

Norah Story. *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature*, Toronto. Oxford University Press, 1967, 935 pp., \$15.00.

In the sound tradition of previous Oxford Companions this major work of compilation and authorship by Norah Story makes available an extremely useful guide to reading and research in Canadian history and literature. Nearly two thousand articles, suitably cross-referenced, provide biographical material on Canadian writers in every category of achievement and historical figures in every age, at the same time introducing general topics as varied as "Fiction in French" and "Toronto portage." The extensive bibliographies attached to the major articles are a welcome achievement after the rather sketchy efforts of editors of earlier reference works to provide a similar service. In *The Oxford Companion* bibliographic material is never simply listed but commented upon with a keen appreciation of the relative value of any one entry to the topic under consideration. Thus the bibliography for *Quebec* extends to almost nine full pages arranged under six headings: (1) the period before confederation; (2) the post-confederation period; (3) nature and sport; (4) political and social thought; (5) general histories; and (6) the remodelling of the province. The reader is also reminded that related material will be found in the bibliographies on "New France," "British North Amer-

ican," "Ungava," and "Labrador."

The Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature can hardly be considered the definitive work in all respects. The *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (University of Toronto Press), volume I which became available to us last year, seems likely to remain a source of authoritative biographical sketches in the early history of Canada, for the degree of specialized scholarships in each article is unusually high. But this is not really a fair comparison. What gives *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature* its peculiar value is its effectiveness in providing an integrated approach to very general subject matter. One sees the hand of the experienced archivist at every point in Miss Story's work. This is a book arranged for reference convenience and intended for constant use.

Because this is so, introductory articles on Canadian historiography and literary criticism would have been desirable additions in order to establish some frame of reference for the work as a whole. Although a wealth of useful material relating to these themes is embedded in the biographical sketches and treated much more specifically in articles such as those on "Belles lettres" and "Biography,"

there is a need for a more direct approach basic in developing concepts.

Miss Story's work appeals because it is refreshingly up-to-date. Books published to the end of 1966 have been included in the literary surveys, and authors like Marie-Claire Blais receive a fair share of attention. Ap-

propriate maps and useful tabular appendices facilitate cross-checking. It seems safe to predict that *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature* will soon become a most popular standard reference to written Canadiana.

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Martena Sasnett and Inez Sepmeyer. *Educational Systems of Africa.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967. pp. 1550. \$30.00.

One of the obvious characteristics of contemporary Africa is the pace of change — the speed of the transformation from dependent colony to independent republic, the sudden shifting of boundaries and the shedding of old political names, the reorganization of social structure and the rising expectations of the people. In such circumstances, it would hardly seem opportune to undertake an encyclopaedic survey of African education systems. Yet this is what has been attempted — and achieved — in the volume reviewed here. To be sure, while *Educational Systems of Africa* was being compiled Nyasaland became Malawi, Southern Rhodesia dropped the "Southern," Northern Rhodesia became Zambia, Bechuanaland became Botswana, and Basutoland became the Kingdom of Lesotho. But these changes were accommodated by the compilers who have, with enterprise, energy and accuracy, amassed basic data on education in forty-four

African countries.

This gargantuan task (note that the book has 1550 pages) was carried out with the aid of a Ford Foundation grant. It was designed to fill an enormous gap in information about African education and to present "raw data" in as simple a form as possible — though the simplicity of the presentation is deceptive, for the schematic outlines and charts of educational patterns are really as sophisticated as x-rays. The raw data of African education systems, while perhaps not appealing to the general reader, is of particular interest to university admission officers attempting to evaluate foreign student credentials, to the growing number of organizations and government agencies sponsoring foreign scholarships and arranging educational aid, to economic and social planners seeking to understand social institutions in developing countries, to scholars of comparative education, and to historians of education. One of