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## Public Archives expands international role

Until 1968, the Public Archives of Canada (PAC) had very little involvement at the international level. Now, every division of the PAC and many staff members participate on international committees, present papers or attend conferences abroad. The PAC has increased its reputation internationally because of its achievements in various fields. In records management, the PAC is considered by many as having the most efficient system. Another area of achievement is conservation. The PAC was the first archival institution to use the mass deacidification of paper and the videodisc.

The PAC's expansion at the international level has been led, in large part, by Dr. Wilfred I. Smith, dominion archivist since 1968 and secretary-general of the International Council on Archives. In an article in the September-October 1984 issue of *The Archivist*, Dr. Smith, who is about to retire after 34 years with the PAC, outlined the growth and development of international activities at the Archives.

The following are excerpts from the article:

...For more than a century, PAC staff has been engaged in acquiring from Britain and France copies of archival material relating to Canada. This activity, focused on the London and Paris offices, still continues and has been extended recently to Spain, Italy and other countries.

With the exception of the foreign acquisition program, international activities are a comparatively recent aspect of PAC functions....

### Important organizations

The first and most prominent organization involving the PAC is the International Council on Archives (ICA). The dominion archivist attended the first ICA Congress in Paris in 1950 and most of the subsequent congresses, which are held every four years, as well as the ICA Round Tables, which from 1954 have been held annually....

Since 1968 PAC participation in ICA has steadily increased. This year the staff involved includes the dominion archivist as secretary general, the assistant dominion archivist as editor of *CAD News* and others as members of committees on reprography, automation, literature and art, and working groups on records management, audio-visual archives and architectural records.

PAC was host to an ICA Round Table Conference in 1974, it will host meetings of the Executive Committee and the Automation Committee in 1985, and it will invite ICA to hold its 1992 Congress in Canada.

Memberships in other international organizations reflect the wide range of archival collections at PAC that has developed as a result of the concept of total archives. These organizations include three that together cover the mandate of PAC's film, television and sound archives, three related to microfilm, others concerning EDP, maps, pictures, photographs and still others....

The assistant dominion archivist is chairman of the Archives Committee of the Pan American Institute on Geography and



Dr. Wilfred I. Smith

History, which is of a regional nature. PAC is also assisting this year with the founding of the Commonwealth Archivists Association.

### Cultural agreements

In the last decade or so, the PAC has negotiated cultural agreements with several countries. Probably the most active has been that with France, and the most recent is that with the Republic of China.

Visitors from abroad are in several categories. There are those who come to take PAC courses in records management, archives administration or micrographics. These candidates are usually from developing countries in Africa, Asia, South America or the Caribbean and are expected on their return to establish similar services in their countries. Other visitors come for instructional visits to learn about aspects of PAC operations, either specific areas such as conservation, reprography and records management, or particular archival collections, such as machine readable archives or film archives....

The visits of PAC members to other countries vary in nature from attendance at special meetings where information or

advice is required such as the short conferences in Jamaica in 1965, Mexico in 1975 and Pakistan in 1980, to extensive visits to advise on archival development, such as in Australia in 1973 and New Zealand in 1978. There is also a special type of visit known as a mission, such as those sponsored by UNESCO to Upper Volta, Burma, Latin America, West Africa and other places.

The PAC will probably continue to play an active role in international archival affairs because of its acquisitions program, the professional interchange between the archivists of its national collections and the corresponding international associations, the interest of developing countries in obtaining information and of developed countries in sharing expertise. The PAC is recognized as the leader in several areas, including records management; new archival media such as computer and film, television and sound records; technological developments such as mass deacidification and videodisc; and relations with the public through research services and facilities or through exhibitions and other diffusion programs....

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## Meeting of first ministers

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney met with Canada's ten provincial premiers in November at his Meech Lake retreat in Quebec and initiated what many of them called "a new era of federal-provincial co-operation".

The first ministers agreed to hold a two-day meeting on February 14-15 in Regina, Saskatchewan focusing on issues of economic development. Mr. Mulroney expected job creation to be a main topic of discussion at the meeting, along with ways of increasing investment, trade and improving Canada's competitive position in the world marketplace.

The two-day economic conference in February will be the first time such talks will be held outside Ottawa.

Prince Edward Island Premier James Lee, spokesman for the premiers, said the conference would be followed by an economic summit of labour, business and other community leaders with the federal government.

The first ministers will then reconvene for another one-day round of talks, following which Finance Minister Michael Wilson will introduce his first budget in April.

Prior to the Regina meeting, the 11 industry and trade ministers and the 11 finance ministers will meet in January to prepare the agenda for the talks.

Mr. Lee said that the 11 first ministers had agreed that following the Regina meeting, a first ministers' conference on the economy will become an annual event.