extend its useful life. Reference works are less likely to be superseded than texts. In any case, an excellent basis for future revisions has now been established, and in its own right the guide will prove its value.

For librarians in the University of Toronto Library and for those in other institutions this work will, as already suggested, be most helpful as a reference work and as a checklist of their holdings.

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The Osler Library. Montreal: [Osler Library], McGill University, [1979]. 64 p., illus., paper, \$10.00, plus \$1.00 handling and postage. ISBN 0-7717-0046-6

Few major research libraries can trace their pedigree to one man with as little difficulty and as much distinction as can the Osler Library of McGill University. The original collection of some 8,000 volumes was the creation of the eminent and international Sir William Osler – Canadian-born physician, teacher of medicine, and lover of books. It has become, quite literally, both his memorial and his monument. His ashes now rest behind a bronze bas-relief of his profile which occupies a central place in the library. This somewhat awe-inspiring detail is one of many disclosures about Canada's premier collection of materials on the history of medicine which are to be found in *The Osler Library*.

For an eight- by ten-inch paper-bound volume to have achieved as lavish an effect as this one has is quite an accomplishment. *The Osler Library* is, really, a very well planned and successful (if overgrown) publicity brochure. Having marked its fiftieth anniversary in May 1979 with a well-attended symposium on books and manuscripts in the history of medicine, the Osler continues to celebrate this special year with a publication that clearly demonstrates its just claim to stature.

The text is in three parts: the first offers a thumb-nail history of the library and its benefactor. The remaining two sections take the reader on a 'pictorial tour' of Osler memorabilia and of some of the other resources which comprise the holdings of the library. The text rambles knowledgeably over bibliographic and Osler family history, relating the growth of the collections, making its impression by the accretion of layer after layer of obviously treasured detail. It is ultimately, though, the photographs which engender the enthusiasm that this book inspires about its subject.

There are forty-four pictures in this 64-page book, and twenty-three of these are in outstanding, almost three-dimensional, colour. There are, among others, photographs of beautiful bindings; of Osler's desk and other furnishings which were bequeathed, along with his books, to the university where he both studied and taught medicine; of pages from incunabula in the collection and from Arabic manuscripts; of inscriptions by John McCrae (author of *In Flanders Fields*) in a Montreal hospital autopsy book and by Voltaire in a book given to a friend. The end papers of *The Osler Library* are, however, simply a photographic tour-de-force. Spread over a two-page expanse at the front and at the back of this slim volume is a photograph of books opened to show their magnificently marbled end papers. Never have books looked so good as they do here; it must be seen to be appreciated.

The Osler Library serves as an excellent introduction to a Canadian collection of international renown. One could quibble that a published supplement to the *Bibliotheca Osleriana* would have better served the community of scholars who are the Osler's potential clients. This would indeed be a quibble, for the publication at hand does not preclude the future appearance of such a catalogue. Moreover, it embodies in careful text and photographs and transmits remarkably well Osler's own love for books as the physical containers of the products of the mind.

TOM FLEMMING

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National Library Saga

The National Library of Canada: Twenty-five Years After: A Retrospective Overview. By Ian Wees. Ottawa: National Library of Canada / Bibliothèque nationale du Canada, 1978. viii, 60 p., paper, \$3.00 ISBN 0-660-01784-9 (Issued also in French under title: *La Bibliothèque nationale du Canada*)

The Foreword by Guy Sylvestre, National Librarian, clearly explains that the emphasis in this book 'is on the evolution, problems, shortcomings, and achievements of the National Library and the major changes that have taken place during its first twenty-five years.' The narrative also gives a comprehensive account of the considerations which hindered and finally brought about the establishment of the National Library.

The work is handsome, with its 21cm x 21cm pages divided almost evenly between illustrations and narrative. The fifty-seven illustrations include portraits of individuals, pictures of buildings and street scenes, pages of books and sheets of music, and news pictures of events significant in the history of the Library. Two illustrations are in colour.

Dr. Kaye Lamb, the Dominion Archivist, to whom in 1948 was given the task 'of preparing the way for the creation of a national library', stressed bibliography from the first. In 1950 he set up the Canadian Bibliographic Centre, the foundation on which the National Library was built. The first person appointed to the project was Miss Martha Shepard. She later became the first Director of the Reference Branch of the National Library. Dr. Jean Lunn, later Director of the Cataloguing Branch of the National Library, also joined the project.

In 1950 the Centre published a *Check List of Canadian Imprints, 1900-1925*, by Dorothea Tod and Audrey Cordingley, and took over the publishing of the *Canadian Catalogue of Books*, previously produced by the Toronto Public Library. The name was changed in January 1951 to *Canadiana*.

The National Library continued the policy of stressing the importance of bibliographies. In 1954 it published *Stephen Leacock: A Check-List and Index of his Writings*, compiled by Dr. G.R. Lomer. Many similar works followed.

The Bibliographical Society of Canada also played a part by publishing, in 1960, a *Bibliography of Canadian Bibliographies*, edited by Raymond Tanghe, first Assistant National Librarian.

The book concludes with a selected bibliography of twenty-eight titles. Its fourth