

INTRODUCTION

This is part 3 of finding aid 434, consisting of a computer index arranged alphabetically by keyword. This finding aid is also available in hard copy at the Public Archives and at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton.

Researchers are reminded that there are other finding aids to the Bennett Papers. Parts 1 and 2 (available on microfilm reel C-4495) consist of file lists to the Political, Personal, Invitations and Clippings Series. Part 4 is a re-sorted version of part 3, in which the computer index is arranged by volume number complete with full file descriptors. Part 4 is also available on microfilm reel C-10859. The Public Archives makes the microfilm copy of finding aid 434 available on interlibrary loan.

The Public Archives has only a microfilm copy of the Bennett Papers. The originals are held by the University of New Brunswick. Persons wishing to borrow portions of the papers on interlibrary loan should take note of the UNB reel number. This is essential since the University, not the Public Archives, makes the microfilm copy of the Bennett Papers available on interlibrary loan.

The computer index to the R.B. Bennett Papers will be of use to most researchers looking at the papers since it provides more detail than the file lists. This finding aid covers the three most important series, the Political, Personal and Invitations Series. The Political Series consists of correspondence, memoranda, etc, covering 1878-1947. The bulk of this series is official files relating to Bennett's tenure as Prime Minister, 1930-1935. The Personal Series contains both family and personal and political correspondence, 1877-1960, and the Invitations Series consists of correspondence on the subject of invitations to Bennett to speak. The fourth series, consisting of Clippings, was not indexed but a file list is available.

Like the computer finding aids to other Prime Ministers' Papers, the index to the R.B. Bennett Papers is arranged alphabetically by keyword. Keywords are nominal and subject entries which are significant for research purposes. Entries which are not considered to be historically significant are called stop words since they do not appear as keywords. Some common stop words are "committee", "department", "government" and "report". Unlike other Prime Ministers' indexes at the Public Archives, the Bennett index consists of one continuous alphabetical sort.

It will be immediately apparent to researchers who have used other detailed computer indexes to Prime Ministers' Papers that the Bennett index is different in several respects. First of all, the indexes to the Macdonald, Borden and Meighen Papers are extremely detailed (each item being indexed) where as in the case of Bennett there is a file by file index. This in turn means several things. The references given in the index will not be as easily traced as those in the more detailed indexes. For example, to find a particular item in a 400-page file it may be necessary to search the whole file. Also, since the index is less detailed, only the most significant subjects and authors in each file have been included.

Researchers using the Bennett Papers are advised to look at other parts of finding aid 434. The file lists (parts 1 and 2) and the volume sort of the computer index (part 4) will sometimes be of more use to researchers than the main computer index (part 3). This will most likely be the case when the researcher is making a detailed examination of subjects which the file lists cover. Such standard subjects include agriculture, elections, external affairs, finance, justice, railways, senatorships, trade and commerce and unemployment relief. With subjects like these it may be futile to copy out hundreds of references from the computer index only to find that most of the entries are from a limited number of volumes.