

for it being completed at half an hour's notice—usually within a few minutes.* A longer notice is necessary when a copy is required. In a year, the number of searches approaches to 30,000, and applications for copies and extracts to nearly 10,000 more. The structure is fire-proof, and the arrangements such as always to secure perfect copies.

The facts here stated will suffice to shew that the public records in England are made strictly public property, and the most efficient systems have been adopted for securing safe custody as well as all necessary facilities for search and reference. Yet, an authority already cited says: "The Records of this country have no equal in the civilized world, in antiquity, continuity, variety, extent, or amplitude of facts and details. From *Domes-day* they contain the whole materials for our history—civil, religious, political, social, moral or material, from the Norman conquest to the present day."

In the United States, the public records of the several States of the Union are placed in charge of the State Librarians, who are liberally compensated. The documents, as they accumulate from year to year, are suitably numbered and placed, so as to be convenient for future access and reference. A catalogue of them is printed annually. Any person, on application, can obtain access to them, whether for perusal or copying. There is no charge for making a search. In the separate States there are no distinct collections of departmental Archives, for the public documents of every department are handed over to the custody of the State Librarians. In Washington, each department keeps its own records, while those appertaining to the whole United States are placed in the custody of officials acting under the authority of the President himself. The arrangements for security and for convenient reference are stated to be of a very perfect nature; but no national document relating to the whole of the States can be procured for the purpose of perusal or copying without the President's order.

In Nova Scotia, action was taken in 1857, with a view to ascertaining the nature and contents of the Archives of the Province. The Hon. Joseph Howe moved for an address to the Governor, "to cause the "ancient records and documents illustrative of the history and progress "of society in the Province to be examined, preserved and arranged, "for reference or publication, as the Legislature might determine, and "that the House would provide for the same." In 1858 and the following year, further steps were taken to procure from England and from Canada copies of any despatches that might be needed for completing the Nova Scotian files. In the course of subsequent years, more than 200 volumes of manuscript were selected, arranged, catalogued, and bound.

The next step was to authorize the preparation and publication of a volume containing selections of such of the Archives as should be deem-

* Lord Campbell had once occasion, while officiating on the Bench at Westminster, to ascertain some particulars relative to the death and testamentary arrangements of a person who had left England in his youth, a hundred years before, and who had died abroad in the East. His Lordship pencilled a brief note of inquiry on a slip of paper and despatched this by a messenger to Doctors' Commons. In a very short time, and before the sitting was concluded, the reply was brought and handed to the Judge, containing full information of the particulars sought.