

**TOWARDS A CONCISE GAZETTEER OF CANADA**

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Resolution 4(E) of the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (1967) recommended the production of national gazetteers containing all standardized geographical names.

Canada's national names authority started a gazetteer series in 1952 and since then the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN) has produced several editions of separate volumes for the two territories and nine of the ten provinces. All have been published by Energy, Mines and Resources Canada under the umbrella title of the **Gazetteer of Canada Series**. The Government of Quebec has been responsible for making available Quebec toponyms in three editions of the **Répertoire toponymique du Québec**. Names of undersea features off the Canadian coast are listed in 1983 and 1987 publications of the **Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names**, prepared by the Canadian Hydrographic Service for the CPCGN.

Some 460 000 geographical names records are now included in the digital Canadian Geographical Names Data Base (CGNDB). Of these, approximately 310 000 are currently approved names recognized by the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names. The entries in this national toponymic data base will constitute the basis for information to be included in a **Concise Gazetteer of Canada**.

During the past year the CPCGN has formed a working group to plan the content of a **Concise Gazetteer of Canada**, aiming for its production before the centennial of the establishment of a national names authority in Canada, 1897-1997.

To date, committee members have discussed the selection of names and the fields of information. Only a little attention has so far been given to introductory material, maps, illustrations, etc.

## 1. Selection of names

Four possible selection methods were identified:

- a systematic inclusion of all names of particular types of places or features
- a quantitative approach, selecting mountains of a certain height, lakes of a certain area, etc.
- a relative selection of names, taking a particular percentage of the official names in each province/territory (or any other given area)
- a cartographic approach, whereby name selection is tied to maps of particular scales

The selection of entries is strongly influenced by Canada's large land mass, yet its very low population density in northern parts of the country. Systematic field collection of toponyms in Canada varies from region to region. Some areas have many geographical names approved on the basis of recent, intensive field studies.

Other areas may have few names recorded, and hence a 1:50,000 map sheet may show only one or two names. To best address these and other issues, the four selection methods noted above will be combined and current proposals for names selection include both objective and subjective criteria.

a) Objective

Include systematically:

• Incorporated places	2,877
• Municipal administrative areas	2,930
• Indian reserves	951
• Federal national parks, park reserves and historical sites	294
• UN World Heritage sites	10
• Canadian Forces bases & stations	30
• Geographic areas	~2500
• "Pan-Canadian" names (English and French forms)	162
• All physical features tabulated in the <b>Canada Year Book</b>	35
• All physical features on 1:2M base maps produced by Energy, Mines and Resources Canada	8,341
• Unincorporated places with population >60	6,393
• US-Canada transboundary feature names as included in the <b>United States Concise National Gazetteer 1990</b>	~100
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,623</b>

b) Subjective

• Additional names from 1:1M (IMW Series)	92
• Additional physical feature names (hydrographic and terrain) based upon 1:500 000 maps of Southern Canada in the <b>Canada Gazetteer Atlas (1980)</b>	2,250
• Undersea features selected from 1:1M National Resource Map Series	~1,000
• Miscellaneous - mountain passes, waterfalls, etc.	~30
• Names selected by individual CPCGN members	(?)~1,000
• Other names (e.g. dams, wildlife refuges, etc.)	(?)~500
• Selected cross references (previously official names or variant names)	(?)~1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,872</b>

A selection of this sort, based on a combination of objective and subjective criteria, would produce a total of some 32 000 entries.

## 2. Fields of data

Discussion so far is leading to the inclusion of the following columns of information:

- a) Name
  - alphabetized by the specific
  - including cross references - of previously approved names and names approved in English and French
- b) Entity
  - bilingual (English/French) format
  - identifying type of feature - so far it has not been decided whether this will be a short list of types of entities, or a grouping of generics (e.g. flowing water features)
- c) Coordinates
  - in degrees and minutes
- d) Location
  - 1st level: province or territory
  - 2nd level: administrative or geographic unit (at the pleasure of each province or territory)
- e) Maps/charts
  - 1:50 000 National Topographic System (NTS) map associated with coordinates provided (possibly 1:250 000 or Canadian Hydrographic Service chart where 1:50 000 is not applicable)
- f) Population
  - for incorporated places only

## 3. Introductory and other material

Preliminary recommendations suggest that the following material should be included in addition to the actual gazetteer listing:

- a) Note on the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names and its membership
- b) Explanation of the methodology for data selection
- c) User's guide for fields of data
- (d) Bilingual definition of terms

And possibly:

- e) Lists of information on highest mountains, longest rivers, largest lakes, etc.
- f) Maps: a 1:7.5M or 1:12.5M map of Canada, showing the NTS map index grid, with first level, and possibly also second level, "Location" data.

During 1992 work will start to identify on the CGNDB the actual names to be included in the gazetteer, questions still to be resolved will be studied, and proposals will be made for publication of the gazetteer in the mid-1990s.