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NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF NATIONAL NAMES AUTHORITIES

Developments in Canadian toponymy**

Paper submitted by Canada

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Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

The Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names was established in 1897 to standardize geographical names in Canada, and to advise federal departments and agencies on geographical names and their spelling, use, origin and map application. The Committee has continued to develop policies, principles and procedures pertaining to the linguistic and cartographic treatment of names and generic terminology.

Committee Membership

Since 1982 the Committee membership has increased from 20 to 23. Added to the one member for each of the provinces (ten), the eight members representing federal departments involved in surveying, mapping, translation and archives, and the two chairpersons of advisory committees, are: one member for the Geological Survey of Canada; and, one member each for the two northern territories (Yukon, Northwest Territories).

Meetings

The Committee holds a plenary session once each year, usually in September or October. Since 1982 its meetings have been held in Québec, Ottawa, Charlottetown, Regina, and again in Ottawa. The 1987 meeting, to be hosted by New Brunswick, will be held on October 2 in the historic Atlantic seaport of Saint John.

During the past five years, the Committee has organized seminars and workshops on international transboundary names (1984), the automation of geographical names (1985), the treatment of native names (1986) and the handling of parallel (alternate) geographical names (1987).

Advisory Committees

In 1984 the Advisory Committee on Undersea Feature Names was renamed the Advisory Committee on the Names for Undersea and Maritime Features. Its terms of reference were rewritten to include the review of names of major offshore surface water features. On behalf of the Committee, the

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Department of Fisheries and Oceans, which provides the secretariat for the Advisory Committee, produced the **Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names** in 1983. Also in 1983 the same department published an information bulletin on the naming of bathymetric features.

The **Advisory Committee on Toponymy Research**, with 11 members, has actively promoted the organizing of a number of seminars and workshops on a variety of toponymic topics. Especially important was the convening of a symposium in May 1985 on the subject of national standards and guidelines for the treatment of geographical names of native origin. It developed recommendations for the content and production of the **Gazetteer of Canada** series; these have been largely implemented.

In recent years, the members of the **Advisory Committee on Glaciological and Alpine Nomenclature** have devoted much of their time to the definitions of generic terminology in use in Canada. In cooperation with the Translation Bureau, which compiled the French-language definitions, the Advisory Committee members put together the definitions of almost 500 English-language generic terms in use in Canada. The Advisory Committee has continued its work on delineating named permanent ice features on maps and in determining and outlining on maps the hierarchy of named mountain features, especially in the Canadian Cordillera.

Policies and Guidelines

In 1983 a policy for the use of the official languages in Canadian geographical names in Federal Government publications was issued by the Official Languages Branch of Treasury Board. Subsequently, in 1984, the Translation Bureau of the Secretary of State Department issued similar guidelines to its translators and interpreters.

One of the main activities of the Committee has been the establishment of principles and procedures for geographical naming in Canada. Over the years, a number of different booklets were made available on the practices that should be followed in the treatment of both established names and of new names. This year, a new booklet has been produced to guide government officials, mapmakers, explorers and mountain climbers, and the general public on the processes to follow in both using names and in giving new names. In a country where considerable new naming is still continuing apace, it is necessary to maintain adequate guidelines on how this naming activity must be done properly, keeping in mind the country's linguistic, historical and multicultural character.

Discussions were held in 1982 and 1983 about the treatment of names of features that were either so small that they had little local significance or that they could not be identified on the largest scales of maps available. It was decided that, except where local and historic usage dictates, the official approval of names of minor features should

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be guided by the relative significance of the feature, its usage, and the scale of mapping available. Otherwise, they should be noted as "names of record".

Guidelines for the application of mountain names were formulated by the Advisory Committee on Glaciological and Alpine Nomenclature, and accepted by the Permanent Committee in 1985. These have been included in the new **Principles and Procedures for Geographical Naming**.

Questions have arisen in Canada about the handling of Canadian names in languages other than French or English; guidelines are being developed for adoption by the Committee.

Publications

In 1984 the Committee published the resolutions of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the papers presented by Canada at the conference in the publication entitled **Geographical Names and the United Nations**. Copies of this publication were widely circulated to names specialists and mapping officials in Canada and abroad.

The Secretariat of the Committee has continued to produce the twice-yearly journal **Canoma**. Since its inception in 1975 **Canoma** has become a valuable vehicle in which to publicize the development of policies and practices in Canadian toponymy, and to communicate information about the origin and use of geographical names. It is distributed without charge to selected names specialists, mapping offices, libraries and others involved in establishing names policies both in Canada and in countries abroad.

In 1982 the **Gazetteer of Canada**, produced for the Committee by the Surveys and Mapping Branch, received the endorsement of the Committee members as a valuable tool in the provision of official geographical names. In the past five years new volumes have been produced for Saskatchewan and British Columbia, and a new volume for Ontario will be brought out in early 1988. Since 1983, the new volumes have included superseded names as well as the official approved names.

A very useful publication is the new **Glossary of Generic Terms in Canada's Geographical Names**. This bilingual volume, produced jointly by the Committee and the Translation Bureau of the Secretary of State, provides the definitions of 492 English terms and 148 French generic terms. Each entry includes the following: brief definition, notes, equivalent generic term in the other official language, related terms and selected examples from various parts of Canada.

A new brochure on the **Gazetteer of Canada** series was produced in 1986,

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and widely distributed. Its main function is to encourage libraries and other institutions to bring their collection of the volumes of the series up to date so that the public and other users can obtain the most reliable information on official geographical names in Canada.

Conclusion

The evolution of toponymic practices and programmes in Canada has been dramatic in the past quarter century. In 1965, the first year I presided at an annual meeting of the Committee, much of the toponymic activity was centrally based in Ottawa, with the provinces (except Quebec) and the territories relying extensively on the direction and support of the Federal Government. The proceedings of the Committee that year were only 16 pages in length. By contrast, the proceedings of the 1985 annual meeting ran for 108 pages, and included extensive reports by almost all the federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions, as well as reports by the advisory committees, a large number of appendices on such subjects as the role, mandate and responsibility of the Permanent Committee, the treatment of transboundary names, and activity plans for the Committee's Secretariat and the Surveys and Mapping Branch's Toponymy Section.

At the present time, much of the activity relating to toponymic investigation, field work and related activities is decentralized in the provinces, with the Committee maintaining a coordinating role, mostly in the convening of seminars and workshops, and in circulating information about naming practices and policies both within Canada and abroad.

Canada has contributed substantially to the development of toponymic policies and procedures at the international level by its solid participation at the various conferences of the United Nations and meetings of the Group of Experts. At the same time, Canada has learned considerably by its participation at United Nations meetings, and has made efforts to implement the appropriate resolutions of the four conferences, both at the national and the regional levels.

