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REPORTS BY GOVERNMENTS ON THE SITUATION IN THEIR COUNTRIES
AND ON THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES SINCE THE SEVENTH CONFERENCE

Geographical Names Board of Canada/Commission de
Toponymie du Canada

(Submitted by Canada)**

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GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES BOARD OF CANADA /
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Paper submitted by Canada

In the section on Goals and National Programmes, changes to Canada's national names authority including its name, the Chair, and its membership are discussed. The strategic plan of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC) was updated during this period, although the core activities remain the same. Decision making is still made at the provincial/territorial level for most decisions. Canada's political/administrative structure has changed with the creation of the new Territory of Nunavut. The section on Problems, Solutions, and Achievements talks about the publications produced nationally, provincially/territorially, and with federal-provincial cooperation. Databases and web sites at the national and provincial/territorial levels have been updated or upgraded. New policies have been approved or are in the process of becoming approved. Municipal amalgamations have led to the problems of multiple streets with the same or similar names. Derogatory names have been rescinded and some replaced with more acceptable names. Commemorative names have become popular but can be a source of problems as well. Various jurisdictions are finding ways of connecting toponymy to heritage. Members of the GNBC have participated in numerous international activities since the last Conference. ISO 9001 standards for activities and processes in the production of toponymic products at the Centre for Topographic Information will be followed.

I. Goals and national programmes

1. The national names authority

1.1 Renaming of the national names authority

Canada has had a names authority since 1897. From 1961 until 2000, this authority was known as the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN). On 2 March 2000, the name was changed by Order in Council P.C 2000-283 to Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC). In French, the name is Commission de toponymie du Canada (CTC for short). The former Chair of the CPCGN, Mr. Tony Price, was responsible for starting the process to change the name of the national names authority.

1.2. GNBC meetings

The CPCGN (now the GNBC) has met four times since the Seventh Conference – in Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Manitoba, and Nova Scotia. This year's annual meeting will be held in British Columbia in October.

1.3. GNBC Chairs

Mr. Tony Price was Chair of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names from 1992 to 1998. Ms. Gisèle Jacob chaired her first meeting of the CPCGN in 1999 and is still the Chair today.

1.4. New GNBC members

Since the last conference in 1998, the Geographical Names Board of Canada has acquired two new members. Canada Post became a member in 1998 by order of the Minister of the federal Department of Natural Resources. Nunavut, however, became a member automatically on the creation of the new territory in 1999. It is anticipated that Elections Canada may begin the process to become a GNBC member during 2002.

1.5. Advisory committees

Three of the advisory committees (toponymy research, nomenclature and delineation, and digital toponymic services) have been active during the past four years. Unfortunately, the advisory committee on names of undersea and maritime features has not met since 1997.

1.6. Working groups

Several working groups were created for specific purposes. They looked at such things as: amending the list of pan-Canadian names; guidelines for names of features within and partially on Indian reserves; updating the GNBC's strategic plan; Antarctic naming guidelines; Aboriginal communications; etc.

1.7 Strategic plan, mission, and goals

The GNBC's strategic plan, first developed in 1989 in response to increased pressure on government resources, was updated for the third time in 2001. Previous revisions were done in 1993 and 1997. This handbook for GNBC members includes the current Order in Council, mandates of the advisory committees, contact points for members, guidelines for Antarctic naming, and guidelines for dealing with names in areas of joint jurisdiction.

The core GNBC activities, as in the previous revisions, remain as follows:

- collection of geographical names
- automation of geographical names records and assurance of availability of information in automated systems
- development of national toponymic policies, principles, standards, and guidelines
- provision of appropriate methodology, tools, and training to support GNBC toponymic programmes
- dissemination of accurate toponymic information
- outreach and liaison with the international community

1.8. Decision making

Decisions on geographical names in Canada are made at the provincial and territorial level. However, there are some areas - on federal lands (national parks, military establishments) - where decisions must be made by both the provincial/territorial authority and the appropriate federal authority in order to become official.

2. Changes in the administrative/political structure of Canada

The Territory of Nunavut was created on 1 April 1999. The land in this new territory had been part of the Northwest Territories prior to that date. The remaining area of the Northwest Territories still

retains that name, although there was an attempt during the last year to find a new name. It was decided to focus on other matters first and so the existing name remains.

On 6 December 2001, the Governor General of Canada, Adrienne Clarkson, proclaimed that the Province of Newfoundland had been renamed as Newfoundland and Labrador. In French, the name is rendered as Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador. (Note that there are no spaces between the hyphens and the letters).

