
RETURN

(81)

To an ADDRESS of the HOUSE OF COMMONS, dated the 3rd June, 1891, giving copies of Correspondence with the Imperial Government respecting the Copyright Laws of Canada, since the Return which was presented to the House of Commons at its last session.

Respectfully submitted.

By order.

J. A. CHAPLEAU,

Secretary of State.

Sir John Thompson to Lord Knutsford.

Following is the full text of Sir John Thompson's memorandum to Lord Knutsford on the copyright question:—

WESTMINSTER PALACE HOTEL, LONDON, S.W., 14th July, 1890.

To the Right Honourable Lord Knutsford, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, Downing Street.

MY LORD,—In the report which I had the honour to make to his excellency the governor general of Canada in council on the subject of copyright in Canada, dated the 3rd August, 1889, and which was approved by his excellency and transmitted to your lordship, it was asked that his excellency's government might be allowed to discuss the questions dealt with in that report at further length, and in further detail if necessary, as they involved grave questions of great consequence to Canada, not only with respect to copyright, but in relation to the powers of the parliament of the Dominion.

Having had the privilege to-day of carrying on that discussion, to some extent, with your lordship, I avail myself of the permission accorded to me at our interview, to place in writing before you some of the arguments which I am instructed by the government of Canada to advance, in amplification of my report above mentioned.

In your lordship's despatch of the 25th of March, 1890, in reply to the observation in that report, you called the attention of the government of Canada to some provisions of the Copyright Act of Canada of 1889, to which you stated that special objection was felt by the proprietors of copyright in Great Britain. One of these was the limit of time (one month) allowed for the British author or publisher to republish in Canada, after publication in Great Britain. Your lordship had been assured that in a great majority of cases it would be impracticable within the period of one month to make the necessary arrangements for republication in Canada, and expressed the hope that upon further consideration it might be recognized that the time proposed was insufficient. Upon this point, as well as to other details of the act, it is unnecessary to trouble your lordship with any argument at the present moment. The questions to be settled first, and to which I understand your lordship to wish that I shall address myself, relate to the principle of the act and to the power of the government of Canada to pass it. Any details which are felt to be unfair or inadequate, in view of all the interests involved, will, I am sure, be reconsidered by the parliament of Canada. At the same time I may observe that it is contended on the part of those who are interested in the publishing