

SOCIETY OF INDEXERS IN AUSTRALIA

All correspondence regarding The Society of Indexers (England), The Society of Indexers in Australia and the *Newsletter* should be addressed to H. Godfrey Green, 35 Rosedale Road, Glen Iris, Victoria 3146.
Phone: 26 6901, ext. 166; A.H. 25 3314.

*Absente auxilio perquirimus undique frustra,
Sed nobis ingene indicis auxilium est.*

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER SIX

FREE TO MEMBERS

APRIL, 1974

NEXT MEETING

FROM the inception of the Society of Indexers in Australia in 1972, members have met in each others homes. However, as the Society has grown in numbers - nearly 70 now, 40 in Victoria - some embarrassment has been experienced by those living in units or flats where accommodation is limited.

A central location, which will also ease the transport problem for many members, has been secured. The RMIT, which has become an institutional member of the Society, on being approached, agreed to the Society holding its meetings in the Library Conference Room. The Society appreciates this courtesy.

The next meeting therefore will be in the Conference Room of the RMIT Library, 1st floor, 368 Swanston Street, Tuesday 23rd April, 7.45 p.m. (Note the earlier starting time.)

The speaker will be Miss Bridget Everett, Senior Co-ordinating Editor of the Tertiary and Reference Division of Cheshire Publishing Pty. Ltd., Melbourne. Her subject: *What a Publisher Expects from an Indexer.*

This follows another record attendance of members who heard Miss Josephine McGovern, the Librarian of the Parliament of Victoria, describe the intricacies of indexing in a parliamentary library. The text of Miss McGovern's talk is given as a supplement to this *Newsletter*.

You are cordially invited to come and to bring a guest to the April meeting. Please say you will come!

BACK ISSUES OF THE NEWSLETTER

LIMITED supplies of back issues of the *Newsletter* are available for a nominal amount. Would members who wish to have back issues, please advise number of copies and date of issues required.

NEW MEMBERS

WE WELCOME this month the following new members: Mrs. P.M. Ray, Librarian for Department of Primary Industry, Canberra; Mr. James H. Thorburn of the Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne; Miss Joan Simmonds, Deputy Chief Librarian for the Caulfield-Malvern Regional Library, Melbourne; Dr. Susanne Pachter, Senior Tutor/Librarian for the State College of Victoria at Bendigo; and, as institutional member, a special welcome to the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Central Library.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

MEMBERS are reminded that annual subscriptions become due on 1 April. Despite inflation and rising costs, the rate remains the same, namely individual membership rate \$5.28 a year; institutional membership rate \$5.28 for non-profit making organisations and \$10.56 for profit-making organisations. (Members who paid the full rate between 31 December and 1 April should pay half rate now.) To this should be added \$2.00 to cover bank and mailing charges, stamp duty, fluctuations in exchange rates, and the *Newsletter*. Cheques, in my name, should reach me as soon as possible for forwarding to England.

AN INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE

You are again reminded that the Newsletter accepts papers in additions to those presented at the Society's meetings.

They should be of a practical nature and of some relevance to problems encountered in book indexing.

Other kinds of contributions which will be considered for inclusion are

INDEXING IN A PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY:

A short talk to the Society of Indexers in Australia, 12 February 1974,
by Josephine McGovern, Librarian to the Parliament of Victoria.

INDEXING is of paramount importance in a library serving legislators, as accurate information must be located quickly, often at times when other sources are not available. Thus we are concerned with compiling indexes for internal use, and exploiting the printed indexes available, particularly those to periodicals and to legal and official publications.

In the Library of the Parliament of Victoria, we maintain indexes to all the incoming Australian Parliamentary Papers and Bills, Federal, State and also New Zealand. This is done by assigning a pencil number in order of receipt and listing the receipts. This arbitrary system serves well as a finding aid until the bound correctly arranged volumes are sent. This is indexing at its very simplest, but is an effective aid to locating specific Papers in a hurry. *The Legislative Reference Index* of comparative legislation appears to be unique to this Library.

