

REPORT ON CANADIAN ARCHIVES

DOUGLAS BRYMNER, LL.D., F.R.S.C., ARCHIVIST.

The Honourable

SYDNEY A. FISHER,

Minister of Agriculture,
&c., &c., &c.

Sir,—I have the honour to present the report on Archives for 1898.

Owing to the fire in the Western Block, to which reference was made in the report for 1897, the books and papers were, as then stated, transferred to the departmental building on Wellington street, and since their removal have been arranged on the shelves prepared for them. Many of the cards forming the catalogue were so injured and rendered illegible by the water used for extinguishing the fire that it was necessary to rewrite those injured, and advantage was taken of this necessity to introduce such improvements in the work of cataloguing as experience had shown to be desirable and advantageous, so as to secure more ready access to the documents. This was in part effected by multiplying cross references, wherever they would afford greater facilities for conducting the work.

Whilst there was no loss of documents by the fire, there was a considerable amount of damage, which could fortunately be remedied, one part of the loss being the damage to the catalogue cards, already mentioned, and another, the destruction of binding, which required considerable time and labour to make good. The extent of the damage thus arising could not be properly ascertained until a rearrangement had been effected.

Every exertion is made to forward the work of copying in London and Paris. The States paper to 1837 have been received from the Public Record Office in the former, these being largely composed of dispatches from the governors to the Colonial Office. Those from the Secretary of State for the Colonies for the time being having been placed in the Colonial Office library in volumes, orders have been sent to have these also copied, and the work, now proceeding, will be finished at a comparatively early date. Other miscellaneous documents, such as military correspondence, commissions and instructions to the governors, minutes of the Board of Trade, boundary correspondence, &c., have been received. A first instalment of the documents relating to Nova Scotia has arrived, the dates of the papers being from 1603 to 1666. The documents copied in Paris extend from 1575 to 1767, with the exception of two years, the two volumes not yet received treating of events in the province of Quebec during the years 1758 and 1760.