

libraries contains about a quarter of a million volumes, and this number is growing rapidly from year to year.

The Imperial Library at Calcutta (100,000 volumes), in which both Lord Curzon and Lord Minto have taken a deep and intelligent interest, is designed to fulfil the duty of a national library to the people of India, native as well as European. It still falls a long way short of the requirements of such a huge constituency, but it is being developed along right lines, and that is, after all, the main consideration.

It is clear, then, that the rest of the civilized world has found use, and good use, for a national library. Are we Canadians either so inferior, or so superior, to the rest of the world, that we cannot use, or do not need, such an institution? Surely not. Those of us who are healthy-minded believe that as a nation we are neither better nor worse than our fellows; and that the things that are good for them, broadly speaking, are good for us. What almost limitless possibilities of usefulness would follow the establishment of a properly-constituted Canadian national library! With the experience of the greatest and most efficient foreign libraries before us, we could borrow from each those features that would most readily adapt themselves to our own peculiar needs. We could, as Japan has so successfully done, adopt our neighbours' successful practices, and reject their failures.

Broadly speaking, the Library of Congress—or, as it is now generally called, the National Library of the United States—offers the most useful model for our guidance. In practical efficiency, and in adaptation to the requirements of a democratic population, that library stands easily first. Moreover, in the geographical distribution of its constituents, it faces a situation very similar to our own, and entirely different from the position occupied by the great European libraries. The national libraries of England and France, for instance, are reference libraries, in the strictest sense of the term. No books may be removed from the British Museum or the Bibliothèque Nationale upon any pretext whatever. Such a system, in which there are manifest