

ARCHIVES NOTES

University of British Columbia Archives: The N. A. M. MacKenzie Papers

The University of British Columbia Archives is fortunate to have had deposited with it the unique and important personal papers of Norman A. M. MacKenzie. The collection of almost 200 linear feet represents the private and public life of one of Canada's leading citizens. As well as providing biographical information on Dr. MacKenzie the papers also reflect the changes which took place in Canadian society during the more than fifty years of his active career.

The collection was gathered together over a ten-year period, from both home and office. It is further supplemented by deposits of current materials from the still active Dr. MacKenzie. Because of this irregular method of acquisition much of the original ordering of the papers has been destroyed, unfortunately, rendering Dr. MacKenzie's index invalid. This, compounded by the large size and varied nature of the papers, placed the task of archival organization beyond the means of the University Archivist.

With the aid of a grant from the Koerner Foundation, Miriam McTiernan, a trained archivist, was hired for the summer of 1976. She was assisted by three students employed by the UBC Department of History on a provincial government summer employment project. These were Jacqueline Murray, Gabriel Scardellato and, later, Brian McLaughlin.

The efforts of this team brought the papers under control but organization was not completed; Jacqueline Murray returned in the summers of 1977 and 1978 to complete the process. She was joined by Cathy Jenkins for two months in 1978, again under the auspices of the UBC Department of History. Thus in the course of three summers the archival organization of the papers was finally achieved under the overall guidance of University Archivist Laurenda Daniells.

Dr. MacKenzie is perhaps best known for his eighteen years as Presi-

dent of the University of British Columbia (1944-62). Under his direction the university blossomed into the institution of world stature it is at present. While the majority of the papers date from his UBC administration they also show the truly diverse nature of Dr. MacKenzie's career. Many of the organizations with which he was involved are of national and international importance. These include such bodies as the League of Nations Society, the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, the Institute of Pacific Relations, Save the Children, UNESCO and the Student Christian Movement, to name only a few. Often his association dates from the organization's inception, allowing the researcher an overview of the body's development.

Professionally Dr. MacKenzie was also involved in various areas. He was an adviser to the International Labour Office in Geneva in the 1920s. He then went on to teach law at the University of Toronto and later became President of the University of New Brunswick. He was an active labour arbitrator and served as Chairman of the Wartime Information Board. Between 1966 and 1969 Dr. MacKenzie, having retired as President of UBC, served in the Senate of Canada. Thus the papers reflect a wide range of experience and touch on a myriad of topics.

Among the many boards and committees with which Dr. MacKenzie was associated were the Nova Scotia University Grants Committee, the Board of Directors of the Bank of Nova Scotia, the University of East Africa Commission, the Massey Commission and the resultant Canada Council. Again this list is only partial but it does allow one to glimpse the breadth of material found within the collection.

The correspondence forms the backbone of the collection. It is all of a personal nature rather than being the official correspondence of the bodies and offices involved, and is divided into two groups in keeping with Dr. MacKenzie's original filing system. One group of correspondence may be considered that of the public man, the other that of the private man. The private correspondence stretches from his boyhood in the 1890s to the present, while the public correspondence covers roughly the years from 1924 to the present. It is arranged alphabetically by year and is now fully indexed and cross-referenced. Most of Canada's leading figures and many of those on the international scene in politics, the arts, education, law and international affairs are represented. This allows one to move behind the scenes of the public affairs which affected us all. The opinions and views of ordinary citizens on the topics of the day are also reflected in the correspondence.

Dr. MacKenzie kept separate files for some eighteen major organizations

and commissions with which he was involved. Each of these subgroups contains indexed correspondence, minutes, working papers and printed materials pertaining to the group. In addition to the correspondence and subgroups there is also a series containing the speeches, articles, reviews and radio broadcasts produced by Dr. MacKenzie during his career. Finally, along with his twenty-two honorary degrees, there are also an extensive clipping file, a photograph collection and scrapbooks.

The papers are accessible by means of a detailed inventory which lists the contents of each box. Each of the subgroups has a separate inventory and is a complete unit in itself. With the aid of computer sorting a cumulative name index is also available for the collection's correspondence. Each correspondent is listed with the years of his correspondence in the main series and subgroups, if any, in which he appears. The speeches, articles, and subject files are arranged in basically chronological order and listed by title. Whenever the original order of the collection has been lost a note of this has been made indicating where Dr. MacKenzie's organization and the present archival organization differ. Despite the size and complexity of the collection, any given piece of information is easily accessible.

While Dr. MacKenzie's papers are of particular interest for the study of British Columbia they also reach far beyond provincial boundaries. They reflect the temper of Canadian society for some fifty years and document the growth of some of Canada's most important social, educational and cultural movements. They also allow the researcher a rare glimpse of the private life of one of Canada's leading public figures.

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