Word from Canada*
Mary Dykstra

Assistant Professor in the School of Library Service at Dalhousie University, and founder-member of the Canadian Society

I would like to tell you something of the relatively infant Society in Canada which became affiliated with your Society as recently as December 1978: the Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada/Société canadienne pour l'analyse de documents, its beginning, the people involved and the backgrounds they represent, and what the Society and these people are now doing.

The historical roots of the Canadian Society can be traced back to the year 1946, for in that year two institutions were established—the Canadian Library Association and the Bibliographical Society of Canada. Twenty-three years later, in 1969, an Index Committee was established within the Bibliographical Society of Canada. This committee lasted until 1973, issuing a newsletter from 1970 to 1973. It was disbanded in 1973, but a new position was created within the Society's Council, that of Indexer to the Society. In 1970 the National Librarian, Dr Guy Sylvestre, suggested the need for a Task Force on indexing. A Task Force is a typically Canadian institution; if someone wants to attract attention to anything at all on a national level, a Task Force is set up. In 1975 the National Library Advisory Board established a Committee on Bibliographical Services for Canada. The terms of reference of this committee included indexing and abstracting. In 1976, this newly formed Committee of the National Library Advisory Board conducted a survey of publicly available Canadian abstracting and indexing services. On the basis of this survey it was decided to sponsor a workshop at the National Library of Canada in 1977, and to invite representatives from the various indexing and abstracting services to attend. At this workshop a directory of all the services attending was distributed. Then, on 12th June of that same year (1977) an Open Forum for Indexers and Abstractors was held at the Canadian Library Association annual conference in Montreal. The Forum was organized by Peter Greig of the National Library, Secretary of the Committee on Bibliographical Services for Canada, and chaired by Martha Pluskauskas, editor of Canadian Books in Print and the person responsible for its subject index. It was decided to form an association of indexers and abstractors and that same afternoon an executive was formed which began to draft the objectives of the Society. For a few months the Society was called the Canadian Society for Indexing and Abstracting, but soon this was changed to the present Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada. The French name of the Society remains unchanged. The Society's Newsletter began in February 1978. By the end of that year its affiliation with the Society of Indexers had been ratified and approved.

Canada, as you know, is a big country—4,400 miles across from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island—and as a result a lot of work is conducted on a regional basis. It was decided to divide the Society into three regional areas: Western Canada, Ontario and Quebec, and Atlantic Canada. The Society elects two Regional Directors for each region who, together with the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Editor, form the Executive Committee. Since most Canadians live in Ontario and Quebec, that central region has been the most active. Several regional meetings and workshops have been held there. But meetings have also been called in the Western Canada region, and some coordination has taken place within the Atlantic Canada region as well.

It is interesting to look very briefly at the people who have led the Society so far, because this is a good indication of the dominant interests and activities of the membership. Peter Greig, our past-president, who was extremely influential in the Society's development, works at the National Library of Canada and has a good grasp of the entire indexing situation in the country. From its beginnings, then, the Society has been national in its outlook. Professor Elaine...
Svenonius became the second president. She was representative of a rather large group within the Society, including myself, who are concerned with the teaching of indexing and abstracting. It is significant that at the Society's first annual conference in 1978—the annual meeting is normally held in conjunction with the annual conference of the Canadian Library Association, since so many of the members belong to both of these organizations—one of the major papers was a survey by Professor Anne Piternick on the teaching of indexing and abstracting in Canadian library schools and in library technician (or 'para-professional') courses. One of the conclusions of the survey is an indication of the potential need for a practical indexer's training course, such as the one offered by your Society. Professor Piternick's survey is to be published by the Canadian Society.

When Professor Svenonius left to teach in a library school in the United States, Edith Auckland, Assistant Editor of the Canadian Periodical Index became the current president of the Society. Although I can't prove it with any hard statistical evidence, it is my feeling that Edith represents the most dominant group within the Society—the large national indexing and abstracting services, mostly of periodical or report literature. This includes indexers for the Canadian Periodical Index (which now indexes 123 Canadian periodicals), the Index to Canadian Legal Periodicals, the Canadian Education Index, the Profile Index to Canadian Provincial and Municipal Publications, the Canadian Business Periodicals Index, Canadian Essay and Literature Index, Canadian Social Sciences Abstracts, and the Canadian Newspaper Index. Not all of the indexers connected with these large indexes belong to the Society, of course, but the Society does include a sizeable representation. While some IASC members are professional indexers, working on a permanent contract basis or as free-lancers, the majority of members are librarians. Other librarians within the Society are cataloguers and indexers of general or special library collections. The genuine freelance non-librarian book indexers seem, so far at least, to be a relatively small group within the Canadian Society. In fact, when the Western Canada regional directors attempted to interest the various book indexers in their region in the Society, the ones who attended the meeting were unable to find a major goal which they felt necessitated or justified the establishment of an organized regional group. It was recognized that individual book indexers generally work under rather solitary conditions. So more work seems needed in this particular area.

