

THE COPYRIGHT SITUATION.

DURING the year 1888 the Canadian Copyright Association was formed, the executive officers being John Ross Robertson and Dan. A. Rose. Mr. R. T. Lancefield, now librarian of the Public Library, Hamilton, was engaged as a permanent assistant, he giving his entire time to the organization and promotion of the proposed amendments to the Copyright Act.

Numerous meetings were held during the year, at which all the trades interested were represented, together with the Typographical Union. A result of these conferences was the drafting of a bill to amend the existing Copyright Act, chap. 62 Revised Statutes. All important points throughout the Province of Ontario had been visited by Mr. Lancefield, where signatures were freely secured to our petitions. Messrs. Robertson, Rose, and Lancefield also visited the city of Montreal, where they addressed a large meeting of the trade, pointing out the benefits to be derived from the passage of the amendments as suggested. The result was that the trade of the city of Montreal gave the most hearty co-operation to the plans of the Association, and it finally resulted in a combined delegation from Toronto and Montreal having an interview with the government, which was most encouraging.

During the session of 1880, Mr. J. R. Robertson and D. A. Rose had numerous interviews with the Minister of Justice, Hon. Sir John Thompson, which ultimately resulted in his agreeing that the government should introduce a bill on the lines suggested. This was done, and the bill passed its three readings without opposition, but a clause was added to the bill, stating that it should not come into force unless by special proclamation of the Governor-General in Council. The act was assented to by the Governor-General in due form, and now stands on the statute books simply awaiting the proclamation. In the ordinary course of events the bill, after being assented to by the Governor-General, was referred, with all other bills passed that session, to the Imperial Government. Strong pressure was brought to bear upon the government in England to disallow the bill. This opposition resulted in the sending out of Mr. Daldy, secretary of the Imperial Copyright Association, to Canada, and a meeting was held at Ottawa, at which were present, Sir John Thompson, Mr. Lowe, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, and D. A. Rose, representing the Copyright Association, together with Mr. Rutter, of Toronto, representing the printing interests.

Mr. Daldy's arguments and objections to the act were fully stated, and the arguments of the Canadian delegation were also given in opposition to his. The result of this conference was largely in favor of our views, and Sir John Thompson fully coincided with our arguments.

Later on a commission was appointed by the Imperial Government to inquire into the bill, and the effects it would have upon the English trade. This commission reported, and the report was transmitted to the Dominion Government. In the opinion of the Canadian Copyright Association the arguments used against our bill were very weak, and the commission clearly showed their entire ignorance of the state of the Canadian market, their suggestions in many cases being entirely impracticable and in no way to the advantage of the English publisher; in fact, the adoption of the suggestions of that commission would in no way have improved the condition of the English publisher, but it would have worked largely in the interests

of the United States publisher as against the Canadian publisher. Further, several compromises in the act were suggested. This document was submitted to experts on copyright in Canada, and the reply, as we understand, was sent to Great Britain some eighteen months ago, and nothing further has been done in the matter.

Since the passage of the amendments to our bill, the United States have passed a Copyright Act, which upon simultaneous publication, together with printing from type set in the United States, grants to the British subject a copyright. The effect of this has been that the United States publisher has in all cases been purchasing English books, or books by British authors, and has demanded the right to control the Canadian market. The effect of this has been that the entire reprinting trade, which, prior to the passage of this act, was of considerable amount in the large trade centres in Canada, has entirely ceased, and the loss to the trades interested has been very considerable.

The introduction of the amended Canadian Copyright Law, it can easily be seen, would be an injustice to no one. The law clearly states that "any person shall have the sole and exclusive right and liberty of printing and reprinting and publishing, for the term of twenty-eight years from the time of recording the copyright thereof, upon condition that the said work be, before or simultaneously with its first publication elsewhere, registered in the office of Agriculture by the author, or his legal representative, and further, that the work shall be printed and published in Canada one month after the publication or production elsewhere." In the event of the author not taking advantage of this clause, then the government are at liberty to grant a license to any person applying to print the work, upon his agreeing to pay to the author, or the proprietor of the work, a royalty of ten per cent. on the retail price of each copy of the work so produced, the government collecting the royalty. This clearly shows that it was the intention of the government, while protecting the interests of the printing trade, also to secure to the people suitable editions of popular books at reasonable prices. Since the passage of the United States Copyright Act, it can easily be seen that the prices placed on the books by American publishers are so high as to put them outside of the reach of the bulk of the reading public in Canada.

A HUGE SHIPMENT.

ONE of the largest shipments of writing paper that ever came into Canada has just been received by Warwick Bros. & Rutter. It comprises 120 cases, containing 5,000 reams, or nearly 50 tons. It arrived per the *Armation*, and includes the firm's leading brands, Elkhorn, Osgoode, Warwick Special, Printers' Fine, etc. This firm seems to be for going ahead in spite of the hard times that seem to exist among paper and stationery houses. A firm that can hold its own at present must be well managed, must have proper goods, and must command the respect and confidence of the trade to which it caters.

Letters patent have been issued to the Plaindealer Printing and Publishing Co. of Owen Sound (Ltd.), with a capital of \$3,000. The members of the company are William Pattison Talford, banker; William Howey, gentleman; Joseph Lang, journalist, and Joseph McClelland, plasterer, all of Owen Sound, and Robert Alexander Stark, County of Grey, lumber manufacturer. The object is to carry on a general printing business and publish a newspaper.