

ARCHIVES IN THE NETHERLANDS

by

H. HARDENBERG

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The article begins with an affirmation that, though archives develop as a result of the growth of the organizations responsible for their formation, it is men who determine the nature and the limits of that growth.

The history of archives development in the Netherlands is traced, beginning with a recounting of the fundamental changes introduced as a result of the French Revolution and, more particularly, as a result of the appearance on the European scene of Napoleon the Great. The Dutch regained their independence after Napoleon's collapse, and demonstrated their capacity for original acts and innovative thinking in a series of statutes and decrees concerning the centralization of archives, and the making of these documents available for public access. Dutch State Archivists began to have annual meetings from 1890, and in 1891 the Association of Dutch Archivists was set up. Thanks to this co-operative activity, three archivists (Samuel Muller, J. A. Feith and R. Fruin) were able to collaborate on a manual relating to the arrangement and description of archives. The resulting treatise is still regarded as an authoritative textbook. There are sections dealing with the present-day organization of the archives of the Netherlands, rights of public access, finding aids, legislation, and a new approach to Dutch archival science.

In order to illustrate the difference between archives and mere collections of historical documents, the former are often described as the written deposit left by public or private transactions. The number of documents constituting such a deposit usually grows with the volume of such transactions, and through taking all too literally what was only meant as a figure of speech this growing process has sometimes given rise to the paradoxical assertion that archives accumulate entirely of their own accord and even contrarily to what men intended. But nothing could be farther from the truth. Just as separate documents are created one by one by human effort, so it is only man who is responsible for gathering them together into the assemblage of documents usually known as the archives of a public or private body.

It is man who throughout the centuries has determined whether and in what order the documents should be set aside for preservation and by doing so has given each archive group its own special structure. Although the original structure might occasionally have been altered, either because a different arrangement was needed after some time, or through neglect, fire or other disaster, it is still a fact that the order in which the archives were arranged in the first instance was dictated by the custodian's view on the subject at the time the archives were formed.

Dutch archivists, believing that the best way to assist archival research is to restore the original order as a guarantee of greater authenticity, have opted for the "restoration principle" as a basis for the proper arrangement of archives in their custody. But this system was preceded by others, the reason being that the unification of archive administration in the Netherlands was rather a slow process; as we shall see later on, a uniform organization has unfortunately never been completely established.

I. The History of Archive Administration in the 19th and 20th Centuries

As with so much else in Dutch government during the past 150 years, concern for preserving archives and making them available for research was an offshoot of the French Revolution. Up to late in the 18th century the sole purpose of the government archives was to serve as an aide-memoire for the administration. Accordingly it was only by way of exception that historical scholars were allowed to draw on these sources. In their eagerness to break with the *ancien regime*, the leaders of the French Revolution showed no such reticence and even went a step further by considering archive administration as a separate function of the state with particular emphasis on the right of access to archives and provision for their use in the interests of learning.

In 1789 the *Assemblée Nationale* decided that documents of the pre-revolutionary period relating to the country's historical highlights should be brought together at a centre known as the *archives nationales*, and after the Batavian Revolution the same system was adopted in the Netherlands. This measure, which was of such great consequence to the future, was an outcome of the Dutch Constitution of 1798 which replaced the federal system of the Republic of the Seven United Provinces by a single indivisible Batavian Republic. The independent provinces ceased to exist, their possessions were nationalized, and as a result the archives of the provincial governments, like those of the former federal bodies, became national property. At the same time this led the way towards making these records available for historical research.

On 22 December 1800, Mr. Hendrik Van Royen, the former Head of the Latin School at Flushing, complained in the Upper Chamber of the Representative Body or Batavian Parliament about the inaccessibility of the archives, "Those genuine and unadulterated sources from which we should, and from which alone we can, draw all the knowledge and learning required for the proper understanding of affairs and circumstances." Up till then it had been extremely difficult to examine these archives, only a few privileged persons being allowed to do so. Now, fortunately, a new era had dawned at last; "all the charters and a vast number of excellent documents are now no longer the supposed property of various bodies which, jealous of their possessions, kept them hidden from the view of others, proud of a mass of material lying useless under a pile of dust." This material had now become the property of the entire nation, so was it not high time to make use of it in the national interest? Hence he suggested that all charters, papers and documents previously in the custody of the federal, provincial or district administrations should be brought together and put in order for the benefit of the Batavian nation as a whole and students of the nation's history in particular.

Following Van Royen's suggestion, Mr. Henrik Van Wijn, former pensionary of Gouda, was appointed archivist of the Batavian Republic on 17 June 1802. The government made him responsible for superintending the charters and ancient state papers down to the conclusion of the Peace of Munster. True, this was a very limited task, as all the very important documents of later date than 1648 were omitted. Moreover, he was only authorized to trace the older documents without moving them from the province where they were preserved, and to merely make an inventory of the most notable charters. There was no question of making these documents available to the public, as Van Royen had suggested. All the same, Van Wijn's appointment some months later as archivist for the department of Holland made other departments more interested in their records and led them to appoint archivists to look after their own charters and documents.

The Batavian Republic was in time transformed into the Kingdom of Holland which in its turn was, by Napoleon's order, annexed to the French Empire. This dealt Van Wijn's work a serious blow, for a decree of 23 August 1812 declared the Dutch national archives abolished and ordered the removal of their principal records to Paris, to be deposited in a huge building intended for housing the chief records of the entire Empire. In fact immediately after the annexation the archives of the former ministries and the States General had been removed to the French capital. Fortunately Napoleon's downfall put off the plan and the removal was stopped. After the 1813 revolution some of the 52 chests already in France found their way back to the Netherlands without even having been opened.

