

THE COPYRIGHT QUESTION.

It has been announced from Ottawa that the Dominion Government does not intend to follow exactly the lines of the compromise copyright bill drafted by the Copyright Association and Mr. Hall Caine. Mr. Dickey, the Minister of Justice, in conversation with *The Toronto World's* correspondent, said the great objection which the Government has to the measure is that it prohibits the importation into Canada of British copyright works for three months after publication.

The Department of Justice is now engaged in the preparation of a bill embodying those features of the Hall Caine bill which are thought to be essential by the authors and publishers in England, but eliminating the objectionable feature of the prohibition of the importation of books. Mr. Dickey stated that the Government hoped to be successful in presenting a working measure to Parliament.

On being asked if the abrogation of the non-importation clause would not seriously detract from the bill, Mr. Dickey replied that the reading public deserved some little consideration. Mr. Hall Caine's bill was based on the seeming conclusion that there were only two interests to be considered, namely, the Canadian publisher and the British author, and the question might not unnaturally be asked: "Where do the reading public come in?" He thought the Government to a great extent represented the reading public, and certainly nothing could be more important than that our population should get the very latest literature in the freest possible manner.

MR. ROBERTSON'S VIEWS.

Upon this information being made public, Mr. John Ross Robertson, president of the Canadian Copyright Association, replied in a public statement as follows:

SIR,—A despatch from Ottawa this morning intimates that there is little probability of any copyright legislation this session, chiefly because of the great objection which the Government has to the compromise agreed to by the Canadian Copyright Association and Mr. Hall Caine, acting on behalf of the English authors and publishers. The greatest objection is said to be that this compromise prohibits the importation into Canada of British copyright works for three months after publication.

There seems to be a serious misapprehension in the minds of the Ministers on this point. A reference to the Caine-Jenkins draft Act (3) (iii.) shows that this section is not to prohibit the importation of copies of the book lawfully printed in the country of origin of the copyright union and published for general circulation and sale to the public therein.

The same point is covered in the original Caine-Association draft bill, in section 6,

sub section 9, which distinctly provides that the importation of copies of the book lawfully printed in the United Kingdom, and published for circulation and sale to the public therein, is not to be prohibited; but that such copies are to be allowed to enter Canada until the day of publication of the Canadian copyright edition.

It, will, therefore, be seen that there is really no force in the objection raised by the Government, as both draft bills provide distinctly that the trade as well as readers may import in any quantity so long as it is an edition of the work printed for sale in the country of origin of the copyright union.

This is eminently fair to the three great countries embraced in the copyright union—Great Britain, France and Germany—as any books printed for sale in any of those countries may be imported into Canada.

It undoubtedly will exclude copies of any copyright book printed in the United States;



MR. GILBERT PARKER.
The Canadian Novelist Banquetted at the
National Club, Toronto.

but as the British Incorporated Society of Authors have officially declared that they as a body think this is right, and as it has been demonstrated time and again that the people of Canada think this is right, surely the Government of Canada should be the last body to endeavor to longer keep us under the thumb of the United States publishers.

The publishing interests of Canada have been too long hampered by being made subject to United States interests. Mr. Hall Caine was very emphatic in announcing his belief that this state of things must cease. When the British author is so emphatic on this point, surely the Government of Canada should have no hesitation in taking action, especially when Mr. Hall Caine is supported almost unanimously by the Incorporated Society of Authors of Great Britain.

As to the protest from France, this should not be allowed to complicate the question. And for this reason—the proposed draft

Act treats French and German authors exactly the same as the British authors. The British authors have officially accepted the proposed compromise. Surely, then, the French authors should be satisfied. We place British, French, and German authors all on the same level, and treat them all alike. The British authors are agreeable to the compromise. Why should not the French authors be satisfied also? And let it be distinctly noted that the most of the protesting that we have heard from France has not been by French authors, but by a Parisian publisher. This fact alone should be sufficient to cast to the winds this so-called protest from France.

To return to the Government's objection—it has been shown very clearly that readers will not be restricted to their own personal importation, but that the booksellers may import in any quantity, as they do now, and that the readers will be supplied by booksellers as they are to-day.

Yours, etc.,

J. ROSS ROBERTSON,

Pres. Canadian Copyright Association.

Toronto, March 24.

DINNER TO MR. PARKER.

Mr. Gilbert Parker, the novelist, was entertained at a complimentary dinner in the National Club, Toronto, April 6, by a number of publishers, journalists, etc., as a tribute to his success as a Canadian writer. Among these present were: Lieutenant-Governor Kirkpatrick, Hon. G. W. Ross, Dr. Parkin, Col. G. T. Denison, O. A. Howland, M.P.P., J. S. Willison, of *The Globe*; J. Carter Troop, of *The Mail*; Stuart Livingston, of *Hamilton*; A. F. Pirie, of *The Dundas Banner*; J. A. Ewan, of *The Globe*; Frank Yeigh, David Creighton, Theodore W. Gregory, of *Appleton & Co.*; W. Copp, of the *Copp, Clark Co.*; S. B. Gundy, of *W. J. Gage & Co.*; E. S. Caswell, of *Wm. Briggs*; Frank Smith, of *The World*; Stewart Lyon, of *The Globe*, and others interested in literary work. Mr. Parker made a fine speech, and was very cordially received by the company assembled. It is announced that Mr. Parker's new book "*The Seats of the Mighty*," a story founded upon the days of Wolfe and Montcalm, will shortly be issued in Canada, cloth, \$1.25, by T. W. Gregory, of the *Appletons*.

THE TRILBY CRAZE.

The Trilby craze has extended to stationery. Beechings, Ltd., have brought out dance programmes, post cards, note paper and birthday cards with the familiar picture of Trilby O'Ferrall in the military coat, striped petticoat, and bare feet, in the act of remarking that she had just stepped in "to pass the time of day."