

Retention and archiving of sound and video recordings in the House of Representatives of the Federal Parliament of the Kingdom of Belgium

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Audiovisual Documentation of Plenary Sessions

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1. GENERAL SITUATION

- In Belgium, the civil service does not have a strong culture and tradition when it comes to managing and archiving government records.
- The Clerk of the House is officially the archivist of the House (de iure); there has been an archivist (de facto) since ca. 2000.
- There is no service (department) at the House dedicated solely to records management and the management of the historical archives.
- There is no general, centralised policy or system for records management and archiving.
 - There are some procedures for certain types of records.

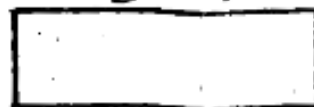
2. SOUND RECORDINGS UNTIL 1999

- Originally, stenography was used as a means of recording verbatim what was being said in meetings (plenary sessions).
- Later on, analogue sound recordings were made to support the production of verbatim minutes (we don't know when this started).
- Stenography was still used besides sound recording.

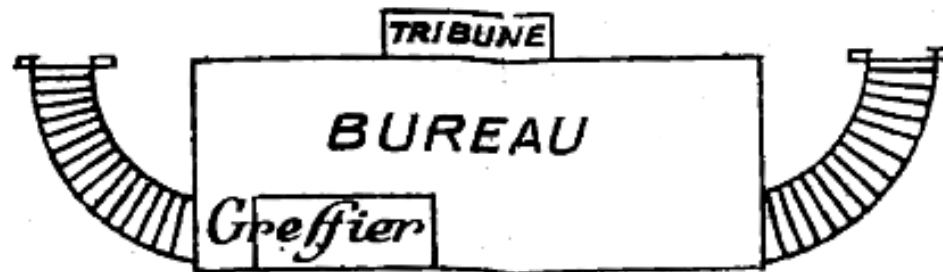
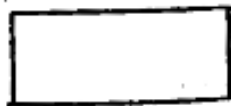
*Compte-rendu
analytique.*



Sténographie.



Sercice flamand



Huissiers



Huissiers

3. HOW COULD THE SOUND RECORDINGS HAVE STARTED? (SPECULATION)

- In 1936, microphones for the interpreters and headphones were introduced in the Chamber.
- Starting in 1949, similar systems were installed in the committee meeting rooms.
- In the following decades, these installations were regularly modernized.
 - The sound system in the Chamber for instance was renewed ca. 1976 to make television recording easier.

