

raw data of history; and, if at times their reminiscences provide clues rather than answers, the quality of their responses to perhaps not always inspired leads is an overall strength rather than a weakness in this type of "history."

Until very recently the number of substantial Canadian library histories could be counted on the fingers of one hand excluding the thumb, and the valid synthesis could be counted on the thumb. Indeed, even that synthesis, Antonio Drolet's *Les Bibliothèques Canadiennes, 1604-1960* (Montreal: Cercle du Livre de France, 1965) has been published only in French and is, perhaps for that reason, little known outside of Quebec. Moreover, Drolet's pioneer venture, courageous though it was, suffered severely from the lack of specific histories upon which to draw; and in this respect served merely to underscore the sad state of Canadian historiography. As *We Remember It* forms, therefore, an important addition to the source materials of library history, and one may now hope that Dr. Rothstein, recently freed from overriding administrative demands, will find the time and the incentive to produce a scholarly interpretation which would add perspective to the data, preserved with such foresight in these engaging memoirs.

"Try to remember, and if you remember, follow, follow, follow. . . ."—J. P. Wilkinson, Professor, School of Library Science, University of Toronto

Andriot, John L., ed. *Guide to U.S. Government Serials & Periodicals*. McLean, Virginia, Documents Index, 1971. 4 volumes in 3. Paper. \$60.00. LC No. 75-7027.

"As a general rule, the public documents have been a despised class of books." The statement is Melvil Dewey's, spoken in 1877. Later he added, "A few United States documents are regarded as valuable. Specialists have learned that they contain much which is of the utmost importance to them, and which they can obtain nowhere else." Today not only specialists but anybody dealing in the commodity called information, values the content of government publications. As far as their unstandardized, whimsical, erratic, multifarious and unpredictable form is concerned they

are, if not despised, at least tacitly frowned upon by most users and librarians alike. Only one aspect of Dewey's statement lost its validity. Today few government publications would be identified as books. Compounding the problems of their handling, a frightfully high percentage of them is issued in serial form.

Andriot's *Guide* is a courageous and quite successful effort to lighten two kinds of headache of the library world: government documents and serials. It must be made clear at the outset that the *Guide* is a directory and not an index. It provides bibliographic control of federally published serials and periodicals by several listings: (a) An alphabetic list of U.S. government agencies, commissions, and committees, with a brief history of each, (b) a classified list of Superintendent of Documents numbers with the names of agencies they represent, (c) classified list of current agencies (in existence on January 1, 1971) with annotated entries of their serial publications, (d) classified list of abolished agencies with their annotated publications and discontinued SuDocs numbers, (e) agency and title indexes. The *Guide* is in its seventh edition. Since its first publication in 1962, numerous, substantial changes attest to the responsiveness of its editor to specific information problems connected with government serials. What are some of these problems, and to what extent are they helped by the *Guide*?

1) Federal government agencies, with their frequent reorganizational changes present a tangled pattern. The maze is carried over into the classification scheme of federal publications, which mirrors the agencies' organizational structure. The *Guide* lists and briefly describes 2,216 agencies in the authority file of volume 1. Especially useful are lists of House and Senate committees and special presidential commissions. Unfortunately, the lack of a subject approach limits the value of this section. (The *Government Organization Manual* provides comparable directory information in conjunction with a subject index.) [For instance, somebody interested in agencies with an environmental concern will find only three listings. The "Agency index" in volume 4 will lead him to an additional seven, which still do not

provide the full picture of federal environmental involvement.]

2) Most of the standard periodical selection tools offer either very inadequate bibliographic control of government periodicals or none. (*Ulrich's* includes more government periodicals in recent editions, but it is still highly selective and unannotated.) Also the lists designed specifically for the selection of government periodicals (the February issue of the *Monthly Catalog* or *Price List* No. 36) are more limited in scope and bibliographic detail than Andriot's *Guide*. Research libraries in need of a comprehensive bibliographic apparatus will want to investigate the new *Checklist of United States Public Documents, 1789-1970* (Index four lists series) and compare it with Andriot's *Guide*.

3) A well-known problem is the identification of non-GPO serials including elusive bulletins, circulars, newsletters, releases, and looseleaf services put out by minor bureaus and field agencies. The *Guide* includes most of these fugitive items not readily identified by any other tool.

4) Sub-series of government serials have always appalled and frustrated users. Citations of such sub-series are furnished and annotated. Examples of series thus analyzed include the *Catalog of Copyright Entries*, *Current Fishery Statistics*, *Water Supply Papers* and, what will please any information seeker who ever tackled the *Serial Set*, even House and Senate documents.

5) After a government periodical had been bibliographically identified, information about its availability, frequency, and price is as vital as the basic question about its existence. The *Guide* provides the following details for each entry: Availability (same symbols used as in the *Monthly Catalog*), beginning date, frequency, LC card number, SuDocs number, and depository item number. It is regrettable that information provided by earlier editions is no longer included: LC class number, decimal class number, and price.

6) With the federal government becoming more and more involved in affairs of institutional and private life, access to information on current federal laws, regulations, standards, statistics, raw and repackaged data is becoming more crucial to

wider strata of population than ever. There should be access to this information by topics in disciplinary as well as interdisciplinary areas. Since the *Guide* has no subject index and the title index is not a permuted one, the user has to resort to his familiarity with agencies and their concern with various areas of human endeavor when using the Agency index as a poor substitute for the subject approach.

[There are some inconsistencies and errors in the bibliographic listings and indexes. In the Agency index (v.4, p.1040), under *Council* we find *Environmental Quality*. On p.1043 we find *Environmental Quality Council*. Both entries carry the same SuDocs number. Actually the entries should clearly distinguish between two different agencies: the *Council on Environmental Quality* (established in 1970) and the *Environmental Quality Council* (established in 1969, renamed and later terminated in 1970)].

In conclusion, the improvements in this new edition of the *Guide* outweigh the flaws and shortcomings. A further improvement could be made by including, in case of government periodicals, the indexing and abstracting services where these periodicals are included. This device would be invaluable for both selection and reference purposes. In the meantime, the *Guide* is recommended for use in medium and larger libraries of all types. If there is still a librarian to whom public documents represent "a despised class of books," he should find them less despising because of this expedient key.—Marta L. Dosa, School of Library Science, Syracuse University

Spyers-Duran, Peter, and Gore, Daniel, eds. *Advances in Understanding Approval and Gathering Plans in Academic Libraries*. International Seminar on Approval and Gathering Plans in Large and Medium Size Academic Libraries, 2d, Western Michigan University, 1969. Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1970. 220p.

When approval plans first appeared on the library scene in the early 1960s, only libraries with sizeable book budgets could consider having an English-language approval plan. The questions facing the libraries using and contemplating approval