These changes to the administrative/political structure of Canada have had some side effects. The postal code for Nunavut was retained as NT – the same as for the Northwest Territories – until 18 December 2000 when it became NU. Newfoundland and Labrador’s postal code remains as NF until 21 October 2002 when it will become NL.

Traditional abbreviations are a matter that many people have inquired about following the creation of Nunavut and the renaming of Newfoundland and Labrador. At this point in time, the Geographical Names Board of Canada does not believe that it has the authority to create such abbreviations. This subject may be discussed at the Board’s annual meeting in October 2002. The abbreviations now in use have come into being and have been accepted over time. Until there is action of some sort, the situation now is that there is no abbreviation for Nunavut and the abbreviation for Newfoundland and Labrador remains as “Nfld.” in English and “T.-N.” in French.

Should there be changes to any provincial or territorial postal codes or traditional abbreviations for the provinces and territories in Canada, or if action is taken to develop a GNBC policy on official abbreviations, they will be announced on the GeoNames web site at http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/english/prov_abr.html.

II. Problems, solutions, and achievements since the last Conference

1. Publications

Since the Seventh Conference in 1998, the following publications have been produced.

At the national level, these include:

Principles and procedures for geographical naming was revised in 1999 and again in 2001. Most of the revisions were minor, although the 2001 edition reflected name changes for the names authority and for the department which supports the work of the GNBC. The principles were not amended. However, the procedure for submitting a geographical name was explained in more detail. Contact addresses for the members of the GNBC are now provided as a paper insertion so that changes in membership can be kept up-to-date, instead of having to wait for a revision of the entire publication. A pdf version of the 2001 text can be found on the Internet at <http://geonames.iircan.gc.ca/english/publications.html> or <http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/english/gnbc.html>.

- The *GNBC Strategic Plan* was updated late in 2001. It includes lists of the members of the GNBC and its advisory committees, the GNBC’s Order in Council, mandates of the advisory committees, Antarctic Naming Guidelines, etc.

- A new brochure, *Geographical Names*, about the activities of the Geographical Names Section and the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base was produced in early 2001. It is possible that this publication may be posted on the GeoNames web site in the future.
- *Aboriginal Place Names – charting our heritage* was published earlier this year (2002) with the intent of letting Canadian Aboriginal groups know that there is a process by which geographical names in Canada are approved for use on federal government maps and on other documents. It was published as two separate documents in a flip format. One version has English on one side and French on the other while the second version has English on one side and Inuktitut on the other. This publication will be posted on the GeoNames web site in the near future.

National and provincial cooperation:

- Two gazetteer volumes in the *Gazetteer of Canada* series were published jointly with Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the two provinces involved. The *Gazetteer of Canada: Saskatchewan* was produced in 1998 and the *Gazetteer of Canada: Manitoba* in 1999.

Since 1998, the offices of the provincial and territorial members of the GNBC have published the following:

Alberta

- *Name Your Place* A manual for use by those who have taken the *Name Your Place* workshop and others who are contemplating undertaking community-based toponymic research projects. Prepared by the Friends of Geographical Names of Alberta Society. Published in 1998.

Manitoba

- *Cumulative Supplement to the Gazetteer of Canada: Manitoba* (1994) A listing of all names officialized since publication of the *Gazetteer of Canada: Manitoba* in 1994. Published in 1998.
- *Geographical Names of Manitoba* Contains explanations of the origins of Manitoba names and includes bibliographical references. A French version is in preparation. Published in 2001.

Quebec

- *La France et le Québec des noms de lieux en partage* Illustrated; produced jointly by the toponymic authorities of France and Quebec; devoted primarily to French toponyms that have been given to places in Quebec; introduction: <<http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/Publications/index.htm>>. Published in 1999, 178 pages.
- *La Toponymie des Hurons-Wendats* Gazetteer containing the traditional geographic nomenclature of the Huron-Wendats Aboriginal nation, including the origin and meaning of names. Published in 2001, 55 pages.
- *La Toponymie des Algonquins* Gazetteer of the traditional geographical nomenclature of the Algonquin Aboriginal nation; includes the origins and meanings of names. Published in 1999, 178 pages.
- *Noms de rues de Québec au XVIIe siècle . origine et histoire* Covers 31 names that appeared in the 18th century; illustrated with maps; introduction: <<http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/Publications/dtopo27.htm>>. Published in 2000, 53 pages.
- Annual reports 1998-1999, 1999-2000, 2000-2001; 2001-2002 (to be published); electronic versions: <<http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/Publications/index.htm>>. Report of the CTQ's annual activity and the toponyms it has officialized.
- Supplements to the *Répertoire toponymique du Québec* published in the *Gazette officielle du Québec* in 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 (to be published).

