

Supply—National Library

spend and I would like to look at a book or paper in the public library." He said, "We have never had anything like that here." I said, "What do you do when you want to get some books?" He said, "Well, they keep some in the drugstore over there." I knew very well the kind of books they kept in the drugstore. I have seen them before.

Mr. Pickersgill: The hon. member for Kamloops knows too.

Mr. Knight: I said, "Have you no books in this town which are available to the public of your town or to a stranger who comes here?" He said, "There is the high school up there." There was a fine high school up on the top of a hill. I did not want to bother the high school people. He said, "I believe there is a little room above one of the stores where the I.O.D.E. have a few books." I gave up and went over and sat by the river and looked at the natural beauties of the water running under the bridge.

That is a story that is typical of a great many places not only in that part but in other parts of the country. I am proud and pleased to say that my own province is very well provided with libraries and books. There is the question of the cost of books. I assert again that it is a great thing when there is available to anyone, irrespective of his means, a source of information and education such as is provided by a public library.

Perhaps one of the greatest satisfactions which I shall derive from the fact that there is to be a national library will be the guidance and assistance which that library can give to provincial libraries, the encouragement which it could give to the establishment of libraries in other parts of the country. I am well aware that it is rather difficult to decentralize an institution of this sort. I do not think it could be done. After all this is a national library and is something which pertains to Ottawa, the capital of this nation. I do not think we could have a lot of little national libraries all over the country. I do feel the very fact that we have a national library is going to be a spur, and give an impetus, to this thing, the lack of which I have just deplored, that is to say interest in books generally.

One may ask, what sort of books? One can be accused of being priggish. One could say, why is your type of book any better than any other type of book? I am not going into that whole story. I am not going into the question of censorship. I had a go with the Minister of National Revenue over that some time ago, without too much success. I want to make this point, even if it is not in direct

line with what I have said. I am particularly interested in reading for the young people of this country. I feel it is a deplorable situation that if you give a boy or girl of high school age about 25 or 30 cents, there is almost only one type, I was going to say of literature, but I should say reading, which that child can obtain at that price. In that regard we are miles behind the mother country, and at the moment I am talking about the British Isles. We are miles behind them in the matter of bookstores and the availability of books, particularly books suitable to be read by the youth. In almost every business block in a town in Britain, and more particularly in Scotland, you will find bookstores and secondhand bookstores. You will find lines of people looking over the books and taking something home. In my opinion, which may not be worth much, the type and quality of the literature available in those stores is tremendously superior to anything we have in the same type of place in this country.

Well, those are thoughts that I think perhaps are useful. There are one or two matters in regard to the recommendations of the royal commission on arts, letters and sciences that I should like to mention. Many things have been quoted from this report to prove almost anything. Not long ago we did have some discussion when the matter of the parliamentary library was up, as to the necessary qualifications of libraries, and particularly national libraries, in which the government or the board, whatever it may be, had some responsibility to the public. I would draw your attention to the third recommendation which is under the heading of federal libraries at page 327 where it says that the library of parliament laboured for years under the disadvantage of operating with staff members of low academic qualifications.

It is a source of satisfaction to myself that a good many of our best students now are going into the library profession, and I call it that with some significance. I hope that more of them will. I should like to see a system of scholarships, if there is no other way. A plea was made here yesterday for some assistance in the training of another fine professional group, namely nurses, and I should like to see some assistance given to the training of these people, particularly in view of the fact we now hope under the national library system to extend our library facilities.

I shall not delay the house by quoting this particular item, but I do want to put it on the record so that he who runs may read, and may be able to turn up this volume and