



# RECORD COMMISSION.

## REPORT OF THOMAS B. AKINS,

Appointed by His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor to be Commissioner of Public Records, under a resolution of the House of Assembly, passed 31st day of April, A. D. 1857, as follows, viz.:—"That His Excellency be respectfully requested to cause the ancient records and documents illustrative of the history and progress of society in this Province, to be examined, preserved, and arranged, either for reference or publication, as the Legislature may hereafter determine, and that this House will provide for the same."

*Halifax, February 24th, 1864.*

SIR,—

I have the honor to submit for the information of the Administrator of the Government, the following report of my proceedings during the last three years, relating to the public archives of this Province under my charge.

By the report of the committee of the House of Assembly on the subject of the Record Commission, made on the 30th day of April, 1860, it was recommended that the work of the Commissioner should be suspended until the termination of the then current year, after which it should be resumed, with a view to its completion. Accordingly, on the first day of January, 1861, the work was resumed, and continued without intermission until April, 1862. During these fifteen months a large mass of papers were examined, and selections made from them of such documents as were considered worthy of preservation; not only as being of historical value, but also such as appeared likely to be the subject of reference for business purposes. These selections occupy sixty-four volumes, and have been bound up and their contents carefully catalogued. A large quantity of papers connected with the granting of land have been also put in order, tied up in bundles under their respective dates, and packed away in boxes. These papers consist of petitions for grants, warrants of survey, orders, original surveys, and drafts of the grants, &c. They occupy four boxes.

The volumes of selections bound during the year 1861, consist of the following, viz. :—

	VOLS.
Papers of the Legislative Council from 1830 to 1841,	7
Supplemental volume of Cape Breton papers from 1799,	1
Continuation of the first series of files of the House of Assembly from 1831,	1
Supplemental volume of papers from files of Legislative Council, Sheriffs' appointments, gaol returns, &c.,	1
Supplemental volumes of general series from Secretary's office, 1760,	2
Papers connected with the criminal proceedings from 1749 to 1800,	1
Papers connected with the partition of the old townships, from 1760 to 1784,	1
Transcripts received from State paper office in London, viz. :—	
Letters from Governors of Nova Scotia to Lords of Trade, from 1715 to 1781,	5
Letters from Governors of Louisburg to Lords of Trade, from 1745 to 1749,	1
Letters from Board of Trade to Governors at Annapolis, 1714 to 1748,	1
Minutes of Council at Annapolis, 1720 to 1749,	2

French documents relating to Acadia, from the archives of Paris, (copies made at Quebec,) from 1632 to 1749,	2
French register kept at Annapolis, of marriages, baptisms, &c., for 1703,	1
French manuscripts, known as the Tyrell papers, 1753 to 1755,	1
Book containing accounts, certificates, orders, &c., relating to the vessels employed by governments at Halifax in 1749,	1
Letters from Governors of Nova Scotia to Secretary of State, from 1808 to 1813,	2
A volume of public accounts, 1776 to 1781,	1
A volume containing emigration reports, &c.,	1
Census of the county of Halifax, taken in 1851,	2
Documents connected with the militia since 1829,	1
Letters from the Governors of Massachusetts to Secretary of State, 1748 to 1751, from State paper office,	1
Letters from Governors at Annapolis to Secretary of State, 1720 to 1748,	1
Letters from Governors at Halifax to Secretary of State, from 1749 to 1794, from State paper office,	9
Original Council books of Cape Breton, from 1785 to 1820,	6
Returns of the partition of the township grant of Horton,	1
Catalogues of the public documents, made by W. Gautier about 1810,	1
Catalogues of the contents of the foregoing volumes,	3
Catalogue of the contents of volumes made up in 1859 and 1860,	3
Two large volumes of plans and survey of roads, &c.,	2
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In May, 1862, the work was again suspended, by direction of the Government, until January, 1863, when it was once more resumed, with the intention of bringing it to a speedy close. The selections from the papers in the Secretary's office had been brought down to the year 1841, and it was deemed advisable that those from the files of the House of Assembly should be also completed to that time. They occupy four volumes, no papers being selected but those of chief importance and which had not been printed in the Journals. During this year the missing portion of the census of 1838 was found, and was arranged and bound up with the rest. Also, a considerable number of papers connected with the mines and minerals, and the questions in dispute between the Government and the Mining Association of London; and also some despatches from the Colonial Office relative to important changes in the government. These have been also bound and catalogued.

The most important work performed during the present year, has been the progress made towards the completion of a copious Index to the registry books of crown grants of land in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. A complete Index of the names of all grantees from 1725 to 1817, with the dates of the grants, number of acres of land granted, the locality, and other particulars, embracing the names of upwards of 24,000 grantees, has been carefully prepared.

