

Correspondence

Dear Editors

IN HER REVIEW of my *Annotated Bibliography for the History of Medicine and Health in New Zealand* (*New Zealand Journal of History*, April 1995, pp.121-2), Philippa Mein Smith raises a number of points which highlight the difficulties faced by bibliographers. Her comments about 'peculiarities in the organization' and 'oddities of arrangement' suggest — a little uncharitably, I believe — a somewhat idiosyncratic approach on my part. Mein Smith illustrates this with references to a number of entries relating to women and medicine, and to nursing. It is arguable, however, that her attempt to categorize these is no more consistent or valid than my original classification. Two examples will suffice: Mein Smith complains that Michael Belgrave's PhD thesis, "'Medical Men" and "Lady Doctors"' is not listed under 'Women in Medicine', appearing instead in 'Medical Profession — General'. When one includes the sub-title of Belgrave's thesis ('The Making of a New Zealand Profession 1867-1941') the reason for its allocation becomes evident. The reviewer further takes me to task for the 'curiously titled' sections on 'Doctors — Female' and 'Doctors — Female — Collective', without indicating that these were two of the eleven subsets in the section headed 'Biography & Autobiography'

Acknowledging the inclusion of author, persons and subject indexes (which occupy 59 of the 322 pages of the *Annotated Bibliography*), the reviewer adds that 'the reader has to do the cross-referencing'. Writing in *Archifacts*, I explained how '[t]he contents' pages have been designed as a finding aid for the general reader; a comprehensive index will enable users to target specific subjects.¹ In adopting this approach I was mindful of the frustrations encountered in using inadequately signposted bibliographies. The final paragraph of the introduction to the *Bibliography* advises readers to use the subject index in conjunction with the contents list (22 main headings and more than 160 sub-headings), noting that the former has been 'liberally cross-referenced to help both the experienced and inexperienced researcher'. The main entry for nursing, for example, includes the following sub-headings: community health; dental (see School Dental Service); district; Karitane; Maori, obstetric; occupational health; paediatric; Plunket; psychiatric; psychopaedic; public health; school (see School Medical Service); uniforms. There are also cross references to military nursing, nursing biography and historiography, schools of nursing, and nursing education. Given the range and variety of branches of the profession, it would have been unrealistic and impracticable to include everything under one generic heading of 'Nursing'. It is difficult to envisage what else might have been done to assist the user.

DEREK A. DOW

The University of Auckland

1 D.A. Dow, 'Gestation and Birth: Compiling an Annotated Bibliography of New Zealand Medical History', *Archifacts* (April 1992), pp.25-6.