

be separated into three categories: names, subjects and geographical locations. When a record is analysed for disposition and subsequently declared historical, it is then carded in every possible way that this type of information could be requested. This information would be indexed and cross-indexed. This also allows grouping all other records dealing with the same subject. For example, records dealing with advertisement would be indexed together, so that if a researcher is looking for information on advertisement in the RCMP, records on recruitment as well as records on public relations and many other subjects dealing with advertisement would surface. The same principle applies to names and locations. Many times, requests come in for records dealing with a certain region of the country. With the historical index, we are able to group information by names, subjects and locations, and present a good selection of records with one common denominator.

In order to make the historical index as functional as possible, it was necessary to include certain information on the index cards. The name or subject, address or place of offence where applicable, any available identifying data such as date and place of birth, racial origin, fingerprint number would be typed on the cards. A brief summary of the file content would also be on the cards. This summary would allow the person requesting records to know at a glance if this is the type of record being sought. Since the historical index groups numerous records with one common denominator, the summaries allow for the selection of a wide variety of different types of records, with the option of requesting only those of interest without physically drawing all the files.

In establishing an archival program, the physical aspect of the re-

cords was also considered. In analysing records, the general archival principles of "provenance" and "respect de fond" must be maintained. Records are arranged according to the source from which they come and in the order in which they were arranged at that source. Care must be taken to preserve original covers, pictures, maps and irreplaceable documents. By looking back in the history of records, the evolution of time becomes very evident. The type of paper used, the pages written in longhand by hired writers, the changing characters of the typewriters, the color and different finishes on pictures, the quality of the photocopier and the introduction of computers are all documented. These historical facts must be captured in our archival program. It is also interesting to see the evolution of RCMP transportation from the use of animals to motorized vehicles and eventually the airplane.

In the final stages, the archival program would not be complete if it did not ensure that these records are preserved under controlled conditions and made accessible to the public. As a result, retention periods are constantly updated and submitted to the Dominion Archivist for approval. Records are scheduled for disposition on a regular basis. Every day, records are channelled through the archival analysts and analysed for final disposition. Records are then destroyed or declared historical. As part of our program, and in compliance with records management policy, historical records are transferred to the Public Archives of Canada.

### **The Formation of a Task Force**

It is estimated that the Force is creating in excess of three million records a year. Keeping this figure in mind, it is evident that the disposition program is quite extensive.