A strip index is employed and the Government Publications Officer scans all incoming official publications so that items of comparative legislation may be added strip by strip chronologically. Items relative to current or proposed legislation in Victoria are specially featured. The Index is used as an adjunct to Current Information Files of clippings and bibliography. As the Stripdex pages can be easily photocopied, the subjects listed can form an instant bibliography of Bills, Debates and Acts, especially those of Great Britain, N.Z., the Australian States, the Australian Government, and sometimes Canada and U.S.A. Annually, the whole *Legislative Reference Index* is photocopied to make a master volume and the individual subjects (such as Aborigines, Capital Punishment, Objectionable Literature, Pollution, etc.) added to the Current Information Files.

MUCH important work was done in the past. The Library has a hand written one volume *Index to Pamphlets* (1856-1900). This was maintained in subject and author form, until the Commonwealth Parliament moved in to the Parliament House in Melbourne in 1901. There is a photocopy of this Index at LaTrobe Library but in most cases, the pamphlets are also held at the State Library. Appropriately the first entry, Volume 1, number 1 is entitled "The discovery of gold".

A useful but quaint and often inconsistent guide to the Victorian Parliamentary Papers is that published in 1909 and entitled *Index to the Parliamentary Papers . . . 1851-1909*, compiled by J.M. Worthington. Here I must pay tribute to the fine work done over many years by the present Librarian at LaTrobe University, Mr. D.H. Borchardt for his work in providing indexes and guides to Parliamentary papers in the series *Studies in Australian Bibliography*. To date the *Checklist of Royal Commissions, Select Committees of Parliament and Boards of Inquiry* includes Part I and IA. Commonwealth of Australia 1900-1950, 1950-1960: Part II Tasmania, 1856-1959: Part III Victoria 1856-1960. Wentworth Press in Sydney have published the later volumes.

STATISTICS play a vital part in our information services to Members of Parliament. We arrange the publications of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (formerly the Commonwealth Bureau of Census & Statistics) by the numbers used in their *Publications of the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics* (Canberra, C.B.C.S.) To be used effectively, this requires constant annotating and see-also references to bring allied subjects together. The next edition may codify the collection better, but, with a meticulous officer shelf listing the publications received by the A.B.S. arbitrary notation, we manage quick retrieval.

The third edition in 1972 of the N.S.W. Parliamentary Library publication of *Government Publications in Australia* contains a useful discussion by R.N.D. Baker on "Indexing problems in N.S.W. Government publications". However he does pay tribute, by means of comparison, to the guides to indexing in the *Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers of Australian Government Publications* (Canberra, A.G.P.S. 1972). It would be a great help if those who prepare indexes to the various Yearbooks and Government Gazettes throughout Australia were guided by the *Style Manual*. However we must gratefully acknowledge the marked improvement in the index of the *Victorian Yearbook* and particularly that of the latest and special Centenary Edition.* The long awaited *Australian Government Digest* (Canberra, A.G.P.S. 1973-) has indexes of both subjects and persons, with special emphasis on the Ministers and their Departments. The indexes in the first issue were reasonably efficient and no doubt will improve.

THE National Library in Canberra produces *Australian Government Publications* now issued quarterly, with annual cumulations. This is a field ripe for development in Australia. The Library of N.S.W. and the State Library of Tasmania bring out useful lists of official publications while the W.A. Parliamentary Library has recently produced *Official Publications of W.A.* Victoria, Queensland and South Australia still lag. There are many difficulties in finding and locating all official publications, especially those not printed by the Government Printer. The Parliamentary Libraries are all considering the best ways to bring indexes of current information to the M.P.'s. Canberra has taken a lead and so we have the fortnightly Australia Parliament Library's *Index to Current Information*, primarily for the use of Senators and Members. The Queensland Parliament Library produces *Selected Pamphlets Recently Acquired*, while Tasmania and W.A. bring out indexes to current topics from periodicals. N.S.W. Parliament Library has over the years produced various indexes, the last one being *Australian Parliamentary Serials : a working checklist of sessional volumes*. The N.S.W. Parliamentary Librarian, Mr. Russell Cope, has been appointed a National Editor in connection with the *Government Publications Review*, a quarterly published in New York by SEBD Publications Inc. (1973 -).

