THE PREPARATION OF INDEXES

B.S. 3700 : 1964

A new British Standard, being 'Recommendations for the Preparation of Indexes for Books, Periodicals, and other Publications', has just been issued by the British Standards Institution. It is the work of a committee which has been engaged upon its preparation since 1961. The time that it has taken is not surprising because indexing, although a subject of strict rule, allows the possibility of much agreeable variation. And variation means long and arduous discussion.

An American Draft Standard on indexing was published in the U.S.A. in the Library Journal of that country on 1st May 1958. It was naturally of the greatest interest to the Society of Indexers over here, and in acknowledgment of its value the American Standard was reprinted in The Indexer of September 1958. Discussion within the Society revealed the desirability of a British Standard of comparable authority, and at the invitation of Mr. A. R. Hewitt, the Society's then Chairman, the British Standards Institution readily agreed to co-operate in the preparation of a British Standard.

Under the auspices of the Institution, a Sub-Committee on Indexes was formed, on which the Society of Authors, the Library Association, Aslib and the Publishers' Association were represented in addition to the Society of Indexers, and the B.S.I. itself. Mr. Hewitt, who, with Mr. J. C. Thornton, represented the Society of Indexers, was later compelled to withdraw through pressure of other work, and in May 1961 the Sub-Committee was reconstituted as follows: —

Mr. A. L. Bacharach (Society of Authors)
Mr. Jack Bird (Aslib)
Mr. R. Collison (Society of Indexers)
Dr. R. M. Crowther (Science Abstracts)
Dr. L. E. C. Hughes (Society of Indexers)
Dr. A. J. Walford (Library Association)
Mr. J. Alan White (Publishers' Association)

Mr. Thornton was elected as chairman in recognition of the special interest which the subject has for the Society of Indexers. On the death of Dr. Hughes, Mr. Norman Knight joined the Sub-Committee. Mr. G. A. Lloyd, Secretary of the Documentation Standards Committee of the B.S.I., also acted as Secretary of the Sub-Committee on Indexing, and the successful completion of its work owes a very great deal to his resource and tireless endeavour.

J. C. T.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Bancroft, M.A., is a Deputy Keeper in the Department of Printed Books in the British Museum, where he is Superintendent of the Reading Room. He is a Vice-Chairman of the Society of Indexers and was a member of the joint sub-committee which made the award of the Wheatley Medal.

John M. Shaftesley, B.A., O.B.E., was formerly Editor of the Jewish Chronicle.

Mrs. Grace Holmes, B.A., F.L.A., is a founder member of the Society, and holds the H.M.S.O. contract for indexing the London Gazette.