The value and importance of this index will be apparent, when it is known that frequently from 25 to 800 names occur in one patent, and the first name only on the list of grantees is given in the old index. Much inconvenience has hitherto resulted, both to the Government and private parties, in consequence of the want of such an index as that now in progress. It is, however, a work of time, and cannot be completed until July or August next, when I hope to have it brought down to 1845, from which period the crown grants have been recorded in the Registry of Deeds in each county, and proper indexes of them have been kept.

A large quantity of papers to which reference is never made, consisting of

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government vouchers, treasurers' reports, and duplicate accounts, papers appertaining to the custom house, excise, board of revenue, school returns, and those of the Secretary's office, from which selections have been made, have been placed in boxes, but not arranged or classified.

The necessity of some system of registration of marriages has been the subject of much consideration during the last three years. In my last report I mentioned that a great number of bonds taken at the Secretary's office on the issuing of marriage licenses had come into my hands. These bonds extend over a period of 85 years, and are about eleven or twelve thousand in number. Many of them are defective, (particularly the more modern,) and some so carelessly filled up as not to contain the names of the persons to be married, but only those of the sureties; others are without seals, and in other respects defective. These bonds are usually filled up by the ministers in the country, to whom the licenses are directed, who frequently neglect to return them to the office; consequently no record of marriages solemnized under license has been kept. I should suppose about one fourth part of these bonds only have been returned; those, however, in possession of the Government, have been carefully catalogued. The governments of New York and Rhode Island, where the same system of marriage licenses prevailed previous to the revolution, have collected and published catalogues of marriages from their bonds on file. In the latter State there is a very complete system of registration of marriages, births, and deaths, and their returns are annually published by order of the State Government.

I have attached a complete list of the books bound, and documents filed and preserved since the commencement of the commission; and in conclusion, beg to say that the want of a proper place of deposit for the public archives has been the cause of considerable trouble and expense, which otherwise would have been avoided. There is no room in the building which could be conveniently appropriated for their reception, and it has been found necessary to remove several of the boxes to the garret of the building.

The bound volumes have been placed on the open shelves of the Legislative Library. They should have a separate press or division assigned them, and locked up when not required.

As so many materials have thus been collected at provincial expense, of much value for historical purposes, I think it right to revert to the idea suggested in the resolution of the Assembly in 1857, of printing and publishing selections from these archives, believing they would prove very interesting. The States of New York and Pennsylvania have lately published very large collections of this nature.

I have the honor to remain, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS B. AKINS.

To the Hon. the PROVINCIAL SECRETARY.

*A List of all the books and documents arranged and bound by the Commissioner of Public Records from the date of issuing the commission in 1857 to 1st February, 1864.*

	No. of Vols.
1. Copies of despatches from Lords of Trade and Plantations to the Governors at Annapolis, from 1714 to 1748, with catalogue or table of contents,	1
2. Original despatches from Lords of Trade to Governors of Nova Scotia at Halifax, entitled Whitehall despatches, from 1749 to 1799, with a volume containing catalogue of contents—bound in six volumes,	1
3. Copies of despatches from the Lords of Trade, &c., to the Governors at Cape Breton, between 1785 and 1820, with catalogue of contents at the end of each volume. These transcripts were obtained from the State Paper office in London,	2
4. Despatches (original) from Secretaries of State to Governors of Nova Scotia, from 1800 to 1833—bound in ten volumes,	10
A volume containing the catalogues of the contents of the foregoing volumes,	1
5. Duplicate (original) despatches to Governors, between 1824 and 1840, not catalogued,	4
6. Copies of despatches from Governors of Nova Scotia to Lords of Trade and Plantations, from 1718 to 1781, obtained from State Paper office—bound in 5 volumes, with a volume containing catalogue of contents,	6
7. Copies of despatches from Governors of Nova Scotia to Secretaries of State, from 1720 to 1764—bound in ten volumes, (from State Paper office),	10
The catalogue of the contents of these 10 volumes is bound up with that of series No. 6, entitled Despatches from Board of Trade.	
8. Copies of despatches from Governors at Louisburg to Secretary of State, between 1745 and 1748, with catalogue of contents. (State Paper office),	1
9. From Governors of Massachusetts to the Secretary of State, 1748 to 1751, with table of contents.—(State Paper office),	1
10. Letter books of Governor Wentworth, from 1783 to 1807, in seven volumes. (These volumes were presented to the Province by the late Mrs. Gore, having come into her possession as one of the heirs at law of the late Sir Charles Wentworth, son of Governor Wentworth. They contain copies of all his letters to the Secretaries of State while Governor of Nova Scotia, with a great variety of other correspondence of an official character,	7
11. Letters from Governors of Nova Scotia to Secretaries of State, from 1808 to 1813. All despatches from 1813 to the present time are in the office of the Provincial Secretary,	2
12. Documents selected from the files of the Legislative Council, from 1760 to 1829—bound in five volumes,	5
13. Documents from the files of the Legislative Council, 2nd series, 1830 to 1841,—with volume of catalogues,	8
A supplemental vol. of Legislative Council papers,	1
14. Documents selected from the files of the House of Assembly, from 1758 to 1831, in ten volumes,	10