Soon after independence had been restored to the Dutch people, the Sovereign Prince and future King William I concerned himself with the fate of the archives by promulgating a new statute on archive administration. By the decree of 8 March 1814, he ordered all public records up to 1794, kept at the Hague or elsewhere, to be moved to one of the upper rooms of the *Ridderzaal*, the former centre of government. Van Wijn, as the State Archivist, with the help of a number of assistants, was made responsible for superintending and arranging these archives.

The Royal Decree of 23 December 1826, which ordered unknown and only partially exploited sources of national history to be traced and if necessary brought to light, shows the great historical importance attached to the care of archives at the beginning of the 19th century. To this end all provincial governors were instructed to issue the necessary orders for the immediate arrangement and listing of all provincial, town and other municipal archives, as well as the archives of all corporations, viz. in particular the almshouses and other charitable institutions.

Unfortunately the King had little idea of the immensity of this task or of the amount of time and qualified staff to carry it through. Had it been understood that the listing of archives requires far more than a pen, ink and paper a school of archives would have been set up even at that date, on the pattern of the *Ecole des Chartes* established in Paris in 1821. But no such idea ever entered the heads of the students of history of the time; in fact, historical studies were not looked upon as a special academic science. A century was to pass before the necessity of a school of archives was officially recognized.

Nevertheless the historical interest was strong enough to be responsible for a decree issued by the Minister for Home Affairs on 4 August 1829, which first broached the principle of public access to the archives. This decree empowered the custodians of state, provincial and local archives to permit the inspection of them, with due observance of the necessary precautions, to all known and trusted persons who desired to carry out historical research in the public interest. However, documents of which the contents could only be of interest to a particular branch of administration or to a particular person, could only be consulted by those who could prove they were entitled to do so. This restriction shows that it was still realized that the archives were also of practical value to the administration on account of the rights and evidence they contained. On the other hand it will occasion no surprise that the excessive caution with which public access was first granted was to lead to the erroneous assumption that the record office was the archivist's private preserve. And a selfish official could always refuse admission to any visitor he took a dislike to, with the excuse that the records were inadequately housed or still in disorder.

Owing to the country's financial difficulties between 1830 and 1850 the government paid very little attention to archive administration. A typical

contemporary view was expressed by a member of the Lower Chamber about 1846/7 who considered that archive management should usually be as honourable rather than lucrative profession. But it would be wrong to say that this work was altogether neglected, seeing that several provincial archivists were given a government allowance and required by the Ministry for Home Affairs, among other things, to submit an annual report on their work through the intermediary of the Deputy Councillors of the Provincial States. And there were also plenty of outsiders to keep up the government's interest in archives. For instance, the Leyden Literary Society (Maatschappij der Letterkunde) and the Society of Arts and Sciences of the Province of Utrecht (Provinciaal Utrechts Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen) spoke out against the existing organization; this induced the government to ask an outsider, J. J. F. NOORDZIEK, the librarian of the Lower Chamber, to report on developments in archive work during the period 1826-1852.

Things did in fact improve when Dr. R. C. Bakhuizen Van Den Brink, a distinguished historian, was appointed Archivist of the Kingdom in 1854; in his eleven years of office he achieved a great deal. One of his first steps was to move the public records from the rooms of the Binnenhof to the imposing building on the Plein which is now the seat of the Dutch Foreign Office. Here was ample room for the many pre-1813 documents still not transferred. In "De Gestie van Dr. R. C. Bakhuizen van den Brink als archivaris des Rijks 1854-1865" (Dr. R. C. Bakhuizen Van Den Brink's work as State Archivist from 1855 to 1865), one of his successors, Professor R. Fruin, described what Bakhuizen acquired for his repository during this period, including purchases and gifts. In his "Overzicht van het Nederlandsche Rijksarchief" (Survey of the Dutch State Archives) published in 1854, Bakhuizen himself had already stressed their importance for the study of national and general history. He also succeeded in strengthening the bonds with the provincial archives, but did not live to see them incorporated into a single Public Record Service. But by extending the state subvention system he was at any rate instrumental in providing an Archivist for each province a year after his death. Guelderland had already shown the way by the appointment of a well-known historian I. A. Nijhoff in 1817.

Unfortunately Bakhuizen did not succeed in establishing a statutory regulation of the archive administration, but the draft law relating to public records, found among his papers after his death, leaves no doubt of his intentions. This draft also dealt with the municipal archives, where the State for lack of statutory authority could do little. Although scholars had been appointed record keepers in Bois-le-Duc, Amsterdam, Leeuwarden, Kampen and Zutphen, they were unsupervised and had no contact with each other. Since at this date no general rule existed for the arrangement and description of archives and no one had a clear conception of the problems involved, it was not generally recognized that record office work required special training.

The first man to see that a practical and at the same time permanent arrangement should be governed by rules based on a specific principle was Mr. Samuel Muller who in 1879 was appointed State Archivist for the province of Utrecht and Municipal Archivist for the city of Utrecht. Whereas all loose documents in the various provincial and municipal repositories had previously been arranged in chronological or alphabetic order, without reference to their origin, he now arranged records systematically, according to their original order, and adhered also to the principle that each archive group belonging to an independent body should be separately arranged and described. The inventories he compiled on these principles aroused general interest.

