

Mr. Lovell in his letter says :

In 1849, I believe, the Government of Canada, with the sanction of Her Majesty the Queen, gave United States publishers the right to bring reprints of English copyright books into this country on payment of a Customs duty of 15 per cent., which has since been reduced to 12½ per cent., the proceeds of the duties to be forwarded to the English authors as a compensation for the privileges secured to the American publishers.

The people of the Dominion, and especially the printing and publishing interests, feel that they ought to possess at least equal privileges to those conceded to the foreigner. There are several establishments in the Dominion that would esteem it a great boon to be allowed to reprint English copyrights on the same terms as are now secured to United States publishers, and would gladly pay the 12½ per cent. to the English authors on the total number of copies printed—sure to be very considerable. At present only a few hundred copies pay duty, but many thousands pass into the country without registration and pay nothing at all, thus having the effect of seriously injuring the publishers of Great Britain to the consequent advantage of those in the United States. I may add that, on looking over the Custom House Entries to-day, I found that not a single American reprint of an English copyright (except the Reviews and one or two Magazines) has been entered since the third of April last, though it is notorious that an edition of 1,000 of a popular work coming under that description has been received and sold within the last few days by one bookseller in this city.

It is undeniable that Canadian printers would be enabled to comply with the requisite condition, and produce books—thanks to local advantages—at a much cheaper rate than they can be produced in the States, and so bring about a large export business. This would have the happy effect of bringing back a large number of our skilled workmen, who have been forced to leave the Dominion to find a remunerative field of labor. Indeed it is not too much to say that, as things are at present our very best compositors are constantly leaving with a view to improving their position on the other side of the line. This is a most serious evil, which can only be remedied by a removal of the disabilities under which the Dominion publishing interest languishes.

I feel assured, Sir, that this matter need only be explained to British authors and publishers to ensure their cordial co-operation in the revision of the copyright treaty between England and the States in so far as it affects this country. The number of English editions imported into the Dominion is exceedingly small, entirely through the encouragement so universally extended to the foreigner, and I am persuaded that under the new system of Confederation, offering, as we do, a market of nearly three millions of English speaking people, it will be a matter of serious consideration whether it is not now desirable for the English publishers to produce copyrights in this country independent of the editions emanating from Home presses.

*The Toronto Leader* says :—

It is rather an anomalous feature of the publishing business in Canada that, as regards reprints of English books, it is placed upon a less advantageous footing than the United States. The foreign State has had concessions made to it which are, as yet, denied to this large appanage of the Empire. It happens in this way :—The United States publishers having a large English-speaking and book-reading population within their reach, are able to find profitable sale for almost any kind of literary production. The best books are, of course, published in Europe. For, although one could not make the enquiry now with the sneer which attached to it a quarter of a century ago, "Who reads an American book?" it is self-evident that Europe, with its older civilization, its higher development of literary talent, and better education, stands in a commanding position in the world of literature. Literature has been a paying profession in England for a great number of years. There being no international copyright law, as between England and the neighboring Republic, the American publishers, as a class, steal every good book and periodical as fast as they are printed at home, and reprint them in this country, with considerable profit to themselves. Of late years a few of the more enterprising and honest of the American publishers have paid English authors for advance sheets of their productions. But, as a rule, what is published in England is republished in the United States without any profit to the authors. It cannot be that so unsatisfactory a state of things will long continue to exist between two great countries. Mr. Charles Dickens labored earnestly during his recent visit to America to secure the passage of a copyright law by Congress, and had well nigh succeeded, the United States publishers beginning now to see that it would be better for them to be in a position to secure the indisputable right of publishing a particular book,

by paying for it, than to have to submit to the keen competition and rivalry which the large profits of the business have created. The bill of last session did not pass, however, and there is no movement in Congress now with a view to securing this equitable form of legislation.

The request of the publishing interest is nothing more than equity demands should be granted to it. It asks no protection against the publishers of the United States. It simply desires to be placed upon the same footing; and surely a colony is entitled to at least equal privileges with a foreign country. Did Canadian publishers seek for any special protection, they would obtain no support from us. They desire none. What they ask would be but simple justice to themselves, and would be quite fair as regards the British author. We question if the permission to reprint British works in Canada would not give many of them a far greater circulation here than could be obtained in any other way; and whilst this increased circulation would be for the advantage of our own publishers, the authors would receive the duty out of which they are now often cheated, and which, in any case, they obtain to but a limited extent.

The concession would also give a *status* to the literary profession here, which is now entirely wanting. There is now no recognized literature in Canada, except that of the newspapers, which, however powerful and useful, is not of a permanent character. Men with brains and the education more suited to a literary than any other career would find profitable employment. In the whole business of publishing there would be a marked change for the better.

*The Pictou Standard* says :

We observe that the attention of Publishers throughout the Dominion is attracted to the obstacles which lie in the way of successful publishing under existing circumstances. At present American reprints of British works are admitted into the Dominion, at a duty of 12½ per cent. which is secured to the English authors as a compensation. Publishers here cannot republish English works at all, except with the permission of the author, and the consequence is that the United States press supplies us with these works which might be published here with advantage. The effect of this is that the workmen and others engaged in the publishing business, go to the United States, and thus will draw a large amount of skill, labor and capital from the country. It is contended that the same privilege should be extended to the Publishers of British North America as to those of the States, and that the amount of duty, 12½ per cent, should be secured to the English copyholder as at present. We think this view is one that will commend itself to every person of sense, and that the General Government should at once take the matter in hand, and endeavor to obtain for the publishers here, the same privileges extended to the foreign publishers. There can be no doubt, if the matter is properly represented, that the British Government will be quite ready to grant the privilege, and the subject is so important, not only to the publishers but also to the reading public, who would thus be supplied with reading matter at a lower rate than at present, that we hope no efforts will be spared by the authorities to obtain so desirable a boon.

*The Stanstead Journal* says :

The publication of books in Canada is in its infancy. It is true a few original works have been published which are very creditable to both authors and publishers. There is one branch of the business which might be made both profitable to the publisher and the reading public,—we refer to the reprinting of English copyrights. The copyrights secured in Great Britain extend to all her dependencies, of course preventing by law the republication here of such works. American publishers therefore have every advantage—there being no international copyright law,—over the Canadian publisher. As the matter stands at present, British books may be and are reprinted in the United States and sold in Canada with no advantage to the author, while the Canadian publishers willing to pay for the privilege which the Americans appropriate, cannot secure it, on any terms. This privilege is denied to Provincial publishers on the ground that it would interfere with the sales of the English publishers. This is a fallacy, in most cases, inasmuch as Canada is flooded with cheap reprints from the United States, few of which pay duty. But were the duty paid, the American works would still undersell the English edition.

This condition of affairs is a hardship to a large class of persons who would obtain remunerative employment in the reproduction of valuable works at prices which would compete with the American editions were they allowed to reprint upon equitable terms, say 12½ per cent. upon sales, while the owner of the copyright would reap more benefit than he now obtains under the present anomalous state of affairs.