

2. REPORT OF THE SEMINAR ON LIBRARIES AND RESOURCES FOR CANADIAN STUDIES IN BRITAIN, HELD AT CANADA HOUSE, 22 OCTOBER 1980

(a) Chairman's Opening Remarks

After welcoming those present and outlining the response to invitations, the Chairman said:

"We must all be struck by the wide range of topics which can be considered under the heading *Canadian Studies*. There is the geographical diversity of the second largest country in the world; its richly textured history; problems of Federal Government, very much in our minds of late; a significant role in Commonwealth and world affairs; the wealth of its literature, not only in English and French but in Ukrainian, Icelandic, Algonkian, Inuit, Japanese and other languages; artists who have in the past portrayed the Canadian scene with outstanding insight and the more adventurous work of contemporary painters; great mineral resources; and problems of conservation. So many disciplines are involved that we cannot give a narrow definition to our subject.

The Canadian Government has shown its interest in the promotion of Canadian Studies and this will be the subject of Michael Hellyer's address to you, but I would like to mention the most significant developments, among them the establishment of the Centre of Canadian Studies at Edinburgh in 1975, the designation of the University of Leeds as a Regional Canadian Study Centre last year and the proposal that the University of Birmingham should have the same status in 1981. In 1975 the British Association for Canadian Studies was set up and included amongst its objects 'identifying, classifying and publicising the resources in the United Kingdom that are relevant to the study of Canada. It will seek to promote active co-operation with other organisations interested in Canadian studies'. It is from this specific commitment that today's meeting originates.

The diversity of disciplines involved in Canadian Studies means a diversity of Libraries holding resources. Some are directly concerned with Canada in general; some have valuable items by historical accident; others have relevant material derived from the point at which their special subject interests involve Canadian aspects. No library except perhaps in very restricted fields, can be self-sufficient at the best of times, still less now with chill economic winds hampering us in staff, space and stock acquisitions, and the increasing range of published material straining the resources of even the most fortunate. The Canadian Department of External Affairs has given attention to Library resources for some years. It has arranged for the deposit of official documents in a number of British libraries and made grants to selected institutions for acquisitions. In 1978 it commissioned Valerie Bloomfield to undertake a survey of resources for Canadian studies in Britain.

The activities of the British Association for Canadian Studies include an Annual Conference and at the fourth of these, held at Lincoln College, Oxford, in April 1979, six speakers from Canada and the United Kingdom spoke about the resources for Canadian Studies in their institutions. These addresses, which were published in the *Bulletin of Canadian Studies*² provoked considerable interest amongst those attending the Conference and it was suggested that the Association might, in accordance with its objects, take a more active role in promoting knowledge of resources and liaison between bodies possessing them. It was, however, clearly sensible to await the publication of Valerie Bloomfield's survey¹.

This has now been available for some months, has been widely distributed by Canada House and has been acclaimed as an outstanding example of the collection and presentation of information. BACS felt that the time was opportune to take a step forward and asked me, as a member of its Council, to act on this. Following informal discussions with other interested Librarians, this seminar has been organised, and I must thank Michael Hellyer and the High Commission staff for undertaking the organisation of the proceedings and for arranging both a handsome setting and, later, hospitality.

At its last meeting the BACS Council agreed to set aside time at its 6th Conference for a library session, and looks forward to making a formal proposal to the next AGM constituting the Library Group as a sub-Committee of the Council. It was also agreed that the Association's two publications, the *Bulletin of Canadian Studies* and the *News Letter*, should expand their existing coverage of library and bibliographical matters.

This is the background to to-day's meeting. In the first session you will be given a survey of resources for Canadian studies, with some indication of areas where further work is required, and in the second session you will have the opportunity of making your own contribution, with comments and questions to the speakers, consideration of whether some group of Librarians concerned with Canadian studies is needed, and if so how it should be organised."

Donald Simpson