Minister of Guyana: The book has been beautifully produced . . . There are, however, enough blank pages to have provided an index of double the length of the meagre four-and-a-half columns that appear here. Among numerous other omissions I notice the names of the Duke of Kent, Sir Alfred Savage, Martin Carver, National Youth Corps, Angola and Mozambique, all of which are significantly alluded to in the text.

Review of Suez, the twice-fought war by Kennett Love (Longmans, 80/-), in the New Statesman, 23 October, 1970:

... To the serious student there is one trivial but irritating failure in a work that has pretensions to history. Very few readers will share the gratitude which Mr. Love expresses to the enchantingly named Roberta Blaché for her index. In places it is misleading and in others quite simply inaccurate. This may be to some extent the result of the eccentric pagination of the book which sometimes numbers the pages that separate the major sections, but more often neglects to do so. However, the reader who is informed in the index that the opinion of the New York Times on Senator Javitz is to be found on page 641 is unlikely to be mollified when a diligent search finds the reference on page 643. An index that is recurrently inaccurate cannot be forgiven because it is only a little bit wrong in each case . . .

FRANCE NEGLECTS INDEXING


G.N.K.

PERSONALIA

A new edition of John L. Thornton’s A select bibliography of medical biography has been published by the Library Association. This contains 275 new entries, an introductory essay on medical biography, and also an index of authors, editors, translators, etc., neither of which was included in the first edition published in 1961. Th Library Association has also accepted the manuscript of the third edition of Scientific books, libraries and collectors, by Mr. Thornton in collaboration with Mr. R. T. J. Tully. It will be published this year.

Congratulations to Miss R. D. Coole, who has been a member of Council since 1960 and is a Vice-President of the Society, on being awarded the M.B.E. in the New Year honours.

Mr. Robert J. Palmer, our Hon. Correspondent for the Northern States of the U.S.A., says that he is progressing on the 50-year index for Foreign Affairs, which is due on 1 July, 1972, and is now working on Volume 14, involving 35,000 to 40,000 cards so far. In a letter to the President, Mr. Palmer says, ‘It appears that it will be a real monster when it is finished. Although it will be primarily an index to the periodical, it should also end up as a useful reference book in the field of international politics’.

After 25 years’ residence in Barnet, Herts., our President, G. Norman Knight, has moved to Scio House, Roehampton, London, S.W.15. This is the Red Cross home for officers and Captain Knight is much amused by having always there to be addressed by his Army rank, which he has scarcely ever used since being demobilized from the Judge Advocate General’s office in 1920, after World War I. Would members please note his change of address.

The third edition of the Librarians’ glossary and reference book by Mr. L. M. Harrod is being published this spring by André
Deutsch. Originally simply a ‘glossary of terms used in librarianship and the book crafts’ it has been extended to provide a general reference book to librarianship. It will be more than twice as large as the previous edition.

Several members of Council had the pleasure of entertaining **Mr. J. Arthur Greenwood** to lunch when he was on holiday in England during September.

**Dr. Lindsay Verrier**, the Society’s Corresponding Member in the South Pacific, and **E. Neal Bozarth, Jr.**, of Takoma Park, Maryland, U.S.A., have become Life Members.

**Mr. H. Anthony Rydings**, Librarian of the University of Hong Kong, is compiling a cumulative index to the *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*. It is due for publication this year.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The Editor, *The Indexer*.

**BEST, MR. JUSTICE, HIS GREAT MIND**

Sir,

Your correspondent, Mr. George Chowdhary-Best, seeks information regarding the above alleged index entry. I have always thought of it as a sort of boy-Chattertonian hoax-entry, concocted *pour rire*.

It may be as well to see what is said on the subject in Benjamin Wheatley’s *How to make an index* (1902), which is responsible for many of our best indexing anecdotes, too often quoted without acknowledgment. It will be observed that Wheatley, who was writing twenty years before the publication of Lord Birkenhead’s book quoted by Mr. Chowdhary-Best, mentions two other possible sources of the entry; we find on p. 157:

*A good instance of the frivolous entry is the hackneyed quotation, 'Best (Mr. Justice), his great mind,’ which is supposed to be a reference to a passage in this form: ‘Mr. Justice Best said that he had a great mind to commit the man for trial.’* **

This particular reference is almost too good to be true, and I have not been able to trace it to its source. That has been said to be in the index to one of Chitty’s law-books, and it is added that possibly Chitty had a grudge against Sir William Draper Best, one of the Puisne Judges of the King’s Bench from 1819 to 1824, and Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas from 1824 to 1829, in which latter year he was created Lord Wynford. Another explanation is that it was a joke of Leigh Hunt’s, who first published it in the *Examiner*.

Wheatley’s last sentence provides a possibly potent clue, which might prove well worth following up. James Henry Leigh Hunt (1784-1859) edited the Sunday newspaper, *The Examiner*, from 1808 to 1821. Since Sir William was not appointed a Judge until 1819, any reference to him as ‘Mr. Justice Best’ in the paper would have to have occurred in the last two volumes, and by a strange coincidence those are (I believe) the only two volumes available at the Library Association. It would be a notable triumph if Mr. Chowdhary-Best—can he by any chance be a descendant of the ‘great-minded’ Chief Justice?—were to succeed in a research in which the distinguished Dr. Wheatley had failed.

Incidentally, it so happens that Lord Birkenhead’s connexion with the ‘hackneyed quotation’ was also mentioned (but quite differently from his own statement in his book) in a leading article in *The Times* of 8 May, 1957:

*The story has been attributed to Lord Birkenhead that seeing in an index ‘Lord X, his great mind’, and being interested to have such an evaluation, he looked up the reference to find it was that Lord X said ‘he had a great mind’ to do something or other.*

This was part of the famous leader (quoted in full facsimile in the first number of *The Indexer*, Spring, 1958), in welcoming the formation of *The Society of Indexers*. The thunderer expressed its view that ‘here is a necessary body if ever there was one’.

Yours obediently

**NORMAN KNIGHT.**

**Commit . . . for trial.** This alone is enough to make one suspicious of the quotation’s genuineness as having come from any law-book. High Court Judges do not commit for trial, that being the function of magistrates.—G.N.K.