his reply was: “You will know soon enough when you receive our cheque, for
on it will appear the words: ‘In consideration of all rights.’”

I had the curiosity to look at the Copyright Acts of 1911 and 1956. There I
find a literary copyright defined as “the sole right to produce or reproduce an
original literary work”. There must be some originality in the work—originality
either in expression or arrangement—for it to enjoy the benefits of copyright. The
expression “literary” does not involve any qualification of style—a directory or
railway guide, or even a list of football fixtures, can be the subject of copyright—
but covers any work expressed in print or writing, so long as it is substantial
enough to involve some literary skill and labour of composition. Normally the
author is the first owner of the copyright, the author being the person who actually
“writes or compiles” the work. An indexer seems to me to satisfy all these con-
ditions and I am under the impression that the copyright in his index remains
vested in him (or her) until he has expressly assigned it. At any rate I shall en-
deavour to stipulate in the case of the two indexes of which I have been speaking that
the copyright remains in my hands, or that I be suitably compensated for its transfer.

I feel I owe you an apology for my talks having been so scrappy and disjointed.
But if any of my scraps can provide nourishment for thought I shall feel in some
measure justified and amply rewarded.

PUNCH PULLS THE SOCIETY’S LEG

The Society of Indexers has never signally sought press publicity, although
its activities have received a couple of unsolicited testimonials in leading articles in
* The Times.

Now, however, Punch has entered the fray. In No. 12 of its series of Toby
literary competitions competitors were asked to invent a demarcation dispute in
the professions. The winning entry from Mr. E. O. Parrott included the following
account of a quite fictitious (we hasten to add) occurrence:

The Chairman of the Society of Indexers said yesterday that Dictionaries,
Telephone Directories, etc., were, in fact, indexes, and should not be compiled
by non-members of the Society. “Let lexicographers and the Post Office join
our Society. Not that they’re qualified to join,” he said.
The cutting was kindly contributed by Dr. R. Dickinson.
It only remains to say that both lexicographers and members of the Post Office
are fully eligible to join and indeed would be very welcome members. G.N.K.

MEMORANDUM ON THE METHOD OF ALPHABETIZATION
LAID DOWN BY THE DRAFT BRITISH STANDARD FOR INDEXES

*A. R. FISK

I believe there are librarians among us, and if there is only one of them who
doubles the job of information officer then I shall expect support for what I have
to say.

5.2 Word-by-Word and Letter-by-Letter

This unqualified insistence upon word-by-word order is putting professionalism

* Read at the special extra meeting of the Society of Indexers, 6th December, 1962.
before utility. Those who think it sensible to put New York before Newark must be asked to consider more seriously two of the other examples given, New Haven and Newhaven. And what about the thousands of times when the user of an index does not know whether what he is looking for is a single word, a hyphenated compound, or two words? With word-by-word the user has to remember—or turn back to the beginning or look down to the foot of the page for—the arbitrary rules invented by the indexer. With the other method all he has to do is to look for what he wants in one place in a smooth progressive search letter-by-letter.

"The latter method is widely used," says the Draft Standard. It is indeed, and for excellent reasons! New Haven and Newhaven are not too bad in the tiny sample list in the Draft Standard because no more than four irrelevancies come between them, and the eye can see them both at once despite the interveners. But there would be no fewer than 102 other names between them in the gazetteer of the Oxford Atlas if that were arranged word-by-word.

Far worse still would be the case of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* index. That contains 13 different New Haven entries and 5 Newhaven entries, and those 18 entries, coming perfectly well together in the index as published, would be held in two groups 10 or 11 columns apart in a word-by-word arrangement.

In the index to *Chambers's Encyclopaedia* each name appears twice, the four together; in a word-by-word arrangement there would be three or four columns between them. In the gazetteer of the *Larousse International Atlas* there would be 42 intervening names. In the *New Century Cyclopaedia of Names* they would be about 10 index pages apart. *Collier's Encyclopaedia* and the *Children's Encyclopaedia* both arrange their indexes letter-by-letter. The *Encyclopaedia Americana* has the only large general index I could find in the Harrow Central Reference Library that is arranged word-by-word, and there in fact 11 columns of print come between the last New Haven entry and the first Newhaven.

I feel that an indexer should have in mind also the man, less cultivated but no less worthy a citizen than his academic and literary cousins, who particularly in industry may very frequently have to refer to the indexes of scientific and technical books but is not and can never be familiar with the problems that face the indexer and the subtlety of some of his solutions. The presentation of 102 "News" in a neat column is *ipso facto* no particular help to such a man. He is very powerfully helped by the knowledge that every item in the index is to be found with certainty by a straight-through and purely alphabetical search. Words are arbitrarily compounded, or held apart, and the total lack of agreement leads to widespread confusion of a word-by-word arrangement of them. Hundreds of hyphens are optional. An alphabetical index will most quickly give the user what he seeks when it refuses to notice a distinction so artificial and in an index so unhelpful.

We should resist the temptation *necessarily* to follow B.S. 1749 (which is 11 years old and might later on be changed in revision), but if the Standard for Indexes is to insist on rejecting letter-by-letter then I think it should state a case.

Rather than put nothing before something, I would say "Everything counts equally, nothing is insignificant," or alternatively "All words are equal, some are not more equal than others."
Sir,

Mr. N. R. Fisk on the Draft Standard above makes a strong case for letter-by-letter alphabetisation. I could, I believe, do likewise for word-by-word. Indeed, had the challenge arisen four or five years ago, when I happened to be engaged in scrutinising the typescript of a projected new dictionary, I could have put up a better show; as it is, having kept no record of the anomalies with which letter-by-letter then confronted me, I am obliged to extemporise. Consider, then, the following extract from an (imaginary) shortish index, mainly but not exclusively limited to proper names:

- Man, Alfred B.
- Man and Superman
- Man and wife, games partnerships of
- Man, Calf of
- Man for All Seasons, A
- Man Friday
- Man from Blankley's, The
- Man in the Iron Mask
- Man, Isle of
- Manitoba
- Manjrekar, V.

Searching for a mention of The Man who was Thursday, I might well conclude (in this case rather hurriedly, perhaps, but especially if a page turn-over intervened) that there was none, because it's removed quite a long way from where I expected it.

The dictionary above-mentioned, with "irrelevancies that come between" extending over several columns, or even pages, produced much more deceptive examples that foxed me time and again with unexpected popping-up of entries that I'd given up as lost; but this is at least a rough and ready illustration of the kind of letter-by-letter pitfall besetting the user to whom word-by-word happens to come naturally. For there do exist many such persons: while Mr. Fisk is no doubt convinced—quite justifiably—that his preferred method is the more logical and tidy-minded, I'm equally convinced that mine is. It is really a matter of instinct, I suppose, and instincts naturally differ. Moreover, it may well be that each of the two methods is to be preferred for certain differing types of index.

All things considered, it might be wiser and fairer if the Draft Standard expressed no preference between the two methods, but were content to give a clear exposition of both and to state that both are in common use. In any event, do please let us ban the use of the terms "nothing before something" and "something before nothing". I for one can never work out which denotes what, and why.

G. V. CAREY.

"It is a mistake to have no index in a book of this sort, and to offer a bibliography without a single date. Such omissions are unprofessional." Margaret Lane, reviewing The Life and letters of Emma Hamilton, by Hugh Tours (Gollancz) in The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post, 22nd March, 1963.