Muller soon found a number of followers, the first being R. Fruin, then an official in the Utrecht State Archives. When State Archivists began to hold annual meetings in 1890, and the Association of Dutch Archivists was set up a year later, they were able to give their views wider publicity. It was also due to their co-operation with the Groningen State Archivist Mr. J. A. Feith that in 1898 they were able to bring out a "Manual for the arrangement and description of Archives" at the request of the Association. This Manual created a sensation at home and abroad and was translated into several languages.

Besides publishing a periodical, the "Nederlands Archievenblad" (Dutch Journal of Archives) whose first number appeared in 1895 the Association from the beginning had as its aim the establishment of a statutory regulation for the public records. In 1900 the Board appointed a committee for making a draft law which, with certain amendments, was submitted to the Minister for Home Affairs in 1908. This was followed by a long tale of woes, culminating in the resignation of the General State Archivist Jhr. Mr. Th. H. F. Van Riemsdijk. When Professor Fruin succeeded to the post, the matter was reconsidered, although the Archives Law was not finally passed until 1918. This Law, with its implementary decrees, has become the basis of the present-day organization of archives in the Netherlands.

The chief merits of this Law were that public access to the archives was guaranteed by statute and that uniform conditions about consultation and borrowing were laid down for all public records. The Law defined the manner in which the archives were to be distributed among the various state repositories and rules were set up for the care and the superintendence of the municipal and polder board archives. Provision was made for the destruction of documents not considered worth preserving and certain qualifications were fixed for appointments to the post of record officer. But the old, amateurish approach to the subject was still evident in the fact that appointments were not made contingent on compulsory training at a school of archives. Although such a school had been opened in 1919 at the General State Archives, which had meanwhile been moved to the BLEYENBURG, this was actually only intended as a voluntary post-graduate course. It was closed down soon after 1924 as an economy measure and some 30 years were to pass before it opened its doors again as a result of a private initiative.

The 1918 Archives Law provided that public records still lodged with the administrative departments were to be transferred to the state repositories under separate Royal Decrees. The old pre-1811 legal and notarial records and the records of the various ministries up to 1830 had been transferred before 1918. The determining date of the former category was now moved forward to 1842. The ministerial records also gradually found their way to the General State repository up to 1914 (Foreign Affairs only up to 1870 for lack of space). The transfer of church baptismal, marriage and burial records lodged with the municipalities during the Napoleonic period, together with the duplicate copies of records of the Register Office up to 1842, were moved to the state repositories under two important decrees issued in 1929. Legal, notarial and ecclesiastical records originating from municipalities with their own archivist and an adequate repository were deposited there until further notice.

Care for the municipal and polder board archives, however, did not extend much beyond 1813 and 1811 respectively. Since the Law had only provided for an obligatory repository for these sections, it often happened that the later 19th century archives were housed under most deplorable conditions. The same was true of records of the various departments of government. For these and other reasons a completely new law was advocated after the Second World War. Once again it was the Association of Dutch Archivists that took the initiative and

prepared a new law, of which the draft was submitted to the Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences in 1951. And again a number of obstacles had to be overcome before the law came into force; the archivists' view was that all public records ought to be brought under their superintendence, but the administration was very unwilling to make such a concession.

As the 1950 Decree relating to Postal and Archival Affairs of the State Administration made the Minister for Home Affairs responsible for the organization of the contemporary archives of the government departments, which were to be arranged by subjects and classified according to a decimal classification system, the custodians of the "current" archives felt themselves in a strong position. It took three years for a law to be drafted by the archives committee set up by the Minister of Education and including representatives of the administration, and it was not until 22 October 1959, that the draft law was accepted by the Lower Chamber. The Upper Chamber however demurred against the provision that public records which had wrongly found their way into private hands were to be given up; in the case of records later than 1813, non-compliance was even subject to a penalty. These objections proving insuperable, the draft law was rejected on 21 June 1960, after which a new law was submitted without the offending clauses which the Upper Chamber had regarded as an expropriation without compensation.

In 1962, the amended Archives Law got through both Chambers without mishap but did not come into operation because the Archives Decree, in which the provisions for the application of the Law had to be included, was not yet ready. A new delay was caused by the Council of State's objection to certain provisions of this Decree. According to the Explanatory Memorandum to the Budget of the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work, which since April 1965 has been responsible for the supervision of Archive Administration, the Archives Law of 1962 and the Archives Decree based thereon should become effective by 1968. This has been corroborated by a Royal Decree of 26 March of this year, fixing the first May 1968 as the initial date. However at the same time the question is being studied, what amendments are needed to make the fairly complex new Archives Law more efficient.

II. The Present-day Organization of Dutch Archives

a. *State Archives*

Each capital town of the eleven provinces into which the European territory of the Kingdom of the Netherlands is divided has a state repository for the preservation of archives of the former provincial administrations and such records of the present provincial governments as have been transferred to these centres. These repositories also house the records of the executive bodies or persons employed by the central or provincial governments who exercised, or still exercise their functions within the area now covered by the province, or whose rights and functions have been transferred to such executive bodies or persons. A third group is constituted by the records belonging to authorities, institutions or persons, of which the ownership or custodianship has been transferred to the State.

