

UN Group of Experts on
Geographical Names

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In the Surveys and Mapping Branch a reorganization of the geographical thrust of Government-sponsored research is being undertaken. Part of this will be a substantial expansion in the Toponymy Division from 14 persons to 25 persons. This expansion will not take place before the spring of 1976. Meanwhile, this year's field operations is being suspended because of lack of personnel and funds.

Field studies have now been completed for New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, and new gazetteers produced for the first two. The total number of names in these three provinces is 47,000. Geographical Names of Prince Edward Island was published in 1973. It lists in alphabetical arrangement the origin of 1200 current and 500 obsolete names. The galley proofs of a book on New Brunswick's names were sent to the editor this past Monday. This 300-page book, to be published in May, lists the origin of over 4,000 names in that province. Other volumes that will be produced include ones on Nova Scotia, Northwest Territories and Undersea Features.

Since our last report in 1973 we have introduced automated methods into gazetteer production. The Alberta volume was produced last year using this method, and the Ontario volume, to be issued this month, has also been set up by automated inputting and photocomposition methods. In 1974 we produced cumulative supplements for all the volumes of the Gazetteer of Canada series, and these supplements are being updated again this year. We are currently working on new gazetteers for Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories and Nova Scotia. The Province of Quebec, which produced its own volume in 1969 is working on a second edition. Last year the Quebec Geographical Commission put all Quebec names into a computer and analyzed them according to cultural origin.

There are active geographical name boards in Alberta, Ontario and Quebec, and relatively inactive boards in Saskatchewan and Newfoundland. The provincial members of the CPOGN and provincial boards have about 19 persons devoting full-time on names. There are several private toponymy researchers. I have brought a couple of recent private toponymic publications, 1001 British Columbia Place Names and Community Names of Alberta to illustrate their contributions in this field.

During the past two months we have been compiling a notification list so that those who wish to maintain our toponymic materials up-to-date may do so. We have now compiled approximately 1,000 addresses. Any persons here who would like to have their addresses added to our list are requested to communicate directly with me. We do not sell our publications directly. They are sold through Information Canada and the Canada Map Office.

We are looking forward to taking a very active part in the training courses. Since we have had considerable experience in field techniques and with the handling of names in bilingual areas, we would expect to participate actively in the preparations of the course next year in the Netherlands. Although we have thousands of names of aboriginal origin, we have done very little in regard to the field collection of Amerindian names that are in current use. Perhaps some other experts can teach us new techniques in the recognition and the collecting of native names. In addition, the CFCGN has endorsed a second course to take place in Canada, possibly in 1978. I believe that it is very important that solid groundwork be established such as the preparation of manuals and the determination of what really is needed by students from developing countries.