poverty of most of the Métis community in 1884 and 1885. The few dollars realized from the sale of land scrip could mean the difference between eating and going hungry.

The oddest part of the book is the chapter on Riel's personal financial demands. Flanagan finds it strange that historians have hitherto paid so little attention to them. After reading the chapter it seems to me that previous writers were correct in ignoring the episode. Riel unquestionably demanded money for himself, but it is not at all clear what this meant to him. The demands were well known to his followers and did not bother them at all. Riel's followers did not regard him as a saint and found nothing anomalous in his attempt to get something from the government on his own account. They might well have been suspicious if he had not done so.

The strongest chapters in the book are those dealing with aboriginal title, Riel's trial, and the medical commission. Riel's views on aboriginal title for the Métis and its importance in leading him to rebellion are explained with admirable clarity. Various myths about the unfairness or illegality of the trial are dispatched efficiently. The medical commission on Riel's sanity is confirmed as one of the shabbiest episodes in John A. Macdonald's long career. The final chapter on the question of a posthumous pardon for Riel might turn out to be the most publicly controversial part of the book. Here I agree with Flanagan that the basically Stalinist desire to rewrite history by government fiat should be resisted.

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Automation for Archivists and Records Managers: Planning and Implementation Strategies. RICHARD M. KESNER. Chicago: American Library Association, 1984. xii, 222 p. ISBN 0-8389-0406-8 $27.50 pa.

Members of the Association of Canadian Archivists fortunate enough to hear Richard Kesner's stimulating address on the future role of the archivist in the automated office at the 1984 ACA conference in Toronto will know that he advocates a transformation of archivists from passive recipients of documents to active participants in the creation, distribution, and preservation of information. Archivists who are interested in computers as archival tools are probably aware of his excellent work as a compiler of two annotated bibliographies on automation and machine readable records and as the author of articles on automation which have appeared in *Archivaria* and *The American Archivist*, among other archival journals. We would expect therefore that Kesner's latest book, *Automation for Archivists and Records Managers: Planning and Implementation Strategies*, will prove to be an enlightening guide to the volatile world of computers, and indeed he does present a thoughtful introduction to the new information technologies. The book should be of particular assistance to records managers and archivists who have not yet taken the first step towards automation. Needs assessment, system analysis, planning strategies, and implementation patterns are all discussed in some detail.

Those who look to the book for a consumer's report on equipment and programming will be disappointed. Kesner has purposely avoided reference to specific hardware and software on the grounds that product-oriented works tend to be outdated before they reach the reader. It is better to look beyond individual products and to direct the reader to planning and principles. Selection of tools should wait until needs are assessed and a thorough analysis of those needs allows the purchaser to make an intelligent choice with the assistance of knowledgeable vendors and the most recent reports. Notwithstanding his reluctance to discuss individual products, the author does have a preference for information systems employing stand-alone, small computers (either micros or minis) as opposed to those dependent upon large mainframe computers; consequently, many of his examples are drawn from microprocessor-based applications.

In his preface, Kesner warns records managers and archivists that failure to adapt to new technology may relegate them to clerical status under the direction of a manager of information systems. I have personally been of this opinion for many years and in 1977 made a vigorous effort to ensure that a compulsory course on automation was included in the curriculum of the Master of Archival Studies Programme at the University of British Columbia. At that time, there was a shortage of literature dealing with the effective use of automation in archives. It is therefore a particular pleasure to see an introduction to the new technology which is directed specifically to archivists and records managers.

Kesner's models of what he calls "information system typologies" are occasionally oversimplified — one scarcely needs an analysis matrix to decide whether one's parent institution is a university or a religious order, for example, and occasionally too technical — a short discussion of human language alpha-numeric symbols and their ASCH and EBCDIC equivalents could perhaps have been left to another book. However, he does not slip too badly into "computerese;" with one or two exceptions, such as failing to explain terms like "Boolean search," he uses the jargon of the trade in ways the novice can understand.

The author advocates a gradual approach to automation beginning with the simpler and more cost-effective routines. By using a microcomputer work station for regular activities, such as word and statistical processing, the project staff will be able to find the time and administrative approval later to proceed with the deployment of electronic data processing techniques in unique archival information settings.

The chapter on machine readable records and archives outlines briefly the special requirements of machine readable records and the centres servicing them for the users. As an archivist who has administered an established data library and archives as well as a university archives, this reviewer believes archivists should be totally familiar with the media they are administering but do not need to become technicians in every field. Unlike Kesner, I think that archivists should not be analysing data for users or playing a more active and creative role in the research process simply because the media on which the records are kept are magnetic tapes or discs. By analogy, archivists would be developing the photographs in the photographic archives, dubbing the tapes in the audio labs and elbowing researchers aside as we read and write about our documents.

Perhaps some of us do engage in these activities, but most of us should find sufficient satisfaction in devoting our energies to the traditional professional work of archivists, providing we become familiar with the full potential of emerging technologies which can make our records and archives available to new generations of sophisticated and exacting information users.

Readers should be warned that this fairly expensive paperback book is not an easy read. It bears the mark of the word processor; that is to say, there are few obvious errors but paragraphs are frequently awkward, possibly because they have been extracted from various sources and forcibly merged. Kesner favours new verbs ending in *ize* and the routin*ized*, digit*ized*, priorit*ized* matters that he discusses are somewhat tiresome — as are the frequent dangling modifiers, split infinitives, and out of place sequences. However, this is the new Age of Information and it is probably pedantic to complain about style in what is undoubtedly a useful and thought provoking book.

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