

Government Documents

[General](#) | [Parliamentary Guide](#) | [Statistics](#) | [Census Reports](#) | [Census Returns](#)

General Information

by
Dr. Eileen Goltz

The Public Documents collection at the J.N. Desmarais Library is the largest collection of primary source material in Northern Ontario. It includes a wide variety of material from several levels of government and from intergovernmental organizations. As well, it includes a narrower selection of documentation from non-governmental agencies.

The Public Documents Collection contains primarily of publications issued or published by any government. In **Canada**, they may be issued by the Federal Government, by a Provincial or Territorial Government, or by a Municipal Government. There are also documents from many countries of the World. Foremost among these publications are those from the **United Kingdom**, the **United States**, and **France**.

Government documents are issued in several formats: paper or book, microtext (microfiche, microfilm, or microcard), sound or video recordings, CD-ROM, and on-line via the Internet. Governments are increasingly publishing on-line to save printing costs. Although the use of such documents is limited to those who have access to computer facilities, this trend will continue and will accelerate as governments attempt to cope with fiscal stringencies.

Government Publications

Because the J.N. Desmarais Library has full depository status with both the Canadian and Ontario Governments, it is able to obtain most publications from these governments free of cost. Therefore, Canadian and Ontario collections are more comprehensive than are any of the others.

All information published by the Canadian Federal Government is presented in English and French format and has been so presented for many years. Some of the older Canadian documents may be available in only one language (either English or French). These documents are acquired, as they became available, from other libraries and from rare books dealers. They were not acquired directly from the Government of Canada.

Note: Governments do not retain a backlog of documents for distribution, nor do they print large quantities of any document. When the quota of

copies of a document is depleted, a Government will rarely reprint that document.

Ontario publications have appeared in a bilingual format in recent years. Older material was published in English only. It does not exist in any other language.

There are some sections of the Public Documents Collection where the publications are unilingual (either English or French). For example, documents from the United States are always published in English, while those from France are always published in French.

The library selectively purchases documents from other Provinces and Territories. These documents are purchased to satisfy course and programme requirements.

Examples of documents emanating from Canada, the U.K., the U.S.A., and France are:

Canada. Royal Commission to Inquire into Railways and Transportation in Canada. *Report of the Royal Commission to Inquire into Railways and Transportation in Canada*. This document is located at the J.N. Desmarais Library (**REF-DOC CA1 Z1 31R01**).

Ontario. *Workers' Compensation Act*. This document is an Office Consolidation of a Statute. It is located in the J.N. Desmarais Library (**REF-DOC CA2 ON YX74 W74**).

United Kingdom. *Index to British Parliamentary Papers on Canada and Canadian Boundary: 1800-1899*. This item is located at the J.N. Desmarais Library (**REF-DOC UK1 YS C52**).

United States. [*Statistical Abstracts of the United States*](#). This document is an annual publications and is located at the J.N. Desmarais Library (**REF-DOC US1 DD40 A52**).

France. *Étudiants en France*. This item is only available in French. It is located at the J.N. Desmarais Library (**FR1 SG31 69N577**).

Publications from Intergovernmental Organizations

Intergovernmental Organizations include such agencies as the [United Nations](#), the [European Union](#), the [Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development](#), the [International Joint Commission](#), and many others. For more Intergovernmental Organizations, visit the [International Community](#) on our Government Information webpage.

Examples of such Intergovernmental Organizations publications are:

United Nations. Statistical Office. *Demographic Yearbook*. This is an annual publications which has a time lag of several years. It is located at the J.N. Desmarais Library (**REF-DOC UN2 S30 D29**).

European Union. Statistical Office of the European Communities. *Basic Statistics of the Community*. This document appears annually. It is located at the J.N. Desmarais Library (**ZZ EM10 B17**).

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. *Canada: an Economic Survey by the OECD*. This document is one of a series which features various countries of the World. It is published annually. This item is located in the J.N. Desmarais Library (**ZZ EC30 C11**).

Non-Governmental Organizations

This portion of the Public Documents Collection is not large. It includes publications of such non-Governmental organizations as the **Conference Board** and the **Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada**.

Examples of such publications are:

Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. *Statement on Staffing Strategies for Universities*. This document is located at the J.N. Desmarais Library (**CA6 UC 87S77**).

Conference Board. *Business Outlook Chartbook: Conference Board*. This document is located at the J.N. Desmarais Library (**US6 CB B75**).

How to locate information kept in the Public Documents Collection

If you know which **Department** or **Organization** has issued the document for which you are searching, then key in the name of the body responsible for the document and select the **Author (au)** button from our [Online Catalogue](#). Otherwise, search by **Keyword**.

Note: Public documents prior to 1992 do not have subject headings.