

CANADIAN COPYRIGHT.

A meeting of the Copyright Association of Canada was held on Thursday evening, the 18th Oct., at the Board of Trade Rooms, Toronto, Mr. J. Ross Robertson, the President, in the chair.

In opening the meeting, the chairman briefly reviewed the situation, showing that the Berne Bill, which had been introduced at the last session of Parliament, threatened the most disastrous consequences to the book, printing and publishing interests of Canada. After its adoption every British copyright book would be copyright in Canada, without requiring manufacture in Canada (as is required by the present law) in order to secure Canadian copyright. This of itself was felt to be a most serious menace to the printing and publishing interests of the Dominion, but in addition to this the Bill excludes all foreign reprints of British copyright books, thus throwing our market entirely into the hands of British publishers and printers. This is where the book trade and the public are deeply interested, as it is well known that the best and most popular books are issued in England at a very high price at first, and it is months, and in some cases years, before they are issued in cheap editions for the people. Haggard's books afford a good illustration of this. Many thousands of "She" and "King Solomon's Mines" have been sold in Canada simply because we have been able to sell the cheap 25-cent American editions. And yet the cheapest English edition of these books to-day is six shillings sterling, a figure utterly beyond the pockets of the Canadian people.

A rough draft of a bill containing suggestions for the practical operative clauses for a new Dominion Copyright Act, governing the reprinting in Canada of Imperial copyright works, the productions of British subjects, or of the subjects of those countries that have an International Copyright Treaty with Great Britain, was then placed before the meeting, and finally adopted. The following is a brief synopsis of the clauses of most interest to the trade and the public:—

Sec. 1 refuses copyright in Canada to United States authors until such time as the United States Government enters into an International Copyright Treaty with Great Britain and Canada.

Sec. 2 recites that the condition for obtaining the Canadian copyright shall be that the work shall be printed and published in Canada within two months after first publication elsewhere.

Section 3 recites that any work intended to be copyrighted in Canada shall before publication elsewhere, or simultaneously with its first publication elsewhere, be registered in the office of the Minister of Agriculture by the author or his legal representative, which registration and compliance with the provisions of Sec. 2, shall secure the exclusive Canadian copyright to the author or his legal representatives.

Sec. 4 recites that should the person or persons entitled to copyright under this Act fail to take advantage of its provisions, then any person or persons domiciled in Canada may print and publish the work in question, provided registration of intention to do so has been duly made with the Minister of Agriculture, and the necessary license obtained; but in no case is said license to convey exclusive rights to print and publish the work in question. This license is to be granted to all applicants agreeing to pay the author

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