	Catalogue of the contents of the first series of papers from the Legislative Council and those from the House of Assembly, from 1758 to 1831—bound in one volume,	1
	Papers from files of Assembly, from 1832 to 1841.—(Catalogued).	4
15.	Manuscript documents of Nova Scotia, consisting of miscellaneous papers, arranged according to dates, from 1748 to 1841, in 29 volumes. The second volume contains drafts of letters from Governors of the Province and Secretaries of State and Board of Trade, not contained in the series of transcripts obtained from the State Paper office,	29
	A supplemental volume of papers, from 1760 to 1840—another from 1812 to 1840,	2
	The catalogues of the contents of these 31 volumes are contained in two folio volumes,	2

## PAPERS OF THE ISLAND OF CAPE BRETON.

16.	Papers relating to Cape Breton, from 1778 to 1820, in seven vols., with a supplemental volume, from 1796 to 1841,	8
	A volume containing Cape Breton papers, on special subjects, viz. : copies of Imperial acts relating to the Colonies, Orders in Council, Royal Instructions to Governors, Proclamations, and census returns, from 1811 to 1814, &c.,	1
	The catalogue of the contents of the foregoing nine volumes is bound in a separate volume,	1
17.	Papers relating to the county of Cape Breton since its re-annexation in 1820 to 1839, with a few papers in the first volume of previous dates,	5
	The contents of these five volumes will be found in the volume of catalogues entitled "Special subjects,"	5
18.	Council books of Cape Breton while a separate government, from 1785 to 1820, (that for 1793 missing,)	6

## SPECIAL SUBJECTS.

19.	French documents relating to Acadia while under the government of France, from the archives of Paris, being transcripts from the copies in the possession of the government of Canada. Contents : 1st volume, from 1632 to 1699 ; 2nd volume, from 1700 to 1713, with several documents between 1713 and 1749. Table of contents and catalogue of documents in each volume,	2
	A French register of baptisms, marriages, &c., kept at Annapolis between 1702 and 17—. The second volume of this register is in possession of the Roman Catholic Church at Halifax, having been given to the late Archbishop Walsh about ten years since by those in charge of the archives at that time,	1
	French manuscripts called Tyrell's papers, relating to the capture of Fort Cumberland, &c., by Gov. Monkton in 1753 and 1755,	1
20.	Copies of the Minutes of Council at Annapolis, from 1720 to 1749, from State Paper Office. The original Council books had been lost. Since these transcripts were obtained, one of the original volumes has been recovered,	3
21.	A volume containing orders, certificates, and accounts, connected with the vessels employed by Government in 1749-50,	1
22.	Papers connected with the Crown prosecutions for treasons, seditions, &c., between 1749 to 1788,	2

23.	Parliamentary estimates for civil and military establishments of Nova Scotia, from 1751 to 1834,	1
24.	Printed Acts of Parliament relating to the Colonies previous to 1800,	1
25.	Royal instructions to Governors of Nova Scotia, under the Royal seal at arms, from 1720 to 1841—bound in four volumes—an additional or supplemental volume lately added,	4
26.	Royal Proclamations from 1748 to 1807,	1
27.	Orders of the Privy Council, from 1753 to 1827,	2
28.	Royal warrants, mandamuses, and commissions, under seal at arms, from 1753 to 1840,	1
29.	Papers relating to the Indians of Nova Scotia, from 1751 to 1848, including entry book of Commissioners of Indian affairs,	2
30.	Papers connected with the settlement of the old townships, between 1759 and 1784, with some papers relating to the loyalist settlers,	1
	A volume of documents relating to the partition of the townships of Falmouth, Horton, Yarmouth, Onslow, Londonderry, Newport, &c., 1761 to 1784,	1
	Volume containing the return on the writ of partition of the township of Horton,	1
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31.	Treasurers' accounts of the Province of Nova Scotia, from 1758 to 1846—large folio,	6
32.	Papers connected with the settlements formed on the River Saint John, 1764, &c., and the building of the city of Saint John, or Parr Town, 1785 to 1808,	1
CENSUS.		
33.	Census of the Province and return of poll tax to the year 1800,	1
	Several censuses taken between 1800 and 1851,	4
	Census of the county of Halifax, 1851,	2
	Epitome of the census of city of Halifax, 1851,	1
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TOWN OF HALIFAX.		
34.	A perfect copy of the original allotment book of the town of Halifax in 1749-50. This copy was made to be placed in the office for reference in place of the original, which was very much torn, and should be carefully preserved in some suitable place, as the only authentic record of the settlement and plan of the city,	1
	Papers relating to the town of Halifax from 1754 to 1839. The papers of the Shubenacadie canal are bound up in the third volume of this series,	3
35.	Papers relating to the several Negro emigrations and settlements, from 1790 to 1839,	4
36.	A volume containing selections from school returns, &c., between 1813 and 1840,	1
37.	Two volumes containing papers relating to the Government establishment at Sable Island, from 1801 to 1849,	2
38.	Two volumes containing papers connected with the churches of England and Scotland, and the school and glebe lands of the church. (Vol. 1st, from 1779 to 1845, including papers of St. Paul's parish; 2nd vol., from 1800 to 1840, church lands allotted to Ministers of Church of Scotland, &c.)	2

