

INVENTORY DESCRIPTION

Quebec and Lower Canada. Provincial and
Civil Secretary.

Correspondence : 1759-1841.

(*Library + Archives Canada.*)

RG 4
A 1

S SERIES: Correspondence of the Provincial and Civil Secretaries' Offices, Quebec and Lower Canada, 1760-1841

Volumes 1-632 33.83 meters

The evolution of government structure and plurality of office holding in the early years have given the 'S Series' a unique nature. In it are found records normally to be expected amongst the files of the Executive Council and the Governor's Civil Secretary as well as the Provincial Secretary. The records include correspondence, petitions, returns and reports of all types, certificates, warrants and commissions, accounts, lists of office holders and a variety of documents relating to local administration.

On the establishment of civil government in 1764, Henry Ellis was named Secretary and Clerk of the Council, but James Goldfrap acted until 1768 as his deputy and George Allsopp after that date. Hector T. Cramahé, Secretary under the military regime, became the first Civil Secretary. The Quebec Act resulted in certain reorganizations and George Pownall was appointed Secretary and 'Register' of the Province. Pownall spent most of his time as Registrar, leaving the Provincial Secretary's functions to be performed by the Civil Secretary. The boundary between Civil and Provincial Secretaries was neither clearly defined nor understood and observed. At one point, 1820-22, both were held by John Ready. After 1841, administrative structures were re-organized and functions clarified.

The 'S Series' came to the Archives from the Secretary of State's office in 1906. The transfer included over 5700 volumes and bundles, much of which is now located elsewhere. Certain files were transferred to the B series of RG 4: lawsuits in B 17, licence applications and bonds in B 28, etc. Public accounts are now found in RG 1, E 15A.

The card index was prepared before the records were organized into RG 4. While extremely limited in reliability, it is useful. The date of the item is the key to locating it, with the help of the shelf list. Material which was transferred (lawsuits, accounts, licences, etc.) can generally be found by date as the arrangement of these series is also chronological. CAUTION: a study of the index has shown that less than 10% of the items in the series were indexed fully. The card index is kept in the Pre-Confederation Section to facilitate referral of problems to staff of that section.

Volumes 1-200 have been reorganized in strict chronological order. Pagination is complete only to volume 140 (December 1914) and microfilming to volume 131 (October 1813). Restoration treatment of the series will be continued; as a result of past work, certain oversized items are now found in the last volumes of the series, as noted in the shelf list. RESEARCHERS MUST USE THE MICROFILM for volumes 1-131. The shelf list provides a correlation of reel numbers.

PK 29-12-77

TO DO: - check validity of calendar (ancient) for vols. 1, 9-25;
- identify oversize items & transfer Maps
- complete arrangement, pagination & microfilming
- see 1904 PAC REPORT for publication of 1787-1790 committee minutes of the inquiry into the state of the early public records (with index) and its relation to items in both RG 4 A 1 and RG 14, A 1.