Thus the General State Archives at the Hague administer the records of the province of South-Holland up to 1850. Here are also housed the archives of the past and present central governing bodies, as well as such archives belonging to former Dutch overseas governments as have been transferred to the Hague. The latter is only the case with the West Indian government archives up to 1845, those of the former Dutch East Indies being deposited in the *Arsip Negara* at Jakarta, and with the archives of the Dutch Guinea Coast possessions ceded to Great Britain in 1872.

The State Archives in the various provinces, created by the gradual conversion of the provincial record offices into state record repositories (the first being Guelderland in 1877 and the last Zeeland in 1890), form, together with the General State Archives, the State Records Service, headed by an Archivist General to whom all government archivists and other staff are subordinate. For other facts regarding their history reference may be made to *De Rijksarchieven in Nederland* (State Archives in the Netherlands), the Hague, 1953.

The General State Archives, the direct continuation of the State Record Office set up in 1802, is divided into three departments. The first contains the archives of the States General from 1576 to 1796; the Council of State from 1581 to 1795 and other Generality executives; the Stadholder's office from 1747 to 1795; and the administrators of the domains of the Stadholder's family and its ancestors from 1178 to 1811; the boards of management of the Dutch East and West Indian Companies and other colonial archives, together with the records of the Managers of the Levant Trade. The second department consists of the records of central government bodies since 1795/6. An important section of this department is formed by the archives of the Secretariat of State, the King's Cabinet and the Council of State, as well by those of the government departments. It also comprises the records of all kind of political and social organizations and the posthumous papers of statesmen and high-ranking functionaries. The third department looks after the archives of the County of Holland, the States of Holland and West Friesland and succeeding administrations of the Southern portion of Holland up to 1850. It also contains the archives of the Count's "Chamber of Fiefs and Registers", its oldest registers going back to about 1280; the Count's audit office with accounts dating from the 14th century; and the archives of the Court of Holland from the period 1428-1798. In addition to monastic, manorial and family archives; the old judicial and orphan chamber records up to 1811; the newer judicial records up to 1842; and the notarial records from the 16th century up to 1842; at that also ecclesiastical birth, marriage and burial records up to 1811, and duplicate copies of the records of the Register Office from 1811 to 1892. Maps originating from the various departments of the General State Archives have been brought together in a general collection. See B. Van 'T Hoff, *De kaartenverzameling van het Algemeen Rijksarchief* (The Map Collection in the General State Archives) (Nederlands Archievenblad LXV, 1961, 49-75).

b. *Municipal and polder board archives*

The Archives Law of 1918 placed the municipal administrations under no obligation to appoint a qualified officer as their archivist. Where the municipality has no archivist, as is mostly the case, archives transferred to the repository are administered by the Town Clerk. To prevent the municipal authorities' care of its record, as prescribed by law, from becoming a dead letter, both these and the polder board archives are subject to inspection. This is carried out by provincial Inspecting Officers responsible for submitting to the Deputy Councillors of the Provincial States periodical reports on the condition of the archives inspected by them and to assist the non-professional custodians in making inventories. In most provinces the Inspecting Officer's work is performed by the State Archivist, usually assisted by archivists employed by the province. It is exceptional for a qualified archivist to be put in charge of polder board records.

In some provinces the burden of inspection work has been somewhat eased by setting up district record services, i.e. several municipalities jointly appoint an archivist to administer their records on certain days. For further information reference may be made to H. J. Bernsen, *Het ontstaan en de organisatie van de streekarchiwariaten in Noord-Brabant* (Nederlands Archievenblad LXVI, 1962,

11-16) and J. H. Van Mosselveld, *De praktijk van een streekarchivariaat* (ibid. 17-27). Only 18 out of some 1,000 Dutch municipalities boast a separate records building and their own records department. In nearly 40 cases the records and the archivist are accommodated in the town hall. Amsterdam has one of the most important municipal record departments. For a complete list of W. J. Formsma, *Gids voor de Nederlandse archieven* (Bussum, 1967), 95-97.

c. *Ecclesiastical archives*

Several ecclesiastical bodies and religious orders have appointed an archivist to look after their records. The most advanced in this respect is the Dutch Reformed Church which has set up a special archives committee on which archivists are represented and which the new Ecclesiastical Order of 1956 made responsible for superintending the records of all parishes and other ecclesiastical bodies. This committee is assisted by the Archivist of the Dutch Reformed Church, who is also responsible for administering the synodial archives. In 1960 it published the first volume of a conspectus of all records of classes, church councils and churchwardenships still extant in the Netherlands. It also laid down guidelines for the organization and administration of ecclesiastical archives. For further information cf. J. N. Bakhuizen Van Den Brink, *De archieven van de Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk* (Nederlands Archievenblad LXVI, 1962, 169-183), and S. J. Fockema Andreae, *Archives des eglises wallonnes des Pays-Bas* (ibid. LVII, 1952/53, 105-121).

