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FRENCH-CANADIAN BOOKSELLING.

ARTICLE I.

A Discussion on French Copyright.

QUEBEC Province, with a population approaching one and three-quarter millions, the majority of whom are French-Canadians, furnishes a field for French booksellers which, judging by a few good stores in Montreal, Quebec, and other cities, and the characteristic and innumerable small ones scattered throughout the province in cities, towns and villages has been well cultivated. That there is room for improvement is undoubted. French bookstores in Montreal compare unfavorably with English ones, which have not as large a public to cater to. However, French-Canadians are readers not only of the daily press and innumerable religious works, but of fiction. Convents, schools, etc., in every section of the province ensure educated mothers and a reading public. The field is yearly becoming larger and of more importance, though at the present it can hardly be said to be lucrative.

In books French authors, French-Canadian authors and English translations furnish the supply. French-Canadian authors are numerous and are voluminous writers. A patriotic French publisher claims that French Canada, for its population, is the most fertile producer of literature in the world. Names like Casgrain, Clapin, Laure Conan, Louis Frechette and Garneau, illustrate the extent of the field in action, history, biography and religious works. Publishers like C. O. Beauchemin et Fils, Granger Freres, Montreal, and a long list of Montreal printers as well as Quebec printers like Dessault & Proulx, Garneau, Prunneau et Krouak, Lenglais, Lalloume, etc., produce these French-Canadian works. A special article will touch upon this later.

French Authors.

However, the greater proportion of the French-Canadian literature comes from French authors; either imported direct from French publishers or through American publishers, or reprinted in the Province of Quebec.

This latter practice has gone unchallenged for some time, as French publishers regarded the field as limited and ignored existing conditions. Naturally as time went on greater liberties were taken and French-Canadian newspapers like *La Presse* and *La Patrie* boldly produced recent productions of French authors. Montreal French theatres played recent dramas by French playwrights. Montreal and Levis (opposite Quebec city) publishers increased their output of new fiction by French authors. American publishers swamped the province with cheap editions of French fiction. The result has been a serious diminution in the importation direct from French publishers. For the year ending June, 1904, the works of fiction imported into Canada from other countries, principally France, amounted in value to only \$1,204. Still further the work of French-Canadian authors was sterilized.

The first active step to stop this improper practice, notice of which appeared in the August, 1904, issue of *Bookseller and Stationer*, was a resolution passed by the *Association Journalistes Canadien Français*, which urged that no French works should be reprinted in Canada without paying royalty to the French author. Since that time investigations have been made and *Bookseller and Stationer* is able to announce that active steps will be taken to stop the practice among all the offenders.

Alleged Transgressors

The principal publishers alleged to be reprinting French authors' works without permission are: C. E. Beauchesne, C. O. Beauchemin et Fils, Montreal, and Mercier & Co., Levis. Mr. Aime Geoffrion, a Montreal lawyer, has been approached by the *French Society Des Gens des Lettres*.

On the one side it is contended that the terms of the Berne convention (1887), which was entered into by England and France as well as nearly every country in Eu