

the British Empire Exhibition, and in intrusting the detail of the work to the officers of the Association. So far as I am aware this is the first occasion upon which a Canadian Government has officially recognized Canadian literature as a product worthy of display before the nations of the world.

We have established relations with the Authors' League of America by which the interests of our members will be served by the Authors' League in the United States, and the interests of the members of the Authors' League will be served in Canada by the Canadian Authors Association. We have also arranged for reciprocal courtesies with the Incorporated Societies of Authors, Playwrights and Composers in England.

Canadian Authors' Book Week was generally observed throughout Canada, and the annual observance of this week has no doubt been an important influence in directing attention to Canadian literary achievement. The credit for the success of Book Week must, I think, be placed very largely with the various Branch organizations who were instrumental in developing local interest in a manner which would have been quite impossible for the Central Executive. The thanks of the Association, and of Canadian authors generally, is due to the press, to the librarians in our public libraries, and to many educationalists and citizens in other walks of life for their generous support in making of Canadian Book Week a truly national event.

So much for a brief glimpse at some of the accomplishments with which the Association has been identified. If we have not completely solved some of our problems we have at least demonstrated that they are capable of solution. We have other problems still facing us, the solution of which is not so apparent, and it is proper that, for a moment or two, I should turn your attention to them.

The first is financial. Your Executive have continually occasion to be conscious of the fact that the service they are rendering to the membership, and to the cause at large, is circumscribed by financial limitations. Our membership fee of five dollars a year is a very small charge when compared, say, with the \$25 a year exacted by the Authors' League of America, and the Authors' League of America distributes no part of its fee back to local Branches, yet I think that even with the fee so small as it is the activities of the Association could be extended if only the fees were promptly paid. In too many instances that has not been the case, and the fact is that the practice of carrying members who are in arrears in their dues has been a serious drain upon our finances. Perhaps the National Treasurer may have something more specific to say on this point. The practice, adopted last year, of having fees collected by the Branch organizations has not been an unqualified success, and may well receive some further consideration.

The need of a medium of official communication with the members is self-apparent, and various attempts have been made to supply that need. Your Executive, guided by the recommendations made at the last annual convention, entered into an arrangement with the publisher of the "Canadian Bookman" by which a section of that paper was placed at the disposal of the Association. In return for this service the Association subscribed for one copy of the "Canadian Bookman" to each name on its membership list. And here developed another weakness in our financial system. The subscriptions, referred to were paid by the Association out of its general funds, and those members who did not pay their annual fees had to be carried on the list at the expense of those who did. I feel sure that neglect to pay annual dues promptly is in almost every instance due to thoughtlessness or oversight, but the situation created demands a remedy.

Another problem is presented by the widely scattered locations of our membership. Canada has no recognized literary centre, as has the United States; the literary-producers of Canada are to be found from coast to coast, and to keep in touch with them presents difficulties proportionately greater than are experienced in the United States, where the "indus-

try" of literature has become highly centralized. The hearty co-operation of Branch officers is required if our membership list is to be kept correct and up-to-date. It is a fact that during the past year members have changed their address, have moved from one Branch to another, have been dropped from the Branch registers for non-payment of dues, have even been removed by death, without any notification of such changes being sent by the Branch officers to the Central Executive. It is impossible to administer the affairs of the Association efficiently under such conditions, and you may be disposed to give some consideration to means by which they may be improved.

The National Secretary will, I believe, refer to the work of our Grievance Committee, but I may be permitted to remark that it was a noticeable fact that most of the complaints of unfair dealings by publishers were received from authors who are not members of our Association. This might be held to suggest that authors who are so little interested in the general welfare of the craft that they fail to identify themselves with its representative organization are so constituted temperamentally as to be easy victims of the unscrupulous publisher. A more logical explanation is that it is only by association with one's fellows in the craft that one learns to avoid the pitfalls which beset the feet of the ill-informed. In this, as in other matters, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Most disputes arise out of unfair or ambiguous contracts, and it is hardly too much to say that nearly all new authors sign contracts which they but vaguely understand. I am convinced that the Association might render a great service by framing, in co-operation with the Canadian publishers, a standard contract in which the interests of the author, as well as of the publisher, would be fully and explicitly protected.

I cannot conclude these already too long remarks without an expression of my personal thanks to the members of the Central Executive for their valuable and generous advice and assistance in the affairs of the Association throughout the year. When I explain to you that, owing to our financial limitations, members of the Executive who lived outside of Ottawa not only gave their time in attending Executive meetings, but actually defrayed their travelling expenses out of their own pockets, you will be able to appreciate the sincerity of their interest in the welfare of the Association.

I have thus hurriedly reviewed some of the outstanding experiences and problems of the Association, with some suggestions of the benefits it has brought or may bring to its members. But the most far-reaching benefit of an organization such as this cannot be expressed in the formal terms of a President's address. In my opinion the greatest service which this Association is rendering its members is the acquaintanceships which it is establishing among them. As acquaintanceship develops into friendship a bond is woven which knits together the literary interests of Canada and inspires every individual member to efforts which will reflect credit upon himself and his fellow craftsmen. Speaking frankly and for myself, the treasures of acquaintanship which have been unlocked to me through my connection with the Association more than repay any small effort I have expended on its behalf. I hope that that bond of acquaintanceship and friendship may be greatly strengthened and extended by the deliberations and experiences of this convention.

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