really very long, particularly if the indexer is working part-time only. In the latter case the time allocation should I think be doubled.

Yours faithfully,

G. Dixon.

[Mr. H. V. Molesworth Roberts writes:

The letter by Mr. G. Dixon on my (I fear) inadequate article in the Autumn issue is useful; certainly the subject is more complex than might appear. A more advanced study appeared in an article (ironically) in the same issue (p. 169 ff.).

I agree generally that the more phrases (especially those capitalised) are made separate main headings the better; but where one draws the line is the crucial point, and Mr. Dixon’s argument seems inconclusive.

His two single-column examples, as purely verbal arrangement, seem unobjectionable; and the phrase ‘central areas’ in his left-hand column is inadmissible as being other than the words to be indexed.]

[Mr. Negus writes: Mr. Dixon makes a useful point, but I fear that the time for indexing is usually determined by the printer rather than the publisher.]

Sir,

Surely some of Mr. Molesworth Roberts’s difficulties (Vol. 5, No. 4, p. 190) could have been eliminated by correct punctuation. Thus he cites:

London, central doctors, libels against north marriage guidance by

In both cases the comma in the heading seems to me quite inadmissible. As it stands, the sub-heading in the first instance can only refer to central North London, and in the second instance to marriage guidance by libels. Both ‘London’ and ‘doctors’ should be followed by a colon. There can be no ambiguity about:

London: doctors: libels against marriage guidance by

central north

Yours obediently,

G. Norman Knight.

SOCIETY ANNOUNCEMENTS

A discussion meeting will be held on Thursday, 25th April, 1968, when Dr. David Diringer, D.Litt. (Lecturer in Semitic Epigraphy, University of Cambridge, author of The alphabet, etc.), will talk on “The Origins of the Order of the Letters”.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Aslib, 3 Belgrave Square, London, S.W.1, on Thursday, 30th May, at 5.30 p.m. and will be followed by a talk and a reception for members and their guests. Details are being sent to members.

EXTRACTS AND COMMENTS

Among other periodicals which have taken to commenting on the indexes of the books they review is the weekly Nursing Mirror. On September 22nd, 1967, it stated that 101 facts an expectant mother should know, by Claire Rayner (The Dickens Press) ‘is well indexed’. It had not been so enthusiastic the week before in the case of A handbook for nurses, by M. C. West (The English Universities Press), in which ‘common medical and surgical conditions’ are described in alphabetical order, ranging from Abscess to Varicose Veins. We are told that ‘the index is incomplete; under “A” 13 conditions are described but only nine indexed.’

On 26 January, 1968, it says of A field guide to disease, by Berton Roucché (Gollancz): ‘There is a table of contents but unfortunately no index.’

* * * *

Of the fully revised second edition of the Oxford junior encyclopaedia, costing £30 for the set of thirteen volumes, Sarah Preston writes in the Sunday Telegraph of November 26th, 1967: ‘Vol. 13 has a complete index to all the volumes with full cross-references and a splendid ready reference section which ranges from maps of the great empires of the world throughout the ages to foreign exchange rates for the pound (as they stood in September, 1963, alas!).’
Canon H. G. G. Herklots, in The window (a parish magazine inset) for November 1967, reviewing The plain man looks at the Apostles' Creed (Fontana 6s.) and The first three Gospels (S.C.M. Press, 10s. 0d.) both by Dr. William Barclay, says: "The plain man volume has no index; but formidable ones might be prepared, of Scripture passages, of reference to the 'fathers' of the Church and to modern writers... The volume on the Gospels is equipped with scholarly aids, a bibliography of more than seven pages, an index of Bible references of eleven, and an index of names of four pages.'

Sir Charles Petrie, reviewing in The Illustrated News of 4th October, 1967, Michael Pinto-Duschinsky's The political thought of Lord Salisbury, 1854-1868 (Constable, 35s.), writes: 'On the present occasion his [the author's] publishers, by failing to provide an index, have not helped him.'

Sir Charles Petrie, in the issue of 30th September, 1967, of the same periodical, wrote of Elizabeth Gray Vining's Flora Macdonald (Geoffrey Bles, 25s.): 'It is to be regretted that she has been unable to persuade her publishers to supply an index.'

F. Wilkinson, reviewing in Chemistry and industry of 7th October, 1967, R. A. Passwater's Guide to fluorescence literature (New York: Plenum Press Data Division, $19.50), wrote: 'There are two indexes which cite the alpha-numeric identification which is given to each paper and which makes retrieval convenient. There is a complete strictly alphabetical index of all authors with unfortunate mistakes such as Zinschitz for Linschitz and Tredale for Iredale and so on. There are also several errors in the subject index with references only to the titles and not to the content of the papers listed. Thus, the usefulness of the whole book is strictly limited, since many papers listed which give the best data on a particular subject are omitted from the index because that subject does not happen to appear in the title.'

Sir William Hayter, reviewing Svetlana Alliluyeva's Twenty letters to a friend (Hutchinson, 30s.) in The Observer of 1st October, 1967, wrote: 'Mrs. Alliluyeva's book, though not a great work, is profoundly illuminating. It is a pity that it has, apparently, been rather hastily produced. There is no index, and the notes are at the end of the book when they are there at all; Note 2 on page 217 refers to nothing.'

Graham K. Scott, reviewing Sigfred Taubert's Bibliopola: pictures and texts about the book trade, 2 volumes, Penguin, £2 10s., wrote in Library History, Spring 1967: 'A welcome coverage (over fifty [illustrations]) is given to pedlars of books—but disappointingly there is not a single British example. Chronological indexes in volume 1 cover these and the other branches of the trade. There are also indexes of places, artists, and of authors and titles of the anthology of texts. There is no index of the names of tradesmen mentioned.'

'If you want to read about Ecuador, you will find a page or two embedded in a chapter on Paraguay; and as the book has no index it is hard to use except for agreeable reading.'

This comment comes from Alan Pryce-Jones's review of The Gringo in Latin America by Richard West (Jonathan Cape) in the Sunday Telegraph of 6th August, 1967.

Government Chemist's Report. 'This excellent publication, covering as it does all aspects of the wide range of work carried out by the British Government Laboratory, maintains its high standard for its 1966 issue. Meticulous indexing serves as an object lesson and makes fascinating reading in itself. One would be less than human not to refer further to such items as "lead in frying pans", "historical army survival rations" and "foaming problem at Castleford".'—From The Brewers' Journal, December 1967.