians the tools to begin treating government documents the way other librarians treat private-sector publications. Until now, the absence of a method for handling the large volume of government publications has forced the adoption of bibliographical shortcuts. On-line cataloguing could be the tool that permits us to fully catalogue and classify government publications, and to include that data among the data made available through standard catalogue support systems (such as that provided by University of Toronto Library Automation Systems) for shared cataloguing and for the production of catalogue products.

Improving Access to Government Publications

By encouraging the development of standardized, on-line bibliographical databases of government publications, the Bibliographical Society of Canada could become instrumental in achieving the *first* goal of all who work with government information, that goal being the provision of *current* information about *all* government publications. I deliberately chose to qualify that statement by talking about the 'first' goal, because I know that everyone here will agree with me when I say that having ready access to information about publications is not an end in itself, but only a means to the end of acquiring the publications. That's why I'm going to make the second digression from the topic given to me and suggest yet another course of action the Bibliographical Society of Canada might take to facilitate access to government publications.

Why does the subject of access need to be raised at all? Simply because improved bibliographical control makes it only marginally easier to acquire government publications (especially in Western Canada) in their original formats. There needs to be a link made between bibliographical control of government publications and access to those publications.

The link usually suggested in the government publications literature is the establishment of well-organized, central outlets where – the ideal has it – one is guaranteed being able to acquire all publications of lasting importance in their original format long into the future.

Well, I'm going to change my name to David, and I'm going to take on the

Goliath of the conventional wisdom that such government bookstores are the *only* answer to solving the problem of acquiring government publications. Instead, I'm going to suggest the abandonment of that dream in favour of what I believe to be a far more attainable version of it, one that will assure continuing access to all government publications (both current and retrospective) at minimal cost and without the need to disrupt government bureaucracies. And I'm going to ask for your support in lobbying for it.

But first, what's wrong with the conventional wisdom as it applies to the traditional concept of central government publications outlets? I think there are two problems.

First, traditional central outlets for government publications are too expensive for governments to contemplate today – too expensive in terms of the inevitable administrative problems that will result from centralizing services that are currently decentralized, and too expensive in terms of their implications for enlarged printing and storage budgets.

Second, even if money were available to establish central outlets in the traditional sense, I would suggest that governments would be ill-advised to spend it on traditional bookstores when a recent technological development has the potential to disseminate government information much more efficiently and economically than is possible in a traditional bookstore environment.

Let's deal with these problems one by one.

First, expense. Attaining the dream of a central bookstore where every non-ephemeral public document is available in large quantities in its original format is simply far too expensive. For instance, many important public documents are produced for only a small audience – and legitimately so – by specialized government agencies whose budgets simply do not permit printing runs on a scale large enough to meet extensive and continuing demand. The supporter of traditional outlets would argue that the answer is to increase government printing budgets to meet the demand. Well, as a taxpayer, I oppose any such move. Government spending at all levels in Canada is already a dangerously large part of our Gross National Product, and its growth doesn't need encouragement. As a librarian interested in improved access to government publications I am opposed to governments spending large sums of money on staff reorganization, warehouses, and higher printing budgets to establish central bookstores when there are more efficient and economical means of information dissemination available.

What is the alternative? It's a new use for microforms.

A short while ago, a major manufacturer of photocopying equipment announced the availability of a new, high-speed photocopier that can make reproductions onto plain bond paper of either all or part of a microfiche as required. The implications of this development for government publications

distribution are very exciting. If its introduction were carefully planned as part of an overall approach to government publications bibliography and distribution, this photocopying device could produce a revolution in securing access to government information – a revolution that would permit us to bury forever the current debate about government publications and allow us to turn our energies to other bibliographical problems.⁴

Let me outline the role I believe this photocopier might play in government publications acquisition, and then ask your support in bringing it about.

A provincial government would install one of these photocopiers in a central agency, ideally, the one that prepares the province's publications catalogue. Staff at the central agency would microfilm – or arrange for the microfilming – onto microfiche of each non-ephemeral publication, and assign a unique identifier – possibly an accession number – to that microfiche. The identifier would then form part of that publication's record in the provincial catalogue, whether it is a traditional catalogue or an on-line catalogue.

Initially, librarians and the public would acquire a publication as they do now – in its original format from the publishing agency, or as a microform reproduction from a commercial vendor such as Micromedia Ltd. When the publishing agency runs out of copies of the document in its original format, the public will have the choice of purchasing either the commercially available microform reproduction, or ordering a paper reproduction from the central agency that houses the photocopying device. In that way, all important government publications will always be available, and in a choice of formats.

There are many advantages to the approach I've outlined. Government printing budgets would not have to grow. There would be no need for expensive central warehouses to store government publications, and no need to try to estimate demand for these documents before they go to press. Individual government organizations would be free to maintain their existing distribution services and to serve their current audiences for publications. Provincial government officials would not be faced with the administrative nightmare of trying to centralize currently decentralized distribution services. Librarians tired of dealing directly with a large number of decentralized distribution services but still wanting to acquire publications on paper would have the option of acquiring all their government publications directly from the photocopying centre. The private sector would continue to be able to sell microform reproductions of government publications; it might also undertake the retrospective microfilming of government publications and sell the microfiche directly to librarians, or to governments for use in the microfiche photocopier. Above all, the approach I've outlined would mean that government publications need never go out of print.