So far as particular indexing systems are concerned, there is a strong interest within the Society in PRECIS, the PREserved Context Index System developed by Derek Austin at the British Library. A check with Derek Austin has confirmed my suspicion that PRECIS is used as the indexing system in more individual projects in Canada than in any other country in the world at the present time, outside Britain. Indexers for ONTERIS (The Ontario Education Research Information System), an Ontario School Library Network Project, the National Film Board of Canada information/distribution system for Canadian non-print media, and other agency projects using PRECIS are members of the Society. In fact, the Society was instrumental in bringing Derek Austin (and Jutta Sørensen from Denmark) to Canada last summer to speak at the Canadian Library Association annual conference in Edmonton, Alberta. The two two-week PRECIS training courses which will be offered in Canada this summer, one in Edmonton and the other in Toronto, were set up through the efforts of persons who are members of the Society. Much interest in PRECIS has been generated in Canada, then, by members of the Society, both because of the usefulness and capabilities of the system itself, and because the ability to use PRECIS in both English and French is particularly attractive to Canadian indexers. In addition to this considerable interest in PRECIS, Society members are attracted to computerization and automation in general in indexing systems.

Although I have not the most recent figures, in December 1978 (at the time of the vote to become affiliated with your Society) the Canadian Society had 115 individual and institutional members. Annual membership fees at the present time for individual members are $15. This can be compared with the $55 required each year from members of the Canadian Library Association.

Peter Greig is now preparing an enlarged and updated final version of a Draft Chronology for a study of indexing and abstracting in Canada.

One of our Atlantic Canada regional directors has been contracted to design and prepare an automated index for the federal government Excise Tax Office, for use in all offices across the country as a national system. She was selected because the Excise Tax Office specifically looked
for someone with her qualifications through membership records of the Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada. One can only hope that this trend will continue, and that as the Society grows and matures it can play this kind of important role in the professional development of indexing and abstracting in Canada.

Nietzsche as Indexer

August A. Imholtz, Jr Congressional Information Service

Much to the disappointment of Cosima Wagner, Nietzsche returned to Basel on 5 August 1869, to continue his work on the index volume to the first 24 volumes of Rheinisches Museum, neue Folge. The index was only one of Nietzsche's febrile concerns in that year; but despite the drudgery of the work, amplified by his growing disaffection with the world of Wissenschaft, he continued to work on the index. Rheinisches Museum, founded in 1827 by Boeckh, Niebuhr and Brandis, was then and still is one of the preeminent German journals of classical philology. Under the editorship of Friedrich Reitschl, the great Classical scholar at Leipzig, Nietzsche had published in Rheinisches Museum his first philological essays: 'Zur Geschichte der Theognidischen Spruchsammlung,' 'Beiträge zur Kritik der griechischen Lyrik,' and 'De Laertii Diogenis fontibus.' Reitschl, Nietzsche's teacher and friend at Leipzig, had been instrumental in securing for Nietzsche the appointment as Professor of Classical Philology at the University of Basel. He had probably asked his brilliant disciple to compile the index, or Registerband as the Germans call it. The index, totalling 176 pages, contains four separate indexes: an index of contributors, a topical index, an index of passages from classical literature, and an index of Greek and Latin words discussed. The index appeared in 1871 as a separate volume without acknowledgement of the indexer! It was one of Nietzsche's last contributions to traditional classical scholarship. In the following year his Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik appeared. The break with Altertumswissenschaft had begun. There would be no more indexes.

Specialized vocabularies

The 19th unabridged edition of Dewey Decimal classification and relative index, 3v. (Forest Press; H. W. Wilson Co., $90.00) is now available. Like its predecessors, it covers all subjects. It has been revised and expanded, notably in the areas of Sociology, Politics, Information Science, Law, Social Welfare, Zoology, Engineering, Home Economics, Management, and History, and also in its geographical tables—reflecting the changes in administration, attitudes and technology of the times we live in, and the vocabulary generated by such changes.

The latest section of the English full edition of the Universal decimal classification (UDC) to be published is on Mining. It is a revision of the 1955 edition, and represents a classified display of topics relating to the exploitation of ores and other mineral deposits, followed by a detailed alphabetical subject index. (BS 1000 (622) 1979. £8.80.) BS publications may be obtained at members' discount through the Society's Literature Manager.

Terminology in Heating and Ventilation is defined in a newly published Glossary of refrigeration, heating, ventilating and air conditioning terms. (BS 5643 1979. £10.70.)

The policy of Aslib library being 'to acquire all significant English language publications and bilingual or multilingual items with English as one of the languages', it follows that the list of subject headings and thesauri published since 1970 held by the library forms a most useful bibliography for indexers. It is printed, under broad subject headings, in Aslib proceedings 31 (6) June 1979, 264-274.

I certainly think that the best book in the world would owe the most to a good index, and the worst book, if it had but a single good thought in it, might be kept alive by it. —Horace Binney, Letter to S. A. Allibone (1868).