The Roman Catholic authorities have also been active, as a result of the rules relating to the right of access, accessibility, use and loan of ecclesiastical records, laid down by the bishopric of Roermond in 1947. Cf. L. Van Hommerich, *Beheer van diocesane archieven der Rooms Katholieke kerk* (ibid., 183-198). The records of the Archbishopric of Utrecht and the Bishoprics of Haarlem, Breda and Rotterdam are looked after in the same way. For the records of the monastic orders reference should be made to D. De Kok, *Staat van archieven der andere kloosterorden in Nederland* (Ned. Archievenblad XL, 1932/33, 212-217). For many years the records of the Old Catholic Church were housed by the State. Cf. A. J. VAN DE VEN, *De archieven van de Oud-Katholieke Kerk* (ibid., LXVI, 1962, 198-210). Unfortunately no summary accounts are available for the other communions. The Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Calvinistic Churches in the Netherlands have their own archivists (Dr. S. Hart, Municipal Archives, Amsterdam, and Ds. H. Hoekstra, Municipal Archives, Rotterdam, respectively), and some further details on other communions not mentioned here may be found in A. J. Van De Ven, *Les archives religieuses aux Pays-Bas* (Archivum IV, 1954, 115-122).

d. *Domestic and family archives*

The chief domestic archives are the Royal House Archives at the Hague, of which the oldest documents go back to the middle of the 13th century and which also supplement the archives of the Stadholder's Office in the General State Archives. Documents may only be consulted by permission of H. M. the Queen, to be requested via the Director of the House Archives, 74, Noordeinde, the Hague.

Other important domestic archives are those of the Manor Bergh at 's-Heerenbergh on which information may be obtained from the State Archives at Arnhem. In order to provide a conspectus of all collections of family papers in Holland in public or private hands, a Central Register of Family Archives, modelled on the British National Register, was created in 1964, as part of the General State Archives, but seated at Drift 27, Utrecht. Its objects are to assist scholarly research by recording details about the contents, listing and accessibility of private archives, and where necessary to afford assistance when records have to be listed or described.

e. *Business and social archives*

The "Nederlands Economisch-Historisch Archief" (Dutch Economic History Record Office) is seated at 83, Laan Copes van Cattenburch, the Hague, and since 1913 has been engaged in bringing together and preserving company and business records, merchants' accounts, shipping and plantation companies' records, etc., and also printed documents of importance for economic history, such as stock exchange lists of the 17th and 18th century. For information on its holdings reference may be made to the Director's Annual Reports in the *Economisch-Historisch Jaabboek* appearing since 1916. An institute of the same kind is the "Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Gerschiedenis" (International Institute of Social History) which has been bringing together materials for social history since 1936. It collects such documents as trade union records and the papers of well-known political figures of importance in the history of the labor movement, without confining its attention to the Netherlands. See also the *Annual Reports* published by the Institute since 1937.

III. Right of Public Access to and Accessibility of the Archives

One of the main principles embodied in the 1918 Archives Law has been the right of public access to such archives as are deposited in the state, municipal and polder board repositories the Law refers to. This right to access implies that any person, whether of Dutch or other nationality, may inspect free of charge the documents preserved there, or have photographic or written copies or extracts made at his own cost. Reservations are that when records are taken into custody their contents may not be revealed to third parties before a certain date and that they may be withheld for special reasons, such as the material condition of the document. There are also certain classes of documents e.g. the pre-1899 archives of the Secretariat of State and the King's Cabinet, which can only be examined if a written guarantee is first given not to publish anything contained in them without the previous consent of the head of the General State Archives.

The 1918 Archives Law did not say when public records were to be transferred to the public repositories, but the 1950 Decree relating to Postal and Archival Affairs of the State Administration laid down that it should be after forty years. Despite the tendency, especially prevalent in America, to shorten even further than this the time during which contemporary public records are kept closed to the public, the 1962 Archives Law has taken a step in the opposite direction by specifying, as a general rule, that records held by official bodies must be over 50 years old before they may be referred to the public repositories. As the new Archives Law did not exclude the possibility of an earlier transfer, the subsequent Archives Decree is authorizing such a transfer, if the keeper of the record office has sufficient reason to supply room for it. On the other hand, it says that a further postponement of the date limit will need the consent of the Minister of Culture who actually supervises Archive Administration.

But in practice the actual situation is that the competent authorities nearly always give bona fide scholars permission to consult documents less than forty years old and make use of the information they contain. By a recent decision of the Cabinet Council the records relating to the Indonesian question, which have been transferred to the General State Archives, are even available for public access after 25 years. Plans also exist for the rapid conversion to a so-called Limbo of the bunker at Schaarsbergen, an auxiliary repository used by the General State Archives after the Second World War for lack of space. Here

accommodation will be provided for all non-current ministerial records, the documents listed for destruction will be segregated under the supervision of officials of the General State Archives, and the remainder made ready for transfer.

Generally speaking the accessibility of records depends on their arrangement and the compilation of inventories and other means of reference. In the system adopted by the States General of the United Provinces under the Republic, documents were arranged chronologically according to the order in which they were dealt with, and this method was prescribed for all ministries in 1823, the creation of files on specific topics even being expressly forbidden. But the system was not always adhered to in practice; not only were files purposely created, but "closed" files were also formed when documents relating to the same business were moved forward and put together. In addition to the formation of chronological series, the state administration of the Batavian period had evolved the report system in which the decrees were filed in the form of a daily numbered series of double sheets for holding the documents relating to the decree. As in the chronological system a diary, a subject index and an index of names were essential features in the report system, this system was continued after 1813 for the records of the Secretariat of State and the King's Cabinet, but the Public Works Department of the Ministry for Home Affairs decided to arrange documents according to a classification more suited to their own particular needs.

