

National Library can take counsel; it can secure their aid to develop its collections and to answer inquiries of moment. This will be within the field of the natural and physical sciences. Meantime, within its walls it possesses already excellent capacity for miscellaneous research, and special capacity for meeting inquiries in history and topography, in general literature, and in the special literature of economics, mathematics, and physics.

"The library is already issuing publications in book form. In part these are catalogues of its own contents; in part an exhibit of the more important material in existence on some subject of current interest, particularly, of course, in connection with national affairs. Even during the period of organization, fifteen such lists have already been issued. They are distributed freely to libraries and even to individual inquirers.

"The Library of Congress is now primarily a reference library. But if there be any citizen who thinks that it should never lend a book to another library—in aid of the higher research—when the book can be spared from Washington and is not a book within the proper duty of the local library to supply—if there be any citizen who thinks that for the National Library to lend under these circumstances would be a misuse of its resources and, therefore, an abuse of trust—he had better speak quickly, or he may be too late. Precedents may be created which it would be awkward to ignore."

This address of Dr. Putnam's was made nearly ten years ago. Since then, what he suggested as possibilities have become accomplished facts, and these are only a few of the directions in which the National Library of the United States has now taken its place as the greatest single educational factor in the country. Allowing for differences of degree, what has been done by the National Library at Washington for students all over the United States, might as readily be accomplished by a national library at Ottawa for the people of the Dominion.