

closely through its somewhat long history in this House, and particularly through its recent course of the last few weeks. The hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) and the hon. member for West York (Sir Henry Drayton) have made a study, in some degree, of it. It is unfortunate that owing to other engagements the hon. member for St. James (Mr. Rinfret) was not able to be present at the last discussion, and that the other two hon. members to whom I referred are not able to be present tonight. It is quite clear that the hon. member who has just sat down has made a detailed study of the subject, and he certainly has made an able presentation of his case to-night. I do not like the idea though of passing a bill in the hope that the Upper House will, if we are wrong, save us from our folly, or in the expectation that later on in the same session another bill of a better character on the same subject will be introduced and adopted. It may be that I have not caught the latter reservation of the hon. gentleman correctly. It would appear to me though that under the circumstances the third reading might wait until to-morrow until the speech of the hon. member can be read by those here who take special interest in the subject of copyright, and that the minister will be well advised to let the third reading stand to that end. §

Mr. ROBB: The government have no desire to rush this bill through. I may say for the information of my right hon. friend (Mr. Meighen) that the former Minister of Finance, who was leading the House on Friday night was willing that the bill should get its third reading then—that was my understanding. The situation when the bill came before the House on Friday night was that my hon. friend for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) made a strong plea on behalf of the printers while my hon. friend for West York (Sir Henry Drayton) made a plea on behalf of the authors. I have no knowledge whatever of the law on this subject, particularly the international law, but I am assured by the Commissioner of Copyright, who has had twenty-five years' experience in this department, and has made a close study of international copyright law, that the proposed amendment will enable Canada to join the Berne convention, and that the fear just expressed by my hon. friend (Mr. Rinfret) as regards the rights of the Canadian author in countries other than those that adhere to the Berne convention, are unfounded, that as to the United States—we may as well be frank, it is the United States that we are particularly interested in—the

[Mr. Meighen.]

authors will not be affected, that they will have their rights in all other countries, and that the license clauses will apply only to such countries as are not members of the Berne convention. As soon as the United States joins the Berne convention—and at the last session of their congress a bill for that purpose was introduced but was not pressed to conclusion because of the amount of legislation that required to be dealt with—then these licensing clauses all disappear. Of course, if my hon. friend insists upon it we will—

Mr. MEIGHEN: Who is the Commissioner of Copyright?

Mr. ROBB: Mr. O'Halloran.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Has the minister had an opinion on the subject from the Department of Justice?

Mr. ROBB: My recollection is that Mr. O'Halloran told me that a copy of the bill had been referred to the Department of Justice and approved of by them.

Mr. MEIGHEN: But has this feature, this amendment, been submitted to the Department of Justice for their opinion?

Mr. ROBB: Yes. My recollection is that Mr. O'Halloran assured me that it had been submitted to the Department of Justice and approved of by them, that it was their interpretation of it.

Mr. FORKE: It was a very unsatisfactory vote that was taken on the second reading of this bill. I think scarcely anyone in the House understood it, I know I did not; and listening very carefully to the explanation which has been so very well given by the hon. member for St. James (Mr. Rinfret) to-night I cannot say that I am very clear on the subject yet. I have been interviewed by the printers and by the authors and still I do not understand the question. If an understanding was arrived at between the different parties as to the purpose of the bill, and that it was all right it would not take long to pass. However I think it would be better to let the motion for the third reading stand until the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie), who has some knowledge of the subject, is here. Then he and the hon. member for St. James can talk the matter over and if they assure the House that it is all right, and I suppose we can take their word for it, the bill can be passed without any further waste of time. I do not feel like letting it go through now, because I do not understand it.

Motion stands.