

Since the full archival program only started in 1977, the daily workload did not allow for addressing the backlog that existed since the beginning. In the fall of 1982, a proposal for the formation of an Archives Task Force was put forward and submitted to Treasury Board. Eighteen positions were created, and on April 5, 1983, the task of disposing of records dating back to the late 1800s was begun.

This review has permitted the RCMP to retrieve and make accessible a major portion of the early history of the Force. In a letter received from Public Archives Canada, the following was pointed out: "This accession contains several very interesting file blocks. The files on the history of the RCMP and the various western detachments promise to be a valuable source to both historians and researchers interested in local history. The training files should provide future researchers with a good grasp of the specialized training needed for police work." As a servant of the public, the police officer requires this special training today. Valuable services, precedent-setting cases, and policies were documented in those records and this information is now retrievable through the archival program and the formation of a Task Force.

An Adequate Training Program

In order to achieve results from the archival program, the development of standard procedures and criteria, coupled with adequate training is a necessity. With the decentralization of records offices throughout the Force, it is essential that personnel dealing with disposition of records be able to recognize the basic administrative, legal, fiscal and information data values present in records. In order to preserve complete sets of records, it is often necessary to know the background of an event or situa-

tion, or have a good knowledge of the Force's history and classification systems. Continuous training in records management practices must become standard procedure. Records on the organization, administrative and operational policies, work performed for other agencies or departments, transactions establishing a legal status or deemed to have a general or continuing interest, unusual or important cases or events, and records representing social, economic or other conditions must be preserved.

It is a known fact that history happens in the present. In order not to be faced with the same situation which we were faced with not so long ago, we must train our employees to recognize archival material as it is being created. This process is called pre-identification of records. Anyone concerned with the preservation of archival matter can mark a file for potential historical retention when a valuable or historical fact is found on the file. This will allow the archival analysts to index the information in the historical index as soon as the file becomes inactive, transfer records to Public Archives Canada at the end of the retention period. This will also allow the department to make special provisions to preserve archival material, and the historical index will provide for a wider variety of information.

An Archival Program Promotes the RCMP's Work

A continual archival program can ensure the preservation of archival material, ensure the transfer of historical records to Public Archives, and promote the many services offered by the Force. As a government agency, the main functions of the Force are law enforcement and crime prevention. Every day,

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