

### Section 3.—Public Libraries in Canada.

Under the above heading, a short article appeared on pp. 168-9 of the 1921 edition of the Year Book. Because of the pressure upon the space of the Year Book it is not repeated here. Statistics of Canadian libraries are given at pp. 178-221 of the "Annual Survey of Education in Canada, 1928", published by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. For Canadian library legislation, see pp. 165-177 of the same report.

### Section 4.—The Development of the Fine Arts in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

Numerous attempts have been made from time to time, in the form of public addresses and published articles and books, to show that there is in Canada so very indefinite and uncertain a thing as national art. As to the fine art of painting, for instance, the difficulty of its classification as national or Canadian lies in the fact that its means of expression consists usually of pigment placed on canvas. Because pigment is a universal medium, and has been used in most countries for many hundreds of years, the critics fail who attempt to explain just how pigment placed on canvas by individuals who call themselves Canadians is different in a national way from similar work in other countries, especially in contiguous countries. Painters who live and work in Toronto or Winnipeg or Montreal are not likely to be very different in the general result from painters who live and work in Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, Minneapolis or Seattle. To make the lack of difference more obvious one might take the instance of a painter working in Windsor and another in Detroit, the one claiming to produce Canadian national art and the other American national art, with only the river St. Clair flowing between them. The farmer who grows wheat in southern Saskatchewan in a field that actually touches his neighbour's in Montana could scarcely find the difference, especially the national difference, between his wheat and his neighbour's.

Since Canada is a British Dominion with more than three thousand miles of frontier touching the United States of America, it is difficult to dissociate her art from British tradition and American influence. At the time she was wrested from the French, in 1759, there was no native art of any importance, but the French missionaries had introduced painting of a religious character for the purpose of Christianizing the natives, with the result that in some of the early churches and monasteries, conspicuously in Laval in the city of Quebec, there were paintings of great artistic and intrinsic value. The churches also brought to life a native art in the shape of wood carvings for altars and interior decoration, and while some claim to artistic value can be made for these carvings, they should properly be placed among the handicrafts.

Painting, therefore, did not enter into the lives of the people as a fine art until at least a hundred years later. Feeble efforts had been made to encourage pictorial art, but nothing of a permanent character resulted until late in the nineteenth century.

**Sources of Art and Pioneers of Painting in Canada.**—In pursuit of the sources of art in Canada we turn naturally to the redman, from him to the early trader and the missionary, and from these again to the first settlers. But while

<sup>1</sup> Contributed by Newton MacTavish, M.A. D.Litt., author of *The Fine Arts in Canada*.