

"These several branches of the public service, though ostensibly devoted to the promotion of a common object, for years carried on a sort of triangular contest, each claiming to be the only true repository of the country's records. To such lengths was this unseemly strife conducted that copies of documents in the libraries of European capitals have been made for the Canadian Archives at the public expense, when the originals of these very documents, in an excellent state of preservation, were all the time in one or other of the public departments in Ottawa. On February 7, 1897, a portion of the Western Block was seriously damaged by fire, which destroyed many departmental records, the chief sufferers being the Departments of Marine and Fisheries, and Militia. Shortly afterwards, the government appointed a commission, consisting of the Deputy Minister of Finance, the Auditor-General, and the Under-Secretary of State (Joseph Pope), to inquire into and report upon the state of public records. This commission, in the exercise of its duty, made an inspection of all the departments, and reported in due course. After sending out the results of their investigations they recommended that the older and most valuable papers, including the archives in the Department of Agriculture, should be brought together and committed to the custody of one person in a suitable fireproof building, where also antiquated departmental records might be stored. Effect was given to this recommendation in 1903. In 1904 Arthur G. Doughty was appointed archivist and keeper of the records, and