It was a result of inadequate titling, perpetual changes in the headings, and the deterioration of the indices through lack of trained staff, that new systems of filing were introduced at the beginning of the 20th century, records being arranged in subject order according to a universal decimal classification originally intended for the use of libraries. For the system in current use for public records, see P. Noordenbos, *Overheidsdocumentatie*, 8th ed. revised by F. Ruygh (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1962). Since the compilers of the "Manual for the arrangement and description of archives" had expressly laid down that the place a document should occupy in the archives is to be decided not by its subject matter but by its destination, a dispute inevitably arose between the archivists and the registrars or keepers of current records. In this connection reference may be made to H. Hardenberg, *Le classement par matieres des archives* (Melanges offerts par ses confreres etrangers a Charles Braibant, Directeur General des Archives de France, President d'honneur du Conseil internationale des Archives, Brussels, 1959, 189-197).

As a result of this controversy, which grew particularly animated after the Second World War, it was finally realized that a uniform code for the records of the entire government administration had less advantages than had been supposed, and that in practice no administration can do without an inventory of all its records, such an inventory being also required by the 1950 Decree relating to Postal and Archival Affairs of the State Administration. Apart from the system used for archive making, persons who are carrying out a research in archives have to know which authorities usually dealt with certain matters both in earlier and later periods.

IV. Aids to the Use of the Archives

Scholars and other searchers requiring information on the existence of certain records can have recourse to the surveys of holdings of the public repositories. A survey of this kind entitled *De Rijksarchieven in Nederland* (The

State Archives in the Netherlands), published in 1953, covers all state repositories in the country. Unfortunately this work has been out of print for some years. It contains brief historical accounts of the various repositories with a summary of the archives deposited there and information on the periods they cover, as well as extant manuscript or printed inventories of their contents. For separate acquisitions not belonging to any particular collection of archives in the said repositories, reference may be made to the *Verslagen omtrent 's Fijks Oude Archieven* (Reports on Old State Archives), published annually since 1878. As regards other public archives, the position is that nearly all municipal archivists regularly issue annual reports containing a list of new acquisitions and a statement on the progress made in the drawing up of inventories. Information on the presence of inventories of municipal and polder board records not administered by an archivist will be found in the annual reports of the provincial inspectors of these records.

The difficulty of obtaining a survey of all records transferred to the repositories of municipalities and polder boards employing an archivist was met in 1945 by A. Le Cosquino De Bussy, W. J. Formsma and B. Van 'T Hoff's *Gids voor de archieven van gemeenten en waterschappen in Nederland* (A Guide to the Municipal and Polder Board Archives in the Netherlands), Groningen, 1945. Dr. Formsma and Mr. Van 'T Hoff were also the authors of a *Repertorium van inventarissen van Nederlandse archieven* (A Repertory of Inventories of Dutch Archives), 2nd edition, revised by J. Meinema, Groningen, 1965. This repertory gives the titles of all printed, stencilled and offset inventories published. The great number of new inventories published from 1965 to the end of 1967 shows that such books unfortunately soon become out-of-date. A survey of material regularly published in this field is provided by the stencilled monthly *Aanwinstenlijst van de Bibliotheek van het Algemeen Rijksarchief* (List of Accessions to the Library of the General State Archives) which has been appearing since 1st January, 1966, and is a welcome supplement to the above-mentioned Repertory.

Well-known historical scholars were also commissioned by the Netherlands government to carry out searches from 1886 to 1908 with a view to bringing to light material of importance for Dutch history in foreign archives. These searches gave rise to a number of printed reports listed in the *Repertorium van inventarissen van Nederlandse archieven* (Groningen, 1965), 15-16. For supplementary materials in the state record offices of Munster, Dusseldorf, Liege and Antwerp, see *Nederlands Archievenblad* LXX, 1966, 36-75 and also P. WALNE, *Some sidelights on Dutch history in an English County Record Office* (ibid. LXXI, 1967, 126-134).

Some aids to the use of archives, still too little used in the Netherlands, are the record office guides in which all material on a particular historical subject is brought together in survey form. At the request of UNESCO and the International Council on Archives Dr. M. P. Roessingh, member of the staff of the General State Archives, was commissioned to compile a survey of the sources for the history of Latin America and adjoining territories, as extant in Dutch archives, libraries and other institutions. This guide is scheduled for publication in 1968. A *Survey of archives in the Netherlands pertaining to the history of the Antilles* (West-Indische Gids XXXV, 1954) by Dr. M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofs was published in the Netherlands, and for West Africa reference may be made to Patricia Carson's *Materials for West African History in the archives of Belgium and Holland* (London 1962). A recent survey of archival sources of importance for the history of the Dutch province of Limburg is to be found in Dr. G. W. A.

Panhuizen's contribution to *Limburg's verleden. Geschiedenis van Nederlands Limburg tot 1815* (Limburg's Past. The History of Dutch Limburg up to 1815) II (Maastricht, 1967), 704-780, which lists both sources stored in the State Archives at Maastricht and other outside the actual province, with emphasis on the former.

V. Archive Legislation

One of the great merits of the 1918 Archives Law has been the qualifications it requires for appointment to the post of scientific archive officer. It may also be mentioned here that the regulations for the application of the Law included a provision, ordering the drawing up of schedules of documents for destruction in co-operation with the Minister responsible for the supervision of Archive Administration. A third point, worthy of mention is that the Law, in contrast to what German archivists do, for instance, made no distinction between "registry" and "records" considered worth of permanent preservation. For the text of the Law and the resultant Decrees see the edition (now unfortunately out of print) in Schuurman and Jordens' *Wetten* No. 90 which includes all supplements. For a commentary on the Law one should consult R. Fruin, *De Archiefwet 1918 I-III* (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1919-1929).

