(Mr. Greig, Indexer to the Bibliographical Society of Canada and contributor to the international publication *The Indexer*, was formerly a librarian at the Library of Parliament and is now taking advanced training in bibliography in England.)


Few would contradict the opinion that Dr. Watters’ massive work is the most useful single listing of Canadiana in the humanities, be it a bibliography, catalogue, or checklist. Its re-appearance in a new edition must be regarded, therefore, as an outstanding event for the increasing number of scholars and students concerned with Canadian studies in English. In the thirteen years since the first edition was published, the work has made itself indispensable. It is cited more widely than any other volume of its kind, so that “Watters” has become a household word for everyone dealing with Canadian books. The universal benefit of revising the volume, however, is equalled only by the formidable nature of the task itself. Reprinted twice since 1959, the volume now appears in a fully revised and greatly enlarged second edition.

The stated purpose of the book is “to stimulate interest and suggest research in our literary culture, to reveal individual figures and areas of investigation rich in published material, and to facilitate the finding of the books concerned”. Included are separately-published works in English up to 1960. The “Canadian Literature” of the title is misleading in its modesty, if one assumes this to mean no more than poetry, prose, fiction and drama (the categories of the first of the two Parts). Part II includes works in such diverse subjects and forms as genealogy, diaries, lectures, local history, sermons, social history, emigrant handbooks, and travel journals. All these the compiler describes as “books by Canadians which seem likely to be of value to anyone studying the literature or culture of Canada”. Part II, it had been hoped, would be rendered unnecessary in this second edition by the intervening publication of more-comprehensive bibliographical studies in these areas; but, alas! only a very few such works have been forthcoming, so that Dr. Watters has been able to omit only the “Bibliography” and “Education” sections of the earlier edition. (It is a satisfaction to note that the first of these was rendered unnecessary by the Bibliographical Society of Canada’s *Bibliography of Canadian Bibliographies*.) Even so, this new edition contains well over a thousand pages, and this without any space being lost to achieve the improved legibility over the first edition, accomplished by typographical changes such as the use of bold-face entries.

In his Preface, Dr. Watters wisely refrains from involving himself in the controversy “What is a Canadian author?” He allows himself a sensible latitude, preferring this to any arbitrary definition – likely to be unsatisfactory anyway; but even this general interpretation excludes “authors who might be termed tourists or visitors”, and this does seem a pity: for while such persons are certainly not Canadians, a great deal of informed commentary on the Canadian scene must be omitted as a result. These works might not be Canadian literature, but they do form an important part of the ‘background’. It is also regrettable
that, where Dr. Watters found the text to be the same, the existence of “different copyright dates” or “variant imprints” was “not normally indicated” (that is, editions and issues might not be distinguished); but to have taken these bibliographical variations into account could easily have doubled the size of an already thick volume, and would have multiplied the time required to complete it. Manifold are the difficulties in such a work though, whenever the actual volumes listed are not examined, and problems were inevitably encountered by Dr. Watters. He recognized the constant risk of listing a ‘ghost’, of perpetuating misinformation taken from another source, and of placing a work under an incorrect classification because of a misleading title. The plan to increase the number of classifications in the Checklist had to be abandoned for this reason — though the loss here is not great, in my opinion. General classes, with an adequate index, serve most purposes, and greater specificity of classes raises a whole new set of problems which can be resolved only by multiple entries for the same title. Yet another hazard of listing unexamined works is that of crediting a library in the locations with the wrong issue or edition, and this reduces the value of giving locations of copies. Apart from this, however, Dr. Watters makes it clear that the locations given are not intended as a census of copies; his intention (commendable enough) is to give one location in each of the four main geographical areas of Canada (with the British Museum and Library of Congress added when appropriate), so that locations given are not usually indicative of the rarity or commonness of a book. But all of this is explained most carefully in the very thorough Preface. To have attempted a work of greater detail would, in all likelihood, have resulted in no book at all; and one of the chief advantages of checklists over bibliographies is that they do more frequently reach publication! As it is, the compiler has already discovered titles which he should have included, and a few errors that slipped his attention; but these are being cumulated for correction in the next issue of the book.

To look, now, on the positive side, a vast amount of information is supplied, as the user will quickly discover for himself. About 16000 titles by some 7000 Canadian authors are described — 4000 more titles than were available in the first edition. Of these, at least 3000 were published from 1951 to 1960, or about a quarter of the listed titles published from 1628 to 1950 — one decade against thirty-two! Compared with the first edition, many more entries give the author’s full name and dates, and when applicable the pseudonym is given following the title. Changed titles, or those for other editions when they differ, are recorded, as is the imprint and a simple pagination. One notices too the frequent increase over the first edition of the number of titles by a given author, as well as in the number of authors of pre-1951 works. For works published up to 1950, each entry closes with symbols for copy locations, usually greater in number than those given in the earlier edition for the same entry. (I notice though that ‘QMSS’, now replaced by ‘QMBN’, is still used.) The comprehensive General Index is supplemented by a useful Index of Anonymous Titles, which shows publication dates, and gives cross references tied into the General Index.

Conveniently arranged, exhaustive, and well-indexed, this volume is quite indispensable to Canadian studies in English. Truly the wonder is that a work
so compendious could ever have been produced manually; and one is tempted to ask if a million-dollar computer could have put it together one half as well!

Review Editor

*The National Library of Canada; a Historical Analysis of the Forces which Contributed to its Establishment and to the Identification of its Role and Responsibilities*, by F. Dolores Donnelly (Sister Francis Dolores). Ottawa: Canadian Library Association, 1973. xvii, 281p. $15.00

In the context of world libraries, Canada’s National Library is a babe in arms. It is not the child of a revolution, richly fed on state-authorized plunder; it is neither the gift of a monarch nor the accumulation of centuries of the fruits arising from governmental privileges to monopolist publishers. The depressing saga of the gestation and birth of a national library for Canada begins with the usual problems of distance and communication that the country has always had to face; it continues in spite of fires (quite a high record of them, actually), wars, and economic depressions. All these aspects of ill fortune serve to — how shall we say it? — shelve proposals for library development for generations beyond Confederation. A too-long period of delay and inaction is countered, finally, by the appearance of a national library, its role and responsibilities to the nation clearly articulated. Because the movement for a national library grew more intense with the passage of time after Confederation, the bulk of this study is concerned with organizations, men, and movements very close to us in time. Inasmuch as all the sources are not yet available, as the author makes clear, the study is less an historical than a documentary one. It exercises careful discrimination in isolating the shaping factors (here called, at times with unintentional irony, I think, “forces”) contributing to the National Library’s appearance and shaping its role and responsibilities to the nation it serves. Chief among these motivating factors is, according to the author’s thesis, the activity of the Canadian Library Association, founded in 1946.

Readers desiring information on the library situation in Canada, and on problems particular to this country, will find much information in the book, as will those who seek to inform themselves on the aims and objectives of the National Library; a thorough exposition of its aims emerges from this study. Information appears in citations from governmental reports and debates, in correspondence, and in some of the many surveys undertaken. Much here presented is otherwise unavailable, being from files such as those of the C.L.A. The text is amplified by means of useful charts and tables, a well set out bibliography, partially classified, and necessary appendix material (National Library Acts, reproduced from statutes, etc.). The index, compared with the high standard of documentation, is a trifle thin, concentrating on names, not subjects, and having a few omissions. Index format could have been improved, as the series of repeated entries under “National Library” shows.

Despite the fact that the subtitle calls the book an historical analysis, and the author refers to the “historical and analytical framework” within which the study has been carried out, there are many points at which the reader wishes