Considering how much periodicals differ in scope, size and frequency of appearance it would be absurd to suggest that there could be one method of compilation of their indexes which would be suitable to them all. The most convenient way of discussing the subject and of avoiding largely irrelevant generalities is by examining some current indexes with the idea of determining how effective they are and how they might be improved. Even here there is a danger; it is very easy to pick on faults and omissions and so give the impression of total inadequacy when in fact the user of the index might be satisfied ninety times out of a hundred. Similarly it has to be remembered that thorough indexing must be expensive and the perfunctoriness of many indexes might just as well derive from economies as from failures on the indexer's part.

The need for indexes has been realised as long as there have been periodicals and it is useful to note how two early indexes were compiled, partly because they are of some interest in themselves and partly because they bear on current practice.

In 1821 the Gentleman's Magazine published an extensive two-volume index for the years 1787-1818. It is still of great value but it has its limitations. What these limitations are can best be illustrated by quoting a sequence of entries, omitting volume and page numbers:

Lort, Rev., Dr. Michael, character of his writings
Lort, Roger, monument at Tenby
Lothesley, manor, tenure of
Lothian, John Kerr, Marquis of
Lothingland, Island, account of
Lotos, the plant deified
Lotteries
Lotus. See Lotos
Lovat, Rev., John Salt
Love's Labour Lost
(series of entries followed by 'See Shakespeare')

From this it can be easily seen that if you look for single names and place names you are likely to be rewarded; if you want material on a more extensive subject then the index is of little value. It lacks the necessary references and, relying almost entirely upon one word in the title of the article, is to a large extent accidental in its arrangement. The index to the first twelve volumes of Notes and Queries, published in 1856, is similar. One sequence runs:

Jennens, or Jennings, of Acton Place, Suffolk
(no reference from Acton Place)

* A lecture given in the Society's course on Indexing held at the North-Western Polytechnic during 1962-3.
Jennings Family of Shropshire
Jerdan (Wm.), his testimonial
Jeroboam of claret
(no entry under claret)
Jeroboam of claret
(entry under 'Chair of gold found at...')
Jeroboam of claret
No Jersey, gold chair found in
(entry under 'Chair of gold found at...')
Jersey muse
Jesse (E.), notes on his 'London'
(no reference under London)
Here the need for double entry has been recognised but there is a complete want of consistency as well as some ill-considered choice of the word under which to index—who would look under 'Jeroboam' for an article on claret? The method is a simple one, of selecting the key word in the title and reversing the order so that it stands first, but a dangerous one since it depends on the essential subject word being in the title—on how many occasions this did not happen could only be determined by elaborate checking.

With these examples of pioneering indexes in mind it is interesting to turn to a selection of current indexes. One would expect great changes and improvements. A brief examination of recent indexes shows a surprising uncertainty of principle in compilation, and behind that perhaps, an uncertainty as to what is required of the index by the user.

Public Administration is a quarterly journal. Its index, separately printed, is in three parts. The articles are listed in the order they appeared, quarter by quarter, in part one. In part two is a list of books reviewed, arranged alphabetically. In part three is a list of authors. In all parts reference is to page number but there is a preliminary note on the pagination of the quarters. This form of index seems almost valueless. If you have the periodical then it would be as quick or nearly so to skim the contents lists of the parts and it is hardly conceivable that anybody would take the index separately. A similar objection applies to the index of the Church Quarterly Review although its arrangement is different. Here the index, in two parts, is entirely by author—first, the articles listed under their authors' names alphabetically, and second, the books reviewed arranged under their authors' names. Reference is made to the first page but there is no key to which part the page appeared in. The index to Adult Education consists of one alphabetical sequence of titles and authors and would save little time compared with scanning the contents lists of parts. Generally it seems that annual indexes to the ordinary run of quarterly periodicals are not worth producing; they seem to be issued from force of habit.

The Burlington Magazine is one of the world's scholarly journals, and that in a field in which the greatest accuracy is necessary. It is not surprising that its index is elaborate. It is divided into six parts: first, a contents list month by month; second, artists and craftsmen, alphabetically arranged and giving details of works referred to; third, authors with the titles of their contributions; fourth, ownership, public—by name of institution; fifth, ownership, private—by personal name; sixth, book reviews in a classified arrangement. This appears to be admirable until one looks carefully and discovers that the main section—artists and craftsmen—refers in its page numbers to illustrations only. Thus there is no subject section at all. Since most of the articles are illustrated, the disadvantage is not as great as might seem at first likely. Where there are a number of Poussin illustrations one can assume an article round about those pages. But supposing there had been a letter or a correction to the article in the next
issue, it would not appear in conjunction with the original unless it were illustrated. The only way of checking is to work through the author list. This basic deficiency in not providing a complete subject index is inexplicable in such a detailed index.