Yukon Territory

- *Le passé découvert* French translation of *Uncovering the Past* (1994); Contains information on traditional names of the Fish Lake area in the southern Yukon; information collected as part of an archaeological project. Published in 2000.
- *Ta'an Kwach'an - People of the Lake* Contains a map showing locations Ta'an Kwach'an names and a list of official names with the corresponding Ta'an Kwach'an names; information collected as part of an archaeological project centring around Lake Laberge. Published in 2000.

2. Databases

2.1. Canadian Geographical Names Data Base

The Canadian Geographical Names Data Base was re-engineered in 1999. This assured its ability to store and disseminate geographical names data in an efficient manner. In addition, the data model was revised, the system was upgraded to Oracle version 8.1 to manage the CGNDB, and the user interface for data entry, query, and database report facilities were redeveloped.

A paper dealing with the next phase of Canadian geographical names dissemination, the Canadian Geographical Names Service (CGNS), will be presented under a later item of this Conference's

agenda. In support of the United Nations global naming initiative and to participate in the Global Geospatial Data Infrastructure, Canada is implementing the CGNS. Through the Canadian Geospatial Data Infrastructure (CGDI), the CGNS will be developed to provide the toponymic framework layer as part of this national initiative to make Canada's geographical information accessible on the Internet. Visit <http://www.geoconnections.org> for more information. The standards established by GeoBase, the national geospatial information base for Canada, will be used in the CGNS's development.

2.2. Provincial databases

Jurisdictions with automated databases are in the process of upgrading their records. Most are dealing with coordinate precision. Others are working on upgrading origin information and other aspects of their databases.

3. Web sites

3.1. National

The Geographical Names Section has two Internet web sites – the GeoNames site <http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/english/Home.html> and the SchoolNet site <http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/english/schoolnet/Home.html>. They are valuable tools for disseminating geographical names information. Visitors to these sites may notice some changes in the next few months as the two sites will be redesigned to conform to the Government of Canada's Common Look and Feel. All federal governments web sites will have common elements. In doing this, some pages on the web sites may be taken off the Internet until they are fully compliant with the government's guidelines.

3.2. Provincial and territorial

Several jurisdictions have their own web sites. British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, and Quebec have searchable databases called respectively BC Geographical Names Information System (BCGNIS) http://www.gdbc.gov.bc.ca/bcnames/g2_search_options.htm, Place Names Database <http://pwnhc.learnnet.nt.ca/databases/geodb.htm>, and TOPOS sur le Web <http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/topos.htm>.

Between 1 April 1998 and 1 February 2002, the Commission de toponymie du Quebec officialized 22,971 place names, including 18,486 names of transportation routes. These names, as well as those previously officialized, have been entered in TOPOS, a database of Quebec place names that can be queried on the Internet <http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/topos.htm>.

Manitoba's web site <http://www.gov.mb.ca/natres/lid/geo-names/index.html> does not have a searchable database nor does Nova Scotia's web site <http://www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/land/programs/geographic.stm>.

4. Policies

4.1. Antarctic names

A working group was created to address proposals for naming geographical names in Antarctica. Naming guidelines were drafted and then presented to the Advisory Committee on Nomenclature and Delineation before being approved at the 2000 GNBC annual meeting in Manitoba. The documents and articles: *Principles and procedures for geographical naming*, 1999; Proposed International Toponymic Guidelines for the Antarctic (prepared by the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research's (SCAR) Working Group on Geodesy and Geographic Information, 31 August 1994); "Policy Covering Antarctic Names", *Geographic Names of the Antarctic*, 2nd ed., 1995 and at <http://mapping.usgs.gov/www/gnis/antex.html>; April 1999; and "Annex D", *Composite Gazetteer of Antarctica*, Vol. 1, March 1988, were used as sources to create the Canadian guidelines. The GNBC will seek advice from the Canadian Committee for Antarctic Research (CCAR) in making any decision on name proposals. Names decisions made by the GNBC in Antarctica will be supplied to the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) through CCAR for publication in the SCAR Composite Gazetteer of Antarctica. However, it is anticipated that there will not be very much Canadian Antarctic naming activity. Canada's first Antarctic decision - Blackwall Ice Stream - was adopted in November 2000 after Hugh Blackwall Evans. Blackwall Ice Stream appears on the National Geographic map *Antarctica. a new age of exploration*, published in February 2002. Blackwall Ice Stream was also mentioned in a debate on Antarctica in Canada's House of Commons in May 2002.

