The compilation of an index to the first ten volumes of the Canadian Forum by Mr. G.R. Adshead ('Ashed' in the 'Preface'), a reference librarian in the Ottawa Public Library, was long needed. The CLA is to be commended as well for their publishing initiative in following up the Maclean's Magazine index with this work. It is regrettable, however, that it was not possible to produce a larger cumulation of the Canadian Forum. With the appearance of Mr. Adshead's work it is now necessary, as the 'Preface' indicates, to consult three periodical indexes for materials in the Canadian Forum. The present work provides access to the periodical for the period 1920-29; the following ten years are covered in the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature (actually beginning in September 1929, rather than in 1930 as the 'Preface' indicates); and the coverage has been kept up to date by the Canadian Periodical Index. It is perhaps less well-known that the Canadian Forum was also indexed between 1928 and 1932 in the Windsor Public Library's pioneer Canadian Periodical Index. Despite the compiler's diligence "in following the format and headings of the Canadian Periodical Index", there remain a number of puzzling aspects about the work which may disturb future users. The bulk of the index, which runs to some eighty-four pages, is largely explained by the fact that the uniform heading 'Book Reviews' occupies some sixty percent of the pagination. Unlike its counterpart in the Canadian Periodical Index, this list has two parts: the first portion offers author access to the books reviewed with the pertinent bibliographical citation; the second half is a title guide to the work cited in the first part. This technique is not repeated for the entries under the other uniform headings, where the title is the only means of access, with the author entry in its proper alphabetical sequence elsewhere in the index. The page percentage indicated for the book reviews does not include the other major uniform headings — 'Poems' and 'Short Stories' — which, in themselves, add little to the over-all subject analysis of Canadian Forum. Aside from the uniform headings, the remaining thirty pages of the index are marred by a lack of cross references between certain of the entries. Much of the indexer's burden appears to have been shifted to the index user's shoulders. The latter is expected to employ an intuitive creativity in realizing that information on cities within a given province must be sought for under that city's name despite a heading for the province as well. Nor does a heading for 'Education' presuppose that all the material will be grouped under its umbrella; elsewhere in the index there are headings for 'Agricultural education', 'Medical education', and even 'Antigonish, Nova Scotia — Education', with no reference to the more obvious access point. The use of an adjectival modifier as the keyword is surprising in the face of two obvious substantives for both 'Agricultural education' and 'Medical education'. There is a similar unexpressed relationship between 'Religion' and two varieties ('Baptists' and 'Methodists') which might have been expressed quite simply as 'see also' individual sects'. In view of this policy not to provide 'see also' references, it is strange to find such a connective under 'Artists,
Canadian’, where it is obvious, from the lack of actual citing entries, that a ‘see’ reference is meant. It cannot be denied that Mr. Adshead’s work will be in use for many years to come, but this—in view of some of the indicated shortcomings outlined above—will be due more to the fact that such an index for the Canadian Forum is unlikely to be undertaken again in the near future than to its intrinsic merit.

Peter Greig

WESTERN CANADA


In 1862, the Rev. G.O. Corbett was committed to stand trial at a sitting of the General Quarterly Court of Assiniboia, Red River Settlement, on a charge of attempting to procure an abortion on his domestic servant Maria Thomas. Rev. Corbett’s place in the history of the Canadian west is normally limited to the account of this incident. Bruce Peel’s story of early printing in the Red River Settlement, however, brings to our attention a contribution to the story of the west by Corbett which is seldom recorded, and which was of more lasting significance than his celebrated court case. Peel’s account begins in 1859 because in that year Corbett became the pioneer printer of the Red River Settlement with his issuance of a broadside entitled “A Few Reasons For A Crown Colony”. How this publication lay entombed in the cornerstone of the Winnipeg City Hall until 1962 is but one of the many intriguing incidents surrounding the documents assembled in Peel’s work.

Quite correctly, Peel points out that though this was the first printing in the Red River Settlement it was not the first in the Canadian West. Rev. James Evans had begun the printing of hymns and texts, in the Cree syllabics he had invented, at a Wesleyan Mission near Norway House in 1840. Peel had told this story in his Rossville Mission Press, published also in 1974.

A reproduction of Corbett’s broadside constitutes the first of a series of twenty-one imprints which Peel uses to illustrate the beginnings of the printing craft in the West. With the exception of the first four, all the imprints are related to the period of the Red River Rebellion of 1869-1870. This series of imprints begins with Riel’s invitation of 6th November, 1869, to the English speaking settlers to send delegates to consider measures for the welfare of the community, and closes with Colonel Garnet Wolseley’s bilingual proclamation of 2nd July, 1870, a manuscript of which had been brought into the settlement by a “mysterious stranger” and printed under Riel’s supervision at the office of the New Nation newspaper.

It is not Peel’s purpose to re-tell the story of the 1869-1870 Rebellion, but rather to build a narrative related directly to the printing of broadsides, proclamations, etc. during those years. This has been skilfully done by inter-