

*National Library Act*

that our parliamentary library has been operating for a number of years in a double capacity. It has been serving not only the members of parliament, but as Canada's national library, the only national library that was available.

It is understandable that with reference to the functions of the parliamentary library, the government would have some close administrative control and responsibility as, of course, would members of this house. We have had a parliamentary committee responsible for the administration of the affairs of the parliamentary library. But we are now moving into a stage of library service and development which completely divorces the functioning of our National Library from the functioning of the parliamentary library. I think this is where the government has fallen into error; it has failed to appreciate that we are now in a new phase of library development in Canada. The National Library has powers and responsibilities, educational and informational functions that are far greater than those ever performed by its predecessor, the parliamentary library.

Perhaps for the sake of the argument I am putting forward I could quote from a book entitled "National Libraries", which is compiled of extracts from the proceedings of the University and Research Section Conference held at Bangor in April, 1963. This was a meeting of representatives of national libraries from most of the democratic countries of the world. On page 11, this book gives details of the functions that are regarded as those that should be carried out by national libraries in democratic countries.

● (9:10 p.m.)

They are as follows:

1. Collecting national literature.
2. Collecting foreign literature.
3. Serving as a book museum.
4. Giving the public access to the collections.
5. Carrying out information service and bibliographical activity.
6. Functioning as a training centre.
7. Participating in national library planning.

I think that list indicates that the functions of a national library are quite intimately concerned with the everyday on-going process of cultural and educational dissemination. Indeed, I would say that a national library service is one of the most effective forces in a grass roots educational program.

While we expend more money on the electronic media as compared with the funds that are available for the national library service,

I think it is still agreed by scholars that in the long run the printed word is the essence of the educational system in any country and that libraries are the storehouse of knowledge. It is upon the libraries that we must depend for the on-going process of cultural and educational development. On the basis of the seventh function of a national library service as outlined at the conference held at Bangor, which is the participation in national library planning, the National Library will be co-ordinating with the provincial libraries. They, in turn, will be co-ordinating with the libraries at the level of local communities. It is for this reason that I think clause 4 is completely out of context, as well as on the basis of Canada's past experience in dealing with the dissemination of cultural information through the medium of libraries. It is certainly out of context with the emphasis that is placed by the government in its proposed legislation to establish an educational television agency.

I do not think I need to say anything further to establish the point, and there is no action I can take to test the sense of the house on this matter. However, I thought it was incumbent on me to point out that we are trespassing into an area that has serious implications for all communications media. The feeling is shared by those who are most intimately concerned with provisional library services of the Canadian Library Association and its French speaking equivalent. There was a move in the committee to have more direct representation from the Canadian Library Association on the advisory council that is provided for in the act. Unfortunately, this was negated by the committee, so that even this attempt by librarians to become more closely involved in the functions and services of the library have not been made possible under the act.

One of the arguments that is frequently used in cases of this kind is that under the present government, and under the present minister, there will be no abuse of the extraordinary privileges that are granted under clause 4. Of course, that is not the way we look at the process of legislation in a democratic parliament. The government can certainly lean over backwards to avoid even the semblance of trespassing into one of the most sensitive areas of public policy, and I am sure that as the days and years go by and this house is faced with the consideration of its approach to other means of communication sponsored by the government in Canada, we