The Listener's six-monthly index is fairly elaborate. It is a one-sequence alphabetical index including authors' names and subjects, usually by inverted or straightforward title. No other information is given: that is, the author's name appears without the title of his contribution and vice versa. For titles there is a considerable amount of double-entering in order to give a semblance of subject indexing. 'Roe deer in East Anglia' appears also under Deer, but not under East Anglia. But 'Some Problems of coronary heart disease' appears only under Coronary and not under Heart or Disease. This compromise of partial double entry and no references must fail. There is an attempt, again by double entering, to collect under main headings: there are numerous entries under, for example, Africa, Architecture, Art, Birds, Communism, Education, France, Gardening, and so forth. For all its deficiencies this index is a useful one.

The index to Discovery is a curious combination of method. The first part is an alphabetical list of articles by title, the second part a list of books reviewed by title, and the third part a subject index derived from title-words. This provides a subject heading and page reference. Its form is a compromise between the actual wording of the title of the article and the subject heading pure and simple. Consequently you get some curious subjects: for example, World food shortage, World oil consumption, World population problem. These references also appear under Food, Oil and Population. But for the compromise between title-word and subject indexing—a compromise which is bound to have serious disadvantages—the index must be counted among the better ones.

The index of volumes 31 to 50 of The Modern Language Review, running to 216 pages, has a seventy-page subject section. This provides a lengthy example of the confusion of title-word and subject indexing. 'Ibsen, the proverb in' does not appear under proverbs. 'Songs, Old French' does not have a reference from French Songs. 'Snobbery, Three satirists of' has no reference from Satire. Most curiously, considering it is an entirely literary magazine, the largest section is under Literature, divided by French, German and so forth. And there are no references from French and German Literature to Literature, French and German. There are all sorts of confusions—for example, 'Romanticism, See under Literature'. Obviously very little preliminary thought was given to the principle of arrangement; it oscillates between subject, broad classification and title-word arrangement. It does seem extraordinary that when such a large index was being considered so little serious thought was given to it.

The index to Nature is distressing. It is a single alphabetical sequence index of authors, titles and subjects derived from title-words. The results, because of the manic thoroughness, are delightful. Sir John Hammond reviewed a book by Dr. Allan Fraser called Animal Husbandry Heresies and the review was titled 'Animal Husbandry'. This gives rise in the index to the following entries:

Animal Husbandry, reviewed by Sir John Hammond, 47
Animal Husbandry Heresies (Dr. Allan Fraser), review by Sir John Hammond, 47
Husbandry: Animal, *review* by Sir John Hammond, 47
Husbandry (Animal) Heresies (Dr. Allan Fraser), *review* by Sir John Hammond, 47
Heresies: Animal Husbandry (Dr. Allan Fraser), *review* by Sir John Hammond, 47
Fraser, Dr. Allan: Animal Husbandry Heresies, *review* by Sir John Hammond, 47
Hammond, Sir John: Animal Husbandry, *review* 47

Seven entries for one review! This is not at all exceptional. For an article called ‘Seasonal Variation of the Sea Surface Temperature in Coastal Waters of the British Isles’ by F. E. Lumb, published for the Meteorological Office, Air Ministry, there are eleven entries, under Seasonal, Variation, Sea, Surface, Temperature, Coastal, Waters, British, Lumb, Air Ministry, Meteorological Office. The inversions and convolutions of the title are marvellous and masterpieces of typography. An article called ‘Influence of Large Doses of Oestrogens on the Structure of the Bones of some Reptiles’ appears as follows:

Bones of some Reptiles: Influence of Large Doses of Oestrogens on the structure of the
Doses (Large), of Oestrogens: Influence of, on the Structure of the Bones of some Reptiles
Influence of Large Doses of Oestrogens on the Structure of the Bones of some Reptiles
Large Doses of Oestrogens: Influence of, on the Structure of the Bones of some Reptiles
Oestrogens: Influence of Large Doses of, on the Structure of the Bones of some Reptiles

Reptiles: Influence of Large Doses of Oestrogens on the Structure of the Bones of some
Structure of the Bones of some Reptiles: Influence of Large Doses of Oestrogens on the

Added to these seven entries there is an author entry. The procedure is on the face of it absurd, quite apart from the cost of setting and proof reading. Idiocies abound. If Britain, as against Great Britain, appears in the title it comes under Britain only. ‘University of Birmingham’ has no reference from ‘Birmingham University’. The whole method leads to the index for one quarter taking up 107 double-column pages.