4.2. Indian Reserve names and names partially or wholly within Indian Reserves

Responding to the wishes of the GNBC's member in the federal department of Indian and Northern Affairs, *Guidelines for naming or renaming Indian Reserves and for the geographical features or places within or partially within Indian Reserves* were drafted and approved by the GNBC at its 2001 annual meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, no representative of the department was able to participate at that meeting. They have submitted their comments on this document, but discussion on some proposed textual changes will have to be discussed by the GNBC at its 2002 annual meeting. It is hoped to have this matter completed by the end of 2002.

4.3. New policies in Quebec

The Commission de toponymie du Quebec (CTQ) has issued a statement of services available to citizens. The *Déclaration de services aux citoyens* is available at <http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/declarat.htm>. It contains a series of commitments that the CTQ has formally undertaken and with regard to which it is accountable to the members of the Quebec National Assembly on an annual basis.

Before officially changing a place name of significant importance or a name with cultural or historic value, the CTQ will now publish a notice of intent to this effect <http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/intention.htm>. Such a notice of intent will be issued before certain official place names are replaced in order to enable citizens to express their opinions, to foster a stable official toponymy, and to avoid provoking a backlash in response to the replacement of an official name.

5. Municipal names and street name duplication

From 1997 on, many municipalities across Canada have undergone amalgamation to reduce the number of municipalities. Quebec and Ontario have been faced with the largest number of these amalgamations while there have been fewer in the rest of Canada. Not only have new names been required for the new municipalities, but there is also the problem of street name duplication because of the amalgamations.

In many cases, city names threatened by municipal amalgamations are very old, and the Commission de toponymie du Québec (CTQ) has also concluded that steps must be taken to ensure that these names do not disappear from use. The CTQ has, therefore, undertaken to recycle at least half of the names of amalgamated cities by using them to officially name various districts, sectors and areas. Accordingly, these names will continue to be used on public signage, road signs, and maps.

Reorganization of municipalities around the largest cities in the main urban centres of Quebec has not only affected the number of names of municipalities, but has also resulted in a significant increase in the number of names of transportation routes in a given city that have identical or very similar names. In response to this situation, the *Commission* decided to offer the new cities a consistent procedure <http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/procedure.htm> for the reduction of toponym duplication. The procedure takes into account the specific context of each route involved and provides alternative solutions.

Responsibility for street and road names is a municipal responsibility in the other provinces and territories of Canada. Many municipalities publish their naming guidelines on the Internet. Examples found range from the Regional Municipality of Peel and the Town of Orangeville in Ontario to New Westminster in British Columbia to Halifax Regional Municipality in Nova Scotia. While the guidelines are not completely similar across the country, the municipalities do have several guidelines in common, particularly with respect to duplication, heritage, and pronunciation. The level of detail varies.

6. Derogatory names

Investigation into derogatory names, for the most part, is done on a case-by-case basis by the provincial or territorial names authority concerned.

The Alberta feature formerly known as Chinamans Peak was given the name of Ha Ling Peak in 1998. In December 2000, about a dozen names in British Columbia containing the word 'squaw' were rescinded. The names have not been replaced to date. Dummy Lake was the name given in Manitoba to a lake named after a family of deaf-mutes. This name was replaced in 2000 by Wargatie Lake and commemorates the family more appropriately.

7. Commemorative names

Canada's former Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, died in the Fall of 2000. Shortly afterwards, the current Prime Minister announced that he was going to rename Canada's highest mountain, Mount Logan, after Mr. Trudeau. Because of public outcry, this change was never made. One of the outcomes, however, was the creation of the Interdepartmental Committee on Commemoration. Departments and agencies at the federal level of government that have commemorative aspects within their mandates meet on a regular basis to discuss commemoration initiatives involving stamps, coins, statues on Parliament Hill, geographical names, memorials, etc. It is intended mainly as a forum for the exchange of information and a place where proposals that do not fall within the mandates of the participating organizations may be put forward. The Geographical Names Section participates both on behalf of the GNBC and Natural Resources Canada. Other federal departments who have ineinbership on the GNBC (National Defence, Parks Canada, Canada Post, etc.) also participate in the committee.

Toponymic commemoration of people and events is currently popular in Quebec. This civic movement has inspired many of the activities of organizations dedicated to the celebration of heritage and memory, including those of the Commission de toponymie du Quebec.

8. Other types of names

Standardization of the nomenclature of Quebec transportation routes is now almost completed. The corpus of water storage reservoirs (dams, dykes, booms, etc.) is the next one for which standardization seems to be a high priority. Because of the abundance of lakes and rivers in Quebec, these types of features are very numerous in the province. Processing of the several thousand names involved should continue until the 9th Conference.