According to the existing regulation qualified archive staff are divided into two categories. Those in the first category (keepers of State and of important municipal record offices and their adjuncts called "chartermesters") are university graduates with a doctoral degree in law, literature or theology who have successfully finished a practical training course of one year in a public record office administered by an officer in this same category, and have passed a special examination held by state commissioners. Up to 1 May 1968 the examination was in the following subjects: archival theory and archive administration, paleography, diplomatics, historical chronology, a knowledge of the judicial organization in the Netherlands before 1795, the state institutions in the Netherlands in earlier times, and the medieval ecclesiastical institutions.

The 1918 Archives Law required no special preliminary training for appointment to the second category (archivists and head-archivists), although candidates were usually expected to have completed a secondary school course before embarking on their training course. This has also been one of the requirements for entry to the State School of Archives. Until recently the subjects of the examination for the diploma of archivist in the second category were the principles of archival theory and archive administration, knowledge of early Dutch handwriting and the outlines of Dutch history and the state institutions.

The new Archives Decree of 26 March 1968 has revised the examination programme of both categories by adding some subjects, as it has also widened the recruiting of archivists by admitting university graduates from other faculties. Differences between the two categories have largely disappeared since the Second World War now that the Association of Archivists in the Netherlands and its subsidiary association for promoting the interests of archive officers in government service consider both categories as having equal rights, and the salary differences have also been narrowed down.

The State School of Archives, re-established by Royal Decree of 26 July 1955, offers training courses for archive officers. Originally it took a small number as paid trainees, but this has recently been replaced by a system of paid apprenticeship in the State Archives Service. The probationers are trained for the higher and medium grades of archive officer, as they have been termed since

1962. In addition to the former compulsory examination subjects, the School of Archives provides instruction in Medieval Latin and Middle Dutch. The Archives Decree, following the 1962 Law, has made certain changes in the requirement for admission. Attendance at the Archives School will be compulsory for every one, at least for subjects in which the candidates have not passed an academic or equivalent examination beforehand.

The new Law's main changes in the previous situation relate to the following matters. For the first time in the fifty-year period of archive legislation in the Netherlands, a legal definition is given of what is to be understood by archival documents. It includes both papers received and compiled by government bodies and those of institutions or persons whose rights or functions have been transferred to any government body. Also all documents kept in the public repositories by agreement or for other reasons, as well as photographic reproductions legally substituted for archival documents.

Another new feature is that any person who has custody of records more properly belonging to a government department must give them up for a short period to enable a photographic reproduction to be made of them. Non-compliance with this order may incur a fine not exceeding 2,000 guilders. The obligation to transfer to the appropriate repositories any documents over fifty years old, compiled by government departments, has been mentioned already above. Also new are the Archivist General's responsibility for superintending the records of State departments and of public bodies not covered by the joint regulations law; the provincial inspecting officer's responsibility for superintending records not transferred from provincial bodies; and that of the municipal archivist for superintending the administration of records not transferred from municipal bodies. Lastly, the 1962 Archives Law envisages the establishment of a Council on Archives whose task it will be to supply the Minister responsible for implementing the Law with information, either on request or voluntarily, on matters relating to archives. It is to be hoped that the Council will be made up of persons really capable of serving the interests of archive work. For the text of the Law of 19 July 1962 and the Archives Decree of 26 March 1968, reference may be made to the *Staatsblad van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden* (Official Gazette of the Kingdom of the Netherlands) 1962, No. 313 and 1968, No. 200, and for a commentary thereon to F. J. Duparc and F. Hinrichs, *De Archiefwet* 1962 (Alphen aan den Rijn, 1963).

The transfers required by the new Law will present the archive service with great problems, since most of the record offices are already too small even to cope with present needs. Bearing in mind the prospective flow of new records, the government has worked out a building programme of which the new depots at Middleburg and Arnheim are the first results. In co-operation with the town council, the government has recently built a new repository at Utrecht; others will follow at Leeuwarden, Haarlem and Zwolle and a new "Algemeen Rijksarchief" is also projected. In the meantime new depots have been built by the municipalities of Arnheim, Zutphen, Delft, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Alkmaar, and at Rotterdam they are even building a third one. In most cases these new premises have profited by experience gained abroad since 1945, especially in France and Germany. Hence all the new state archives buildings will have exhibition rooms in view of the educational task of the archives. Our own efforts have resulted in an improved method of filing charters in melinex covers. Cf. the relevant articles of the State Archivists Dr. M. P. Van Buijtenen and Dr. P. J. Mey and the Director of the Central Laboratory for the Examination of Objects of Art and Science in *Nederlands Archievenblad* LXIX, 1965, 85-115.

VI. The New Approach to Archival Science

It is gratifying to note that in the post-war period archival science in the Netherlands has undergone a complete change for the better. This renaissance actually began in 1951 with a memorable address given by the former Archivist General Jhr. Dr. D. P. M. Graswinckel, entitled *Hercules op de tweesprong* (Hercules at the crossroads) (Nederlands Archievenblad LV, 1950/51, 107-116) on the 60th anniversary of the Association of Archivists. At about the same time two officials of the General State Archives, Carel Bloemen and J. L. Van Der Gouw, started a training course for business archivists as no such professional training had been organized elsewhere. In the *Mededelingen* (Reports) by and on behalf of past and present pupils of this private school of archives, interesting discussions were held on such burning questions as the revision of the famous *Handleiding* (Manual), for which purpose the Association had appointed a committee of archivists who were unable to agree on the matter, and on problems relating to modern archival systems. After the State School of Archives reopened its doors the two initiators were appointed lecturers there.