The system of subject indexing by title-words is, if carried out to the *Nature* pattern, absurdly wasteful and can be quite ineffective. In a scientific journal you are not likely to go far wrong because the titles are very brief abstracts. But in other sorts of journals you could get curious results. A year or two ago *The Economist* ingeniously entitled an article ‘The Old Lady Shows her Amber’. This would go under ‘Old’, ‘Lady’ and ‘Amber’ on the *Nature* pattern. But the Amber was a reference to traffic-lights, Old Lady was she of Threadneedle Street and the subject was the raising of the bank rate.

The index to *Nature* may be misconceived but that to the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* has faults which render it all but valueless. A series of lectures on photography in education, industry and commerce, and medicine are not indexed under education, industry, commerce or medicine. A lecture on Restoration portraits does not appear under portraits, a notice of the Peter Floud Memorial Prize does not appear under Floud, a lecture on economic developments in Canada does not appear under Canada. In short the
whole basis of the index is to accept the
first key word only as the point of entry,
from which one must conclude that the
user is expected to remember the title of
the article he is looking for. Supposing he
knows the title exactly, is it likely that he
has not noted the page reference as well?
Inevitably one comes to doubt if the index
has any real function at all. To be set
against this is the index to Perspective
where there is an entirely satisfactory
arrangement of title and collection, to pro-
duce subject indexing, of key words. The
arrangement has been devised by someone
who evidently has given thought to the
purpose of an index and who has not
assumed that the searcher already knows
of the title of the article he wants.

Reference to the development of indexes
of groups of periodicals may be useful in
considering ways in which indexes to par-
ticular periodicals might develop. Poole's
Index to Periodical Literature covering the
years 1802-1881 and published in 1882
was constructed on the usual index pat-
tern, relying on key words brought to the
front by changing the order of the title.
The method led to the familiar faults and
these were increased by the fact that the
index was the product of many hands: an
article on Drainage of Calcutta appeared
under Calcutta without a reference on
Drainage though there was an article on
Drainage of London under Drainage,
without, in this case, any appearance
under London. The reform was at that
time in progress through the publication of
Cutter's Rules for a Dictionary Catalog
published in 1876 and what was taught
there bore fruit in The Readers' Guide to
Periodical Literature, 1901. Here was a
one-sequence subject and author index
with a consistent set of subject headings
and a thorough and regular form of
references. There was no dependence on
the change of key words appearing in the
title of articles. For the first time real
order had been offered, not merely verbal
jiggery-pokery. Such indexes have devel-
oped right down to the British Technology
Index where the subject headings are as
specific as possible, and its techniques
therefore more relevant to the problems of
indexing single periodicals.

There are obvious differences between
the two forms of index but clearly such a
method as employed in the British Tech-
nology Index relates closely to any form
of periodical indexing. By comparison
most of the indexes examined are of the
pre-Cutter era. The 'Standards for In-
dexes to Learned and Scientific Periodi-
cals' published in The Indexer suggested
some minimum requirements: 'Articles
in journals should be indexed under the
authors, titles, significant words in titles,
and under the subject dealt with in the
text. Some articles may require many
entries for subjects, synonyms and for
authorities quoted'. Had this been ac-
cepted most of the faults cited would have
been avoided but it is noticeable how per-
sistent even now the 'significant words in
titles' idea is; here it is even more curious
in that subject indexing is insisted upon.
It is difficult to see how, once such a
course is adopted, an index of the Nature
form can be avoided. It would seem time
that the principle of subject indexing
without reference to the author's choice
of words for his title were adopted. One
feels, too, some doubt about the need in
many cases for a title entry. Obviously if
the index is to be an expensively produced
one the title should be included but it
would be interesting to know how often
a title of a magazine article is accurately
remembered. The inclusion of titles seems
to be based on the idea, the dubious one,

Continued on page 50.