

IN MEMORIAM

Sherman C. Swift, M.A., LL.D.,
Chief Librarian

Deceased May 27, 1947.

Blind people all over Canada and in many other countries lost a trusted friend and benefactor with the death early on the morning of May 27, of Sherman C. Swift, M.A. LL.D., Chief Librarian of The Canadian National Institute for the Blind. Born in Petrolia, Ont. in 1879, Dr. Swift lost his sight in childhood. He attended the Ontario School for the Blind in Brantford and matriculated from Petrolia Collegiate. Later he attended McGill University, graduating with an honours B.A. in Modern Languages in 1907. He received his M.A. from the Faculty of Education, Toronto, in 1908. Some years ago McGill University conferred upon him an honorary LL.D. Since 1909, when he became Secretary of the Board of the Canadian Free Library for the Blind in Toronto, he has been the key person in library work for the blind in Canada and one of the foremost figures in this field on the continent. He was one of the prime movers in the foundation of The Canadian National Institute for the Blind in 1918 and when the Library amalgamated with the Institute in 1919 as the Library and Publishing Department, Sherman Swift was appointed head of this department, the position which he held at the time of his death.

He had been active member of the American Association of Workers for the Blind, being on several occasions chairman of its library group. In 1931, he served on an International Committee for the standardization of Braille in the English-speaking world. For some years he has served the American Printing House for the Blind as proofreader for Braille literature in Spanish, French, German and Latin.

In 1933, Dr. Swift was asked to select books for the Library of

Congress to be embossed in Braille. For many years he wrote book reviews for an American publication, "Outlook for the Blind." He was the editor of the C.N.I.B.'S Braille Magazine, The Courier.

The author of a vast collection of unpublished poems, Dr. Swift was co-author with the late T. G. Marquis of a special quatercentenary work "The Voyages of Jacques Cartier in Prose and Verse" published in 1934.

Dr. Swift was always an inspiration to those who knew him not only for his amazing fund of knowledge in so broad a range but also for his personality and his philosophy. He had a deep understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of human beings. A seeker after truth, he had no use for pretence and insincerity. His own life was straight and true, warmed with a dry humour and a great love of people. He in turn, was deeply loved by those who called him friend. We will remember him with admiration for his work and lasting gratitude for his friendship.

There are no better words for his memorial than his own, written in a sonnet on the death of Jacques Cartier, which is quoted here in part:

"Ho! shipmates, have ye heard the sudden news?
'Twi'xt dark and dawn, 'tis said, Jacques Cartier
His cable slipped and quietly stole away
Upon another distant mystic cruise--
A cruise we all must take nor can refuse
When come our sailing orders:

.....But he'll not be forgot,
For he has left a name that legends write
In golden history's bright-illuminated tome:
God grant the wind be fair and he be brought
To where with joy he'll see a beacon lit
By those he loved, to guide him safely home."