As the Muller, Feith and Fruin Manual was not very suitable for explaining to beginners the basic principles of archival theory and its application in practice, Van Der Gouw, the present Archivist General, wrote an *Inleiding tot de archivistiek* (Introduction to Archive Administration). In 1955 this Introduction was published as the first volume of a series entitled *Archivistica, Publicaties van de Archiefschool*, the second, *Nederlandse Archiefterminologie* (Dutch Archive Terminology) appearing in 1962.

The latter was the work of a committee consisting of Drs. J. L. Van Der Gouw, Dr. W. J. Van Hoboken, the Municipal Archivist of Amsterdam, Dr. G. W. A. Panhuysen, the State Archivist in Limburg, and the author of the present report. It arose out of the establishment of an international committee for archive terminology, of which I was chairman, during the Second International Congress on Archives held at Scheveningen in 1953. The *Lexicon of Archive Terminology* in six languages (Elsevier Publishing Company, 1964) with which the international committee completed its labours, follows Dutch terminology in many respects. Even a number of new terms was coined through the need to find out on what classification principles modern systems of archive making happen to be based. See H. Hardenberg, *Zur Frage der Ordnungsprinzipien* (Der Archivar XVI, 1963, 113-118) and G. W. A. Panhuysen, *Structuurbeginsel contra beginsel van herkomst* (The principle of structure versus the principle of origin) (Nederlands Archievenblad LXIX, 1965- 13-33). For a proposal to add a further principle, see W. J. Formsma, *Ordeningsbeginselen* (Classification principles) (Septet, Gedenkboek by de herdenking van het 75-jarig bestaan van de Vereniging van Archivarissen in Nederland, Groningen, 1966, 45-48).

In a paper entitled *Organisch geheel: definitie of beeldspraak?* (Is the term "organic whole" a definition or a figure of speech?) W. J. Van Hoboken disposed once and for all with the out-of-date and misleading definition of archives as an organic entity, Mr. J. H. De Vey Mestdagh's *Archiefselectie in de loop der tijden* (Records selection through the years) (Nederlands Archievenblad LXVI, 1962, 66-82), is an illuminating discussion of the problem of destruction, a matter which has become particularly acute owing to the vast increase since 1940 in the quantity of papers not earmarked for permanent preservation. Dr. R. A. D. Renting has examined the relationship between archives and documentation and afterwards carried out a survey of documentary collections in public record

offices (*Documentaire verzamelingen in overheidsarchieven*, Ned. Archievenblad LXXI, 1967, 10-34). The head-archivist Carel Bloemen, who had already written a manual for the arrangement and administration of registry records (*Handleiding voor de inrichting en het beheer van de registratuur*, Groningen, 1957), completed shortly before his death two remarkable studies on the history of archive administration in Dutch Limburg. Viz. *De wordingsgeschiedenis van het Rijksarchief in Limburg* (The evolution of the State Archives in Limburg) (Maastricht, 1966) and *De Roermondse archiefkwestie 1889-1901* (The Roermond Archives question 1889-1901) (Maastricht, 1966).

J. H. De Vey Mestdagh's *L'activite des Archives des Pays-Bas 1953-1960* (Archivum XI, 1961, 191-197), provides a good survey of the achievements and activities during this period, not forgetting the instructional meetings for archivists which have been held annually since 1956 and at which foreign speakers are invited to air their views on specific archival problems. Dutch archivists have always attended the international congresses organized by the International Council on Archives and other gatherings, and played an active part in those meetings. One of the first chairmen of this organization was Graswinckel, my predecessor as Archivist General.

One of the most recent advances is the closer contact with the universities, especially with history students. When I consider post-war developments in the Netherlands in connection with Archive Administration I think I may conclude by saying, that the archivists have always remained keenly conscious of their calling and have been an inspiration to younger members of the staff. Consequently we need have no fear about the future of this work.

BOOK REVIEW

A Summary of Work 1972

*National Archives of New Zealand
Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, New Zealand*

Users of archives naturally look to archivists to provide some preliminary information about the services and records of other archives. It is my view that the archivist has a responsibility to build up a collection of directories, guides, reports and journals of other archives to this end. Though it may be claimed that reference libraries can perform this function, it might be questioned whether librarians generally could adequately interpret these archival finding aids.

Annual reports from major Australian archival institutions are varied in information and in extent and in some cases they come plodding along as sections of State Library reports that might take a year or more to metamorphose into print. In the case of the Commonwealth the public at large has for years apparently been considered unsafe to be trusted with any published report at all of its own archives.

The National Archives of New Zealand offers a worthy, if modest, model in its annual **Summary of work** based upon a larger official report — a device which permits a government to hug top secret archival policy to itself if it so wishes (though what this could possibly be in the case of public archives is hard to see) while still telling the people at least **something**. However, the current New Zealand **Summary** is admirably forthcoming, discussing disposal, accessions, destruction, arrangement and description, preservation and repair, use of