As much of our work is concerned with legal material, we welcomed the appearance in 1973 of *Current Australian and New Zealand Legal Literature Index* (Sydney, Law Book Co.) Another Law Book Co. publication of great value is the *Legal Monthly Digest* with its index cumulating each month. Then there is Butterworth's *Australian Current Law*, also with a cumulating index. However as these are designed for Lawyers, one must think in legal terms when using them.

*Compiled by John Russell, member of our Society. - Ed.

ONE of the greatest boons to a parliamentary librarian would be a published and up to date newspaper index. A valuable tool is the *Argus Index* (1910-1949 (June)). We also subscribe to *The Times Index* from London but its quarterly volumes have been running sadly behind. The *Nation Review Index* enhances the value of the paper and helps in establishing a chronology of notable events but it only began in October 1970. An interesting development to follow will be the service of *SVP (Australia)* which, on a subscription basis, will make available to clients information from the *Australian Financial Review* and *Sydney Morning Herald* indexes.

The situation regarding indexes to periodicals is much brighter. The application of PRECIS indexing and computerisation to the National Library production, *Australian Public Affairs Information Service (A.P.A.I.S.)* will increase its value even further. *Australian Science Index (C.S.I.R.O.)* is a most valuable tool in the fields of science and technology. These indexes could well merit a discussion on their own.

The National Library loose-leaf multi-volume union list *Serials in Australian Libraries Social Sciences and Humanities (SALSSAH)* and the C.S.I.R.O. union list *Scientific Serials in Australian Libraries (SSAL)* are vital tools for us in locating the whereabouts of serial publications. The first two-volume edition of *SALSSAH* in 1963 is useful for us at Parliament because of the official publications listed in it.

THE locally produced *Guidelines* (Mt. Waverley, Vic., Bibliographic Services) is a good general index to periodicals, with a management favourable to suggestion and constructive criticism.

Pinpointer: A Current Subject Guide to Popular Periodicals is brought out monthly by the Libraries Board of S.A. and is handy for hobbyists and those keen on the popular type magazine. The overseas indexes of special concern in a library serving parliamentarians are in the fields of the social sciences. Paramount are the H.W. Wilson Indexes, *Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature* and *Social Sciences and Humanities Index*. Both are published in New York. The latter is shortly to expand its range. *Humanities* will become an index in its own right, with emphasis on history and literature. From England we receive the Library Association Publication *British Humanities Index*. The B.H.I. subject headings sometimes seem quaint, if one has been nurtured on the American Wilson indexes. *Keesing's Contemporary Archives: Weekly Diary of World Events with Index Continually Kept Up to Date* (London) really lives up to its title.

Those concerned with indexing should be aware of new developments in information retrieval and the use of thesauri. In 1971, the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads brought out *Thesaurus of Terms, a List of Terms and their Relationships used in the Library as a Vocabulary Reference in Indexing and Retrieving Information*.

That notable production, the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* has also brought forth some useful by-products, such as the Roneod two volumes from A.N.U. entitled *Biographical Register: Short List (1963)*. This has been such a useful tool to use in the Parliamentary Library when historical research has to be employed. Attention should also be drawn to the 1969 A.N.U. publication by H.J. Gibbney and N. Burns, *A Biographer's Index of Parliamentary Returns from N.S.W., Queensland and Victoria, 1850-1889*. Mention should also be made of another tool for historical research, Kathleen Thomson and Geoffrey Serles's *Biographical Register of the Victorian Legislature 1851-1900* (A.N.U., 1972.)

There is no time at this stage to discuss indexes in books and the service they offer in a parliamentary library but a well constructed index is often of the greatest value in providing a prompt and accurate information service for members of parliament.