Activities of the Canadian Society
June 1978-June 1979
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The Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada (IASC)/Société canadienne pour l'analyse de documents (SCAD) was founded at an open forum meeting for indexers and abstracters in Montreal on 12th June 1977. The main events of the Society's first year of existence were reviewed in a speech delivered at the sixth annual conference of the Canadian Association for Information Science in May 1978; this account appears in the IASC/SCAD Newsletter (v. 1, no. 3, May 1978, pp. 44-49). The following summary complements the above report by reviewing the Society's progress during its second year of operation.

Executive Committee

The members of the Executive Committee are elected to serve for a two-year term of office. The members of the first Executive Committee were volunteers who held office for one year to establish and maintain the Society's national existence. An election was held in the spring of 1978 and the members of the new Executive Committee took office at the Society's first annual meeting in June 1978. The unexpected resignation of Elaine Svenonius as President in October 1978 tested the viability and strength of the Society's constitutional procedures. The IASC Secretary, M. Edith Auckland, was invited by her fellow executive members to become President and, following her acceptance, Lois Nelson was invited to become the new IASC Secretary. These changes formally took effect on 1st January 1979 and a revised list of the members of the IASC Executive Committee for 1978-1980 appeared in the April 1979 issue of The Indexer.

By June 1979 the Society had 106 members, including 15 institutional members. Contact between members through the annual meetings and the newsletter was augmented by regional meetings, some of which have resulted in the formation of regional groups, as in Ottawa and Vancouver. The Ottawa regional group provided a forum on Canadian indexing for the John Abbott College's Documentation Technology Department at Ste. Anne de Bellevue in April 1979.

Annual meetings

In the absence of well-developed regional groups, the annual meeting provides the only true forum for the members of the IASC. The practice has been to hold a one-day meeting during the annual conference of the Canadian Library Association since many IASC members also belong to the latter organization. While this has served the interests of a portion of the IASC membership, the Society's executive officers are considering the possibility of holding future annual meetings with other groups to accommodate different segments of the membership and their interests, and to provide the opportunity to examine and to exchange differing views.

The 1978 annual meeting was held in Edmonton on 14th June 1978, under the auspices of the University of Alberta's Faculty of Library Science. A varied programme was prepared for this first annual meeting. Following Dean Charles Davis's welcoming remarks, Peter Greig spoke on the establishment of the IASC in the general context of the development of indexing and abstracting in Canada. A background document, the Draft Chronology for a Study of Indexing and Abstracting in Canada (Ottawa: IASC/SCAD, 1978, 18pp.), was distributed to participants at the annual meeting and copies may still be obtained from the IASC Secretary. This compilation marks the first attempt in any English-speaking country to provide the necessary documentation for a comprehensive historical study of the national development of indexing and abstracting.

Anne Piternick outlined the training and educational facilities available to indexers and abstracters in Canada, based on a survey of Canadian library schools and selected library technician programmes.

Marilyn Flitton examined the problems of
retrospective indexing with reference to her own experience and in terms of other current projects.

Consideration was given to contemporary Canadian indexing services and their problems as well. A comprehensive picture of the Canadian Periodical Index from its tentative establishment by the Windsor Public Library to the service's recent automation by the Canadian Library Association, its proprietor since 1948, was provided by Sylvia Morrison. Louise Fast identified the major considerations of a commercial indexing service in evaluating new service projects with particular reference to some of MicroMedia Limited's recent enterprises.

The final section of the annual meeting programme was devoted to different indexing systems. Catherine Michell described applications of KWIC and KWOC indexing with reference to a number of locally established projects. Irene McCordick surveyed the use of PRECIS in Canada and the nature of the projects involved. Based on this paper, the IASC is considering the possibility of publishing a periodic directory of Canadian PRECIS users and their projects. André Nitecki expanded the discussion of PRECIS through an illustrated comparison of PRECIS and Library of Congress subject headings.

The annual meeting concluded with the Society's business meeting, marked by the installation of the first elected IASC Executive Committee.

The 1979 annual meeting was held in Ottawa on 18th June 1979, under the auspices of the Library of Parliament. A central theme, "Indexing Federal/Provincial Legislative Documents", had been chosen to mark the Society's one-day meeting in the nation's capital. Following the President's opening remarks, and a short note of welcome from Pamela Hardisty on behalf of the Library of Parliament, Catherine Pross spoke on the index coverage of federal and provincial government documents by commercial services (non-government agencies) in Canada, contrasting these with their American counterparts.

The next three papers dealt with the indexing services established for legislative documents at the federal level. Richard Woodley, Michael Lukyniuk and John Wallner provided a joint presentation on the work of the Canadian House of Commons Index and Reference Branch in indexing Hansard, the House Journals and, since 1976, the proceedings and reports of the House standing, joint and special committees. Katie Parker complemented this paper with a succinct historical and descriptive review of the services provided by the Index and Revisions section in the Canadian Senate's Debates and Reporting Branch. W. G. Stiles completed the discussion of federal legislative documents indexes with a critical study of the needs of the Library of Parliament's clientele and the services provided by the Library's Index Section in response to those needs. In this context this last paper also examined the feasibility of providing information services from a conventional library base, and reviewed future developments in the light of new technology.