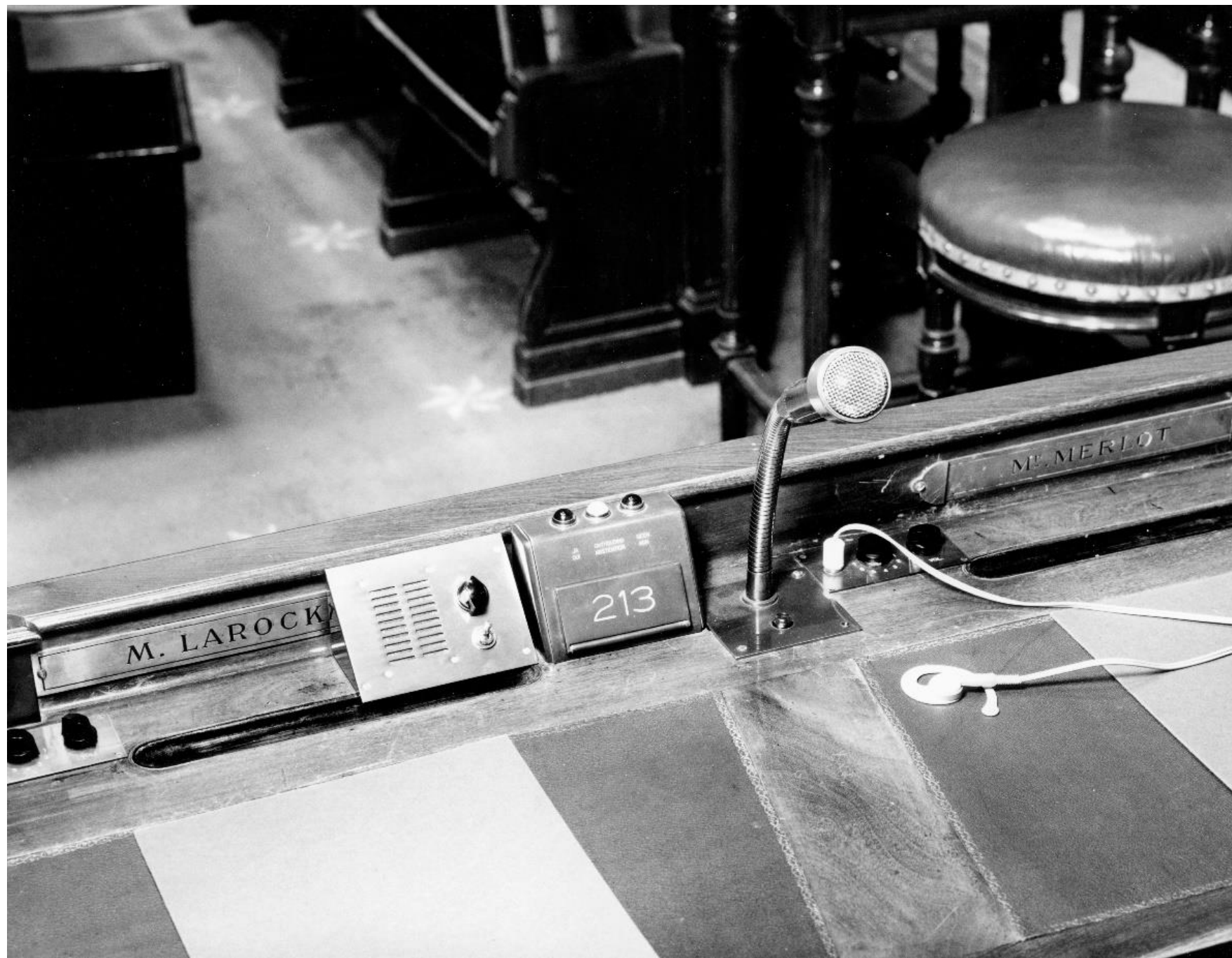
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4. ARCHIVES PRODUCED AND RETAINED AS A RESULT OF THE SOUND RECORDING

- The records which resulted from these sound recordings were:
 - mother tapes on reels (managed by the electricians),
 - copies of these mother tapes on cassettes made for the civil servants who produced the verbatim minutes and the reports.
- Such recordings have been archived mostly when they regard **parliamentary enquiries**.
- Result: collection of about 1000 to 1500 magnetic tapes on reels and cassette tapes, starting in the seventies.

4.



5. BIG CHANGES TO THE SOUND RECORDINGS STARTING IN 1999

- Since 1999,
every House Member has a microphone,
digital sound recordings were introduced.
- These digital sound recordings replaced stenography, which from then on was no longer used in the House.
- Since 14 July 2000 the sound recordings made to support the production of the official verbatim minutes must be archived and kept permanently.

5.



5.



6. VIDEO RECORDINGS SINCE 2002 (1/2)

- Before 2002, there were only occasional analogue video recordings by television stations.
 - These are not archived by the House.
- Installation of a permanent camera system in the Chamber ; started working in January 2002.
- These recordings have been archived on Sony Betamax cassettes, which have sometimes been copied on DVD's.
- This results in about 35 linear meters of archival boxes filled with cassettes and DVD's.

6.



6.



6. VIDEO RECORDINGS SINCE 2002 (2/2)

- Since 2014 the digital video recordings are stored on servers.
- Systematic video recordings of the public committee meetings started in 2018.
- Since 19 of July 2018, the video recordings of the public meetings are official minutes.
 - As a consequence they are kept.

7. IDEAS ON HOW TO MANAGE THESE SOUND AND VIDEO RECORDINGS IN THE FUTURE (1/2)

- The House is now working on a system for media asset management (MAM-system)
 - Management of sound and video recordings
 - Making them available to the public.
- A retention schedule for sound and video recordings could be decided upon.
 - The current retention schedule does not cover all video and sound recordings.

7. IDEAS ON HOW TO MANAGE THESE SOUND AND VIDEO RECORDINGS IN THE FUTURE (2/2)

- The old analogue sound recordings and the old analogue video recordings could be digitized.
- The resulting digital files could be stored in the MAM-system.
- A MAM-system is usually not meant to archive the digital objects it contains.
 - Adapting the MAM-system for long term archiving?

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This presentation accompanies a text written by Joris Vanderborght, archivist of the House of Representatives of the Kingdom of Belgium. It does not contain the full content of said text.