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39. A volume containing papers relating to the casual and territorial revenues, &c.,	1
40. Correspondence between the Governors of Nova Scotia and the British Minister at Washington, with accompanying papers,	1
41. Correspondence between the Governors of Nova Scotia and those of New Brunswick, P. E. Island, and Newfoundland, from 1816 to 1841, with accompanying papers,	1
42. Manuscript copy of the tour made by the late Titus Smith through the eastern part of Nova Scotia by order of Government, with remarks on the natural history of the province,	1
43. A volume containing sheriffs' appointments, gaol returns, and a series of papers connected with the division and boundaries of counties about 1830,	1
44. Papers relating to the militia of Nova Scotia from 1807 to 1843,	2
45. Papers relating to emigration,	1
46. A collection of original returns used in construction of blue books sent to England,	1
47. Two volumes containing papers relating to the mines and minerals of Nova Scotia and the revenue derived from the mines, from 1803 to 1843,	2
48. A collection of catalogues of public documents, made by the late Jas. Gautier, Clerk of Council, about the year 1800,	1
A complete index of all the Crown grants of land in Nova Scotia and Cape Breton between 1718 and 1763, with the names of 4000 grantees, and other particulars,	1
Indexes of the Crown grants from 1763 to 1817, (20,500 grantees,) to be bound in two volumes,	2
A catalogue of all the papers deposited in the various boxes, numbered and marked "Record Commission," including a list of all the marriage license bonds in possession of the Government to 1852 inclusive,	1
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49. Two volumes of letters written by Sir John Wentworth to the Secretaries of State while Governor of New Hampshire,	2
50. Two volumes of plans, chiefly alterations made or proposed to be made in the great roads throughout the province during the last thirty years,	2
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## REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON THE RECORD COMMISSION.

The Committee on the Record Commission beg leave to report as follows :—

They have had under consideration the Report of the Commissioner, T. B. Akins, Esq., containing a statement of his operations since his last Report in the year 1861, and have also had a personal conference with him on the matters referred to in his Report.

They have much pleasure in stating that the duty which was assigned to him by the House of Assembly, has been most ably and carefully discharged, and that his labours in connection with it are now drawing to a close. So soon as he completes the Index of the public grants, which he has now in hands, with some few other matters of a public character, the commission will be at an end.

A very valuable body of public documents connected with the history of the Province, has thus been collected and bound, and now is on the shelves of the Legislative Library. As these volumes are open to the public and liable to injury from exposure, the Committee recommend that suitable book-cases with glass doors should be procured and put up in the small room adjoining the Library, and between it and the Council Chamber, and these documents placed therein under lock and key, of which the Librarian shall be the custodian.

The Commissioner in his Report suggests the propriety of having suitable selections made from these documents, and a small volume published containing them. With reference to this, the Committee think it advisable that the more important of these documents, particularly those in a frail condition and of great historical value, be published so as to preserve them more effectually for historical purposes. They find that this course has been adopted by the States of New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, in reference to their Colonial manuscripts, and that important information has thus been preserved which otherwise must have perished by lapse of time.

They would therefore recommend that the Record Commissioner be directed to make such a selection, and that the Government be authorized to cause the publication of such documents to be made, provided the selections be contained in a single octavo volume of a moderate size.

(Signed)

S. L. SHANNON, *Chairman*.  
J. BOURINOT,  
A. G. ARCHIBALD.

Received and adopted by the House of Assembly, on 22nd day of April, 1864.