9. Toponymy and heritage

Alberta has made its top 300 names available on the Friends of Geographical names Society of Alberta's web site at <<http://www.telusplanet.net/public/geognanie/intro.htm>>.

The British Columbia web site at <http://www.gdbc.gov.bc.ca/bcnames/g2_nl.htm> has added an audio component to its web site. By clicking on part of the map of Nisga'a Treaty names, one can choose to view the names in that part of the map. By clicking on the names, one can hear the name pronounced three times.

The heritage aspect of toponymy has been a significant part of toponymic activity in Quebec since 1998. The relevance of this aspect was acknowledged by the advisory committee mandated to study the vast topic of cultural heritage (*Our Heritage, A Present from the Past*, <<http://www.politique-patrimoine.org/html/Rapport/Rapport.html>>). Many of the recommendations of this committee are consistent with recommendation 6 of the 5th United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names (V/6; Montreal, 1987), which

recognizes “the importance of geographical names as significant elements of the cultural heritage of nations.”

In order to give value to our toponymic heritage and also to respond to strong public demand for this type of information, the Commission de toponymie du Quebec has included among the obligations it intends to meet by 31 March 2004, that of disseminating 30,000 place-name origins and meanings via its toponymic database.

10. International relations

Participants from Canada attended the last two UNGEGN meetings (1998 and 2000) in New York. Canada became a member of the French-speaking Division of UNGEGN when it was established at the 2000 meeting.

Staff of the GNBC Secretariat participated at the ICA conference in Ottawa in August 1999. Participation including holding a workshop entitled, “Developing and Maintaining a National Geographical Names Data Base,” presenting a paper, “The Canadian Geographical Names Data Base (CGNDB): Its Past, Present and Future, and chairing a session, “Geographic Names, Boundaries, and Quality.

At the request of the Basque Country language authorities (Spain), the Quebec Commission de toponymie assigned two toponymists to give a toponymy management training seminar in Donostia-San Sebastian from June 12 to 26, 2000. A report on this event is at <<http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/bulletin2.pdf>>; page 15 of the document is in PDF format.

In the context of the cooperative agreement between the toponymic authorities of France and Quebec, concluded in January 1994 and renewed in March 2001, and of the action plan of the Francophone division of the UNGEGN, these bodies have agreed to work together and in close collaboration with Henri Dorion (Laval University, Quebec), a toponymist and member of the UNGEGN, to publish the corpus of French-language exonyms via the Internet. A presentation on the Web pages that feature French-language exonyms housed on the Web site of the Francophone division <<http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/divfranco.htm>> is planned for the Conference.

Canada was represented at the second session of the United Nations Geographic Information Working Group in Rome in March 2000, at the Geonames 2000 symposium in Frankfurt, also in March 2000, and at the UNGEGN Working Group on Toponymic Data Bases and Gazetteers in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in April 2001.

For details of other international relations between Canada and the United States, please see the United States/Canada Division Report.

11. Other

The Centre for Topographic Information Ottawa achieved ISO 9001 accreditation in March 2000 for activities and processes directly affecting cartographic, products, toponymic products, and aerial photographs. An upgrade to ISO 2000 is planned for February 2003.

Most toponymists in Canada are within a few years of retirement. This could be a problem in any office where there is no one being trained to take over when the current toponymist leaves. Although not a serious problem at the moment, it is worth noting that it could become more serious in just a few years if steps are not taken soon to remedy the situation.

11.1. Conclusions and recommendations

Canada is putting forth two recommendations at this Conference. One will come under agenda item 8 “Economic and social benefits of the national and international standardization of geographical names” and concerns commemoration. The other will come under agenda item 9b “Office treatment of names” and concerns street/road name duplication and provides a method for reduction of duplication.

While not a formal recommendation, it would be a useful step for each country to take a look at the state of toponymy in their country and investigate what training there is for replacing departing or retiring toponymists.

Since the last Conference, members of the Geographical Names Board of Canada have been busy producing publications, updating their databases, and updating or creating web sites. Policies have been updated both at the national and provincial/territorial levels. Municipal amalgamation has led to the creation of new municipalities requiring new names and to street/road name duplication. GNBC members have dealt with derogatory and commemorative names, each of which has their own problems. The heritage aspects of toponymy have long been recognized. Several jurisdictions have added origin information about geographical names or provided audio accompaniments to their web sites. GNBC members have participated in meetings in the United States or other places around the world. Federal toponymic products are subject to ISO 9001 standards.