The rest of the papers dealt with the index services established for legislative documents at the provincial level. Eric Swanick outlined the index services currently operated in each of the four Atlantic provinces, providing a descriptive analysis of the approach used by each provincial index service.

A detailed examination of Quebec legislative and major government documents, and their respective indexes, was presented by Bernard Charbonneau. Particular emphasis was given to the recently established Répertoire analytique des publications gouvernementales du Québec and its supplementary Bulletin.

Mance Carbery introduced her study of the indexes prepared for the Ontario Debates and Journals with a discussion of the general access to Ontario government documents provided by monthly and annual checklists prepared by the Ministry of Government Services' Bibliographic Services Centre. In addition, her paper summarized the 23 indexes and file systems maintained in the Ontario Legislative Library.

The final presentation, prepared by Joan Fraser, dealt with the indexing services provided in each of the four Western Provinces. Beginning with a general definition of an index, this paper examined user-needs in terms of the actual services provided. The information provided in the paper was obtained through a comprehensive survey of the legislative libraries of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

The exhibition area, newly introduced at the 1979 annual meeting, proved a most successful innovation. Exhibitions, from some of the major Canadian services, included the Canadian
Education Index, the Canadian Periodical Index and an impressive array of MicroMedia Limited indexes. The newly published Canadian Subject Headings (2nd ed. Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1979) was also on display. Commonwealth Microfilm Library, in collaboration with the Ottawa Journal, demonstrated the recently established microfiche index to the Ottawa Journal. McLaren Micropublishing and ONTERIS provided leaflets describing their products. The Library of Parliament mounted a display of indexes to federal legislative documents, including a number of the indexes discussed in the papers delivered at the annual meeting.

The papers presented at both annual meetings will be published by the Society, in separate volumes, in the autumn of 1979. A new publication series, the Report of the Annual Business Meeting, will be established at the same time beginning with the proceedings of the business meeting conducted at the 1979 annual meeting.

Newsletter

As a means of communicating indexing news to the Society’s members, and of informing them of Society business, a newsletter was planned from the first establishment of the IASC. The first issue of the IASC/SCAD Newsletter, under the editorship of Clarke E. Leverette, appeared in February 1978. Publication is irregular although above the minimum two issues a year specified in the Society’s Constitution and Bylaws. The four issues which appeared in 1978 (v. 1, no. 1 to v. 1, no. 4) contained a total of 57 pages. Four issues are planned for 1979 and the newsletter already has reached 42 pages with the publication of the April issue (v. 2, no. 2). Copies of the newsletter are exchanged with both the Society of Indexers and the Australian Society of Indexers; the American Society of Indexers has not as yet responded to the offer of an exchange agreement.

Typical features of the IASC/SCAD Newsletter are news of the Society, its activities and concerns; news of indexing/abstracting projects and services, predominantly those in Canada; summaries of pertinent articles relating to Canadian indexing and abstracting; and information about indexing and abstracting reference sources, including book reviews and a continuing bibliography ("The I & A Reference Shelf"). Future issues of the IASC/SCAD Newsletter will contain the directory of the Society’s members for 1979 and an expanded instalment of ‘The I & A Reference Shelf’.

The IASC Executive Committee considers ‘The I & A Reference Shelf’ to be a critical service to its members, given the paucity of and the difficulty in acquiring relevant information on indexing and abstracting reference sources. The first two instalments, devoted almost entirely to books, book article contributions and pamphlets, list over 100 titles and indicate the availability of each title from the collection of the National Library of Canada. Planned expansion of ‘The I & A Reference Shelf’ will include the addition of annotations, purchase information (where applicable) and added locations. Separate publication of a cumulation of the lists published in the IASC/SCAD Newsletter is being considered as well.

Constitution and Bylaws

After nearly three years of working experience with the Society’s rules and regulations the members of the Executive Committee feel there is a need to review the operation of the Constitution and Bylaws, and members’ views on a revision are being sought.

Affiliation with The Society of Indexers (Great Britain)

Formal affiliation between the Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada and the Society of Indexers (Great Britain) took place on 1st January 1979. Mary Dykstra and Peter Greig, representing the IASC, participated at the 21st anniversary International Conference sponsored by the Society of Indexers in 1978. As immediate Past President, Peter Greig officially extended the Canadian Society’s best wishes to the British Society and to its founder, G. Norman Knight. Representatives from the American, Australian, British and Canadian societies discussed possible means of increasing international co-operation between their respective societies; to date there have been no positive results from these discussions.

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Finally, in the index to vol. 1, all the entries under Guinness are misspelt ‘Guiness’. (Letter from Ray Ward to Library Assn. Record, 81. Dec. 1979, referring to Introduction to reference work by W. A. Kutz.

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