The plan is not without its flaws, and I would be remiss not to mention them. The most efficient use of the microfiche photocopier's potential would

be realized only through a major retrospective microfilming project that makes all of a government's publications available for inclusion in the service – a formidable undertaking indeed.

Furthermore, photocopying from microfiche would work best only when the publications involved are primarily text; illustrations would likely not photocopy well. Complicated foldout pages would require careful filming if nothing is to be lost.

The problem of priced publications could be difficult to solve. Arrangements would doubtless have to be made to reimburse government publishing agencies for lost revenue when photocopies are made of priced publications while they remain available in their original format.

Then there's the sensitive matter of competition with the private sector. Micromedia Ltd., of Toronto, already offers to sell paper photocopies from the microfiche reproductions of provincial government publications available through its ProFile Service. I believe that a sensible government interested in the photocopying system I propose would be wise to cooperate with the private sector in making this material available, and restrict its activities to the masses of important material – including statutes, regulations, gazettes, debates, technical publications, and even individual issues of periodical publications – not now available through the private sector.

On balance, though, I believe the photocopying service I outline has merit. Why am I presenting it to this meeting of the Bibliographical Society of Canada? A few moments ago I said that the careful introduction of this photocopying device as part of an overall approach to government publications bibliography and distribution could produce a revolution in securing access to government information. By outlining my plan here, I'm suggesting that the Bibliographical Society of Canada is the organization best able to evaluate the plan in the overall context mentioned earlier.

In general, the proposal I've outlined needs an objective analysis by professionals who have the prestige to execute their recommendations. More specifically, there needs to be an analysis of the photocopier's potential to provide the service I envisage, an analysis of its likely cost effectiveness, its impact on current retrospective microfilming projects such as the Canadian Library Association's, and the potential for encouraging the Western Canadian provinces to establish a regional documents photocopying service in cooperation with the private sector.

Conclusion

The potential results of your involvement are enormous. The two tools discussed here today – the on-line bibliographical database and the microform photocopier – could be both the spur we need to take another look at all

aspects of the bibliographical control of government publications, and the means to do something about the problems we identify.

They might, in fact, be the beginning of the system Paul Pross spoke about in 1974 when he addressed the National Conference on the State of Canadian Bibliography. At that conference he urged the creation of a public affairs information retrieval system that is '(a) as inclusive as possible; (b) as current as possible; (c) accessible from a wide variety of vantage points; and (d) open to members of the general public as well as to academics and government.'⁵ Mr. Pross suggested that the system be built incrementally, category by category.

Perhaps my paper can best be summarized as a challenge to the Bibliographical Society of Canada to examine all facets of the bibliographical control of government publications in light of the two new tools discussed here, and to work toward realizing their potential usefulness as part of the system Mr. Pross suggested.

More specifically, I'm asking the Society to:

- examine Alberta's database and to make recommendations about its future;
- to recommend standards for similar databases;
- to encourage other jurisdictions to develop compatible on-line bibliographical databases;
- to recommend procedures to assure nationwide access to these databases;
- to study the potential of microfiche photocopiers to supplement existing methods of distributing government publications;
- to make recommendations to provincial governments regarding the installation of these devices;
- and to make recommendations concerning the current and retrospective microfilming needed to maximize use of this equipment.

I realize that the foregoing asks a great deal of the Society, but I ask it only because the potential reward for your involvement is very high indeed. The bibliographical control of government publications and continuing access to them are well worth at least a discussion of the course of action I have outlined.

I'm confident that the technological advances discussed here bring us nearer to the day when the bibliographical control and acquisition of government publications will cease to be an issue in Canadian bibliography. I hope the Bibliographical Society of Canada will accept the challenge to hasten that day's arrival.

Notes

1. The Public Affairs Bureau was by then known as the Public Affairs Division.
2. More details about the immediate background to the development of the GAP database and its companion Periodicals Publishing Record database will be found in the author's paper presented at that meeting. See 'On-line Bibliographical Data Bases of Alberta Government Publications,' in American Society for Information Science, Western Canada Chapter, *Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Meeting* (Banff, 1977), pp. 101-109.
3. Doreen Alley, Hugh Lawford, and Peter Wolters, 'Canadian Online Use: Trends, Implications, Policies,' in Canadian Association for Information Science, *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Meeting* (Montréal, 1978), p. 91.
4. The microfiche photocopier has interesting implications for publishing in that it can permit a publisher – in either the private or the public sector – to publish material directly onto COM (computer-output-microform), and prepare paper copies only as demand for the paper version warrants.
5. A. Paul Pross, 'Subject Bibliography – Political Science and Public Affairs,' in *National Conference on the State of Canadian Bibliography, Vancouver, Canada, May 22-24, 1974: Proceedings* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1977), p. 355.

Bibliography

In keeping with the theme of this meeting (to cover developments since 1974), the following bibliography, with only an occasional exception, is merely a list of material cited in the paper. To have done otherwise would have involved repeating the contents of the works cited under the heading 'Sources'. Anyone familiar with these bibliographies will realize my indebtedness to the scholars who prepared them; I hope they will not look unkindly on my borrowings from their work.

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2. Provincial Document Bibliographies

Whenever possible, the works cited below are arranged in order of the era covered. An exception to arranging entries by date coverage begins is made only when doing so would interpose a work between two bibliographies whose coverage is actually continuous.

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