

Proposed Pamphlet for General Distribution

The British Reader's League is the outcome of a movement which has for its primary object a greater interest in and disposition for British books and periodicals. The following figures of importations of books and periodicals into Canada need no explanation.

Official Ottawa figures for the ten months ending January 1920, show that the United States sold very nearly \$2,000,000 worth of books in Canada, while Great Britain sold less than \$255,000 worth. In newspapers and periodicals, of course, the U. S. furnish a much larger proportion of the imported total. Subscriptions to American Journals in the ten months reached \$1,883,000 and to British only \$35,000.

For the seven months ending October, 1920 from the United Kingdom we imported books to the value of \$29,382, from the United States, \$167,255, from other countries \$35,421. Periodicals from Great Britain, \$455,028, periodicals from the United States \$1,536,763. Other countries \$128,496.

The Founders of the British Readers' League hold to the view that the average Canadian will be amazed at these figures. They do not wish to convey the impression that they are opposed to the importation into Canada of United States' literature. They appreciate the part that the U. S. has played in the world of letters. No library is complete without works by Mark Twain, Longfellow, Emerson, etc. etc. But the constant stream of books, newspapers and periodicals that pours into Canada from the United States in comparison with the English is a matter that gives them cause for genuine alarm. It is clear that Canada is a nation of readers of foreign literature. If this balance of trade, although the element of trade is of far less importance in this connection, continues unchecked that which many have predicted, including Mr. Horace J. Gagne, K.C., B.C., B.C.L. of Montreal will doubtless prove true. In a speech at Hamilton on Jan. 15th last when Mr. Gagne declared "that the constant stream of plays, moving pictures, reviews, books, newspapers and magazines that poured into Canada from the United States had a harmful effect on Canadian youth. Slang was imported and adopted almost as readily as its spread in New York. Before many generations he feared that Canadian people would be steeped in the same sentiment as the United States is. This influence was a grave danger to Canada's unity. Language was not a mere formula; it was the crystallization of a people's sentiment." The Founders maintain that it would be infinitely better if the ends that they have in view are secured by voluntary means and not by the enactment of prohibitory laws or the setting up of tariff walls. Patriotism cannot be made by law; it must be of the heart or it isn't worth anything.

The Founders appeal, therefore, to the people of Canada on patriotic grounds to join this organization. Each member would pledge himself or herself to allocate a majority portion of their spending powers for reading matter of British origin; to use all possible influence with their bookseller toward stocking such British reading matter.