to provide 20/20 vision) who examines books without the benefit of machines, but with knowledge and judgment.” Practitioners of the “new” bibliography are frequently guilty of comma-catching, and perhaps too often find themselves talking to each other instead of seeking out a wider audience. Or, in the elegant words of the late John Carter in his presidential address to the Bibliographical Society in 1969, “Shall we prefer the tiger to the tabby cat.” Any compromise position this side of schizophrenia is an individual matter. Depending upon one’s point of view toward the Hinman Collator, among many other things, this volume can provide elucidation as well as information.

Rudolph C. Ellsworth

(Mr. Ellsworth, Head of Bibliographic Research Services, Queen’s University, is the author of many articles on publishing, bibliography, and librarianship, and is presently completing his doctoral dissertation at the University of Chicago, on international librarianship.)


This book is a critical guide to Canadian history, government, and politics since 1867. It is indispensable. It should be on the desk of every person who reads Canadian history and on many of those who don’t but would like to. It is available at a price that makes it easily accessible, and the truth is we have no other book quite like it, in range or quality, Claude Thibault’s Bibliographia Canadiana (1973) is large, cumbersome, and devoid of critical comment; Beaulieu’s Guide d’histoire du Canada (1969) is uncritical and not very comprehensive. The comments in this book of Granatstein and Stevens are usually sensible, and they make up in frankness what they occasionally lack in judiciousness. Candour is the purpose, and it is refreshing to find occasionally even waspish utterances. There is, it is true, a certain tendency to prefer interpretative pyrotechnics to narrative accounts, but this is a defect of virtues.

It is to be hoped that future editions may allow a few corrections. For example strong though this book is in reporting work in the social sciences, it is thin on the side of literature and the humanities. It is a nice question whether literature is part of history or not, but they certainly inform each other. The section on French Canada does mention Pierre de Grandpré’s 4-volume Histoire de la littérature française de Québec (1967-1970), but fails to mention Gerard Tougas’ Histoire de la littérature canadienne-française (1967), in one volume, and thus more useful to English-speaking readers. Carl Klinck’s justly famous Literary History of Canada (1965) is mentioned only once, and that briefly, in the essay on Atlantic Canada. One of the best books on the history of the West is a work of literature, Wallace Stegner’s Wolf Willow (1962). Perhaps that is the reason it is missing. It is however part of a slight weakness in the western section. Hugh Dempsey’s wonderful biography of Crowfoot (1972) is missing, and so is Paul Sharp’s evocation of Alberta in the 1860’s and 1870’s, Whoop-Up Country (1966). James Gray’s chef d’oeuvre, The Boy from Winnipeg (1970) is not there either, though his other books are.

Reminiscences, generally, fare rather badly. Cartwright’s thundering diatribe against Sir John A. Macdonald in his Reminiscences (1912) is not there. Missing
also are reminiscences by P.T. Bone, George H. Ham, Paul Bilkey, J.H.E. Secretan, and P.D. Ross. Hector Charlesworth’s vignettes I do not find in the Index (a work has to be mentioned twice to appear there), nor are Augustus Bridle’s neat pencial sketches in his Sons of Canada (1916).

One or two more subjects might be included. Law, legal history, constitutional law, get rather short shrift. Peter Russell’s well known (and good) Leading Constitutional Decisions (1965) is absent. There is little or nothing on ships and shipping; though, heaven knows, the literature is thin, surely Frederick William Wallace’s works deserve mention, notably his Wooden Ships and Iron Men 1924).

Of course, everyone wants his own favourites in, and the book cannot cover everything. But it could cover a bit more than it does, and thus justify the comprehensiveness implied in its title. I wish this book a long life, but as soon as possible to get into a revised and slightly enlarged edition. Perhaps, too, the editors, who have been so enterprising, might consider arranging to have Canada to 1867 done as well. That is a bibliography that is needed even more.

P.B. Waite

(When Professor Peter B. Waite is not teaching history at Dalhousie University, he is researching into, writing, or talking about Canadian history. He entertained members of the Bibliographical Society of Canada with a lively address at the 1973 Annual Meeting in Sackville, N.B.)

Check List of Canadian Small Presses: English Language, compiled by Grace Tratt. Halifax: Dalhousie University, School of Library Service, 1974. vi, 153 p. (Occasional paper, 6), paper. $2.50.

Every searcher and cataloguer in this country has long wanted access to such a directory as this. Small presses do both magnificent and peculiar things, among them issuing fliers about new publications without giving address or price. Looking for this information in standard references is often in vain. Norman Horrocks, director of the Dalhousie School of Library Service, who has written the Foreword, explains that the compilation was developed from an exhibition of Canadian small press publications held at the library in 1971. Donna Harbin Smith conducted a correspondence with the existing presses and obtained much information. Grace Tratt, the Special Collections librarian, continued the project, which she still regards as preliminary to a more comprehensive listing of presses, personnel, authors, titles, aims and so forth.

Miss Tratt has quoted extensively from the correspondence, which is highly informative and sometimes quite entertaining. Although the work was dated 1974, it was not actually available until 1975.

In the Introduction, she states:

The list does not aim at a purist definition of small presses . . . it is based to a certain extent on Dalhousie holdings. This creates a problem as serious collecting of small press material was only started in 1969 . . . there are many gaps to fill . . .

The check list is arranged alphabetically by press with a geographical listing by province at the end. For each press we have listed name of founder, founding date, first publication, present or last owners, and present or last address . . .

130