prove the standards of indexing; and how, we asked ourselves, can this be achieved without imparting them consistently to the student generation of indexers?

John Vickers, himself a former Wheatley medal winner, saw no necessity for the teaching of indexing: "Those who cannot teach themselves should take up something else—like knitting". Reading Robert Collison's two books, practising and conversing with other indexers, should be sufficient for the competent and conscientious; his interest was not in the teaching of indexing, but of teaching children to use indexes, as Michael Marland had advocated.

Mr Herbert Baxter gave a summary of the courses at present available, limited almost entirely to the postal course of the Rapid Results College; and as a former member of the Society's Board of Assessors, referred to the very varying standards of the indexes submitted by those seeking the status of Registered Indexer, some extremely low.

Dr Sickmann maintained that it was possible to learn only from practical experience, and to teach only the principles of indexing; but we found difficulty in determining exactly what these were, and what should be the content of a teaching course for indexing. We considered the relationship between indexing, classification and librarianship, how far these overlap, and whether teaching of indexing should be a part of librarianship courses, or entirely separate.

Dr Boehm felt that subject-matter expertise was regarded as more important than basic methodology, and also more easily taught. Methodology was studied only by the most highly motivated, and was most necessary with continuous indexing, as of newspapers, or cataloguing, especially if a team were working together, and if there were novices, in order to establish consistency.

Overall, opinion seemed to be that good indexing was best to be achieved by reference to standard texts, conscientious practice, and discussion with other indexers.

B. The business side of indexing

Members of this seminar enjoyed a lively exchange of views between UK indexers and publishers and their American counterparts on indexing fees and the evaluation of indexes by publishers. Other subjects touched on briefly were: the problems of gauging the length of an index and the time needed to prepare it; costing the index; presentation of copy (cards v. typescript); methods of payment; and expenses chargeable against tax.

It emerged that American indexers could expect a rate of between $5 and $10 an hour, whereas some English indexers reported difficulty in securing the Society's recommended minimum of £2.50. English indexers appeared to be less demanding than their American colleagues not only in the matter of fees, but in their lack of insistence on correcting proofs and in requesting a copy of the final publication. One American member thought it reasonable to add 50% to his fee should he be required to work more than 40 hours a week to meet an unreasonable deadline. Another (a publisher) provoked some discussion by putting the value of an indexer's time on a par with that of a secretary. It was pointed out that it had always been accepted practice for the freelancer to be paid at a higher hourly rate than the permanent employee who enjoyed paid holidays, pensions and other 'perks'. Some publishers had agreements with the NUJ for a freelance fee of around £3.20 an hour, and the NUJ was now pushing for this to be increased to £3.80. It was deplored that women tied by domestic problems were accepting the very low rates offered by some publishers because indexing happened to suit their timetables, since these people were undercutting the professionals.

Some members reported payment per page of text, others had been offered lump sums. Views were expressed for and against payment by the hour. Some felt a professional fee raised the status of the job. For work extending over a year members reported payment in three instalments, similar to an author's advance on royalties—one-third on estimate, one-third when the index was half finished and one-third on delivery. The United Nations was said to pay indexers monthly, dividing the total cost by the time over which the project was expected to extend, and there were cases of publishers paying retainers to professional indexers. Mr Collison spoke of his experience of an indexer being paid a yearly retainer, each index payment being subtracted from the total sum. If work was commissioned over the retainer fee this was paid pro rata, and if the work was less then the indexer was in pocket.

The group agreed with Mrs Wallis that there were too many unregistered and incompletely qualified indexers seeking work and too many publishers' editors who did not know how to
commission or evaluate indexes. It was also felt that, particularly in the UK, communications between indexers and publishers badly needed to be improved.

ANN HOFFMANN

C. A study of progress in indexing using modern technical developments; and the benefits of indexing

An apology is given now to dodge any brickbats from members whose comments may be missed. So much was said of interest that I can only provide a summary. We first discussed computers and their effect on indexing. Ample evidence was presented that indexing is an essentially human function, replaceable by machine systems only under limited but special circumstances. Indeed, indexers perform an essential function which extends beyond book and journal indexes. It was stressed that indexers can and should play a recognized role in ensuring that technology-based systems are properly programmed. With increasing use of and facilities for computers the need for indexing skills must increase, although the indexer may be called by another name such as abstractor, programmer, systems analyst or information officer (or perhaps something less polite).

At the present time humans alone are capable of value judgement on conceptual thought. Electronic equipment can compensate by having the capability to process and produce large quantities of information at great speed. However, for in-depth information storage and subsequent retrieval, no machine is yet capable of selecting the input data. The indexer, essential for providing such input, should also be consulted for information searches.

Discussing different computer-based systems, large name-indexes were cited as examples of good computer indexing. Concept-indexing has its limitations with computers, but can be and is used in such systems as Key Word in Context (KWIC). Such a system is quick to produce and easy to update, but is limited to title words and not the contents of papers. In other situations indexing with computer assistance for sorting and printing was mentioned; for example, the British Technology Index is produced in this way. One member from the USA pointed out how computer-based information stores provide a complete storage and retrieval system which can be monitored constantly for efficiency. This does not occur with manual indexes for books and journals. Comments were made that more research is needed for book and journal indexes to identify areas where style and presentation can be improved (see The Indexer, Vol 11 (1) April 1978, 14-23).

Some feeling was expressed that computer technology removes the human element with its associated creative skills. This was balanced by other arguments that the use of computers is different to the function of indexing and also that in the foreseeable future there is no proper alternative to manually produced indexes for most books and journals.

When considering the benefits of indexes, whatever the method of their construction, the members of the seminar offer this list: 1. Indexes increase the human capability of reading. 2. They provide facility of communication between reader and writer. 3. Indexes organize information so that greater learning is possible. 4. Indexes serve as research tools. 5. Excessive information is distilled in indexes to its essence. This is the only way that we can cope with the constant flood of information.

One member made a neat summary of the role of the indexer with computer technology: 'The indexer provides the input and serves as gatekeeper for the output'.

I conclude this report with a request from several members for the Society to keep a watching brief on computer developments in order to ensure that the role and function of indexers is not absorbed by other industries. Also so that indexers can increase their skills as new methods become available.

RICHARD RAPER

D. The next 21 years; progress and development of the Society of Indexers and its affiliated societies

From the beginning, the Society of Indexers has been envisaged as a world-wide organization. At present, it has members and regular subscribers to The Indexer in more than 60 countries. Affiliated societies have been established in the United States, Australia and Canada. This internationalization should be fostered and extended during the next 21 years. The group discussed ways of achieving this.

Efforts should be made to spread the international idea among present members, potential members and those most concerned with the