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from unwritten languages.

THE TREATMENT OF TOPONYMS IN MANITOBA FROM  
LANGUAGES WITHOUT AN ALPHABET\*

Paper presented by Canada

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\* Paper prepared by Michael Munro, head of field research for the Toponymy Division, Surveys and Mapping Branch, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Ottawa.

THE TREATMENT OF TOPONYMS IN MANITOBA FROM  
LANGUAGES WITHOUT AN ALPHABET\*

(paper presented by Canada)

Canada has a multiplicity of Amerindian languages and dialects, none of which has a satisfactory standardized orthography. This presents a problem to the members of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names, who, in pursuing a policy of assigning first consideration to names with established public use, must provide spellings in the roman alphabet for the geographical names used by the Amerindian peoples. The toponyms devised for these names must be transcribed into a form mutually acceptable to the Amerindian peoples, to map users unfamiliar with their languages, and to cartographers. This paper will examine some of the approaches to the problem used in Canada at the present time.

CURRENT PRACTICE IN CANADA

ONTARIO

In 1973, the Province of Ontario conducted a toponymy study at Moose Factory, on the west side of James Bay. A means of romanizing native names was developed based on recommendations of a qualified linguist, specifying vowels and consonants that should or should not be used when reproducing Cree names. The Ontario study established guidelines based on the creation of phonemes in order to reproduce as closely as possible the native names, and these guidelines have been very useful in the preparation of those in use for Manitoba.

At present, the Province consults linguists when any new Amerindian names are reported, and both a linguist and a native person occupy seats on the Ontario Geographic Names Board.

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*QUEBEC*

The Province of Québec is currently engaged in a field program on the east side of James Bay. In this study, the people being dealt with are Cree speakers, and the toponyms obtained are being spelled on the basis of phonetics.

An element of this field project which is much different from those in use in Manitoba and Ontario, is that the native toponyms being approved are in a form suitable for French-speaking persons. This results in word formations which utilize different letters or groups of letters than would be used in English to provide the same sound. For example, *ch* is used for the English sound *sh*; *qu* for the English *kw*; *ou* for *w*, *oo*, or *u*.

*The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs*

This arm of the federal government has jurisdiction in the Northwest Territories, in Yukon Territory, in national parks and on all Indian reserves. The Department is represented by a member on the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names who assumes responsibility for all geographical names occurring in these areas.

The policy adopted by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs has two parts. For Inuit names, a standard orthography from which spellings can be provided for all new names has been in use since 1965, and is currently being revised. However, in the case of names of Amerindian origin for which there exists no written orthography, the Department accepts the spellings provided by the regional offices.

The Department translates into English or French approximately 30 - 35 % of the new submissions of Amerindian origin. This is done either because a name is unwieldy due to its length, or because it is much too difficult for map users to pronounce.

THE APPROACH IN MANITOBA

*Toponymy Study 1975-1978*

A federal-provincial toponymy study (involving the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Canada, and the Department of Renewable Resources and Transportation Services, Manitoba), was initiated in the Province in 1975 and completion is expected in 1978. This study consists of interviewing local people, and conducting archival research at all populated places in the province, including the most remote. It is expected that by the end of the study the existing stock of approved toponyms will be doubled, from 7,500 names to approximately 15,000. Of these new names, it is expected that 50 % will be of Amerindian origin. A method had to be determined to devise phonemes in the roman alphabet suitable for word construction, while maintaining the integrity of the native names.