

Supply—National Library

opposite. There is also the item for office stationery, supplies and equipment.

Mr. Fulton: And one for photostats.

Mr. Pickersgill: Yes; and, as the hon. member for Kamloops reminds me, one for photostats. It is part of the general administration.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Who is doing the work?

Mr. Pickersgill: It is done by the staff of the national library. While I am on my feet I would point out that the hon. member for Saskatoon talked about the national library being established. That national library was established by act of parliament in 1952 and has been in existence since January 1, 1953. The fact that it does not have the kind of building we want it to have does not mean that it is not already in existence. It is housed in the present archives building—very inadequately, I admit. And I certainly hope my colleague the Minister of Public Works will be able to go ahead with a building as quickly as possible. However, I must say that, after our experience here in the last few weeks, I have grave doubts about air conditioning.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): The use of any material indexed and filed determines the value of that material. Obviously it is useless to spend money, time and effort on the indexing of material if no one is going to refer to the index, or if no one is going to use it.

As one who is interested in this project of a union catalogue which ultimately will list all the books in all the libraries of Canada, and as one who feels that this project can be of very considerable value to many people in Canada, I turn to certain information in the report of the national librarian. He tells us, in connection with the union catalogue, that on March 1 of this year it consisted of over 2,900,000 cards representing very close to six million volumes—5,968,000 to be exact.

In the preceding paragraph however he tells us that in the past year they were asked to locate only 2,189 titles. Of these requests more than half, or about 60 per cent, came by telephone from libraries in Ottawa, and only 40 per cent of the inquiries were received by mail from outside this city. This indicates that a worth-while project, and one which could be justified only on the basis of a somewhat extensive use, is not being used as it should be. Obviously if we are going to go on indefinitely, receiving from outside Ottawa only two or three inquiries a day, in connection with a project which, by the time

it is completed, will cost many hundreds of thousands of dollars, the project is going to be of questionable value.

If the inquiries can be increased, the project becomes more valuable.

I would recommend most highly to the minister that steps be taken to advise other libraries across Canada, as well as scholars and universities, of the existence of this catalogue, and thus encourage its use. I know, of course, as the minister knows, that some attempt has been made to have this done. But I suggest that attempt has not been sufficient, and that the reference to the catalogue in the middle pages of the report of the national librarian is inadequate.

Often, and I suggest rightly so, we have criticized the government upon the existence of sizeable staffs of public relations experts and information officers of one kind or another. If those gentlemen are going to continue in the government service, then I suggest one of the projects some of them might find interesting and helpful is that to which I have just referred. That would be the project of publicizing the existence of this union catalogue and developing a sizeable increase in its use. Because at the present time, no matter how good the catalogue is, it is close to valueless because it is not being used.

Mr. Nicholson: I would ask the minister to clarify his comment. I gather he is opposed to air conditioning in the new building; is that correct?

Mr. Pickersgill: The minister has an unfortunate habit of making flippant remarks.

Mr. Nicholson: It is very important that the Canadian people have a reply.

Mr. Pickersgill: Well, if my hon. friend wishes to have a serious answer, then my serious answer is that I have the greatest confidence in my colleague the Minister of Public Works. I have plenty of responsibilities myself, as a minister of the crown; and I do not go around trying to usurp the responsibilities of my colleagues—and I do not intend to. If the hon. member wishes to put his question to the Minister of Public Works, when his estimates are before the house, I am sure he will receive a courteous and comprehensive reply.

Mr. Nicholson: In connection with this library being built at the request of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, may I ask if the people working in the library are not to have some say as to the type of building to be constructed. Is that to be left entirely to the Minister of Public Works? He is a very competent engineer and an able