

have gone to the bottom of the matter and have made a real study of it can possibly understand it, and, without any disrespect to the committee, I think that for the most part we are seeking to legislate in the dark. I believe the minister would facilitate the passage of his bill very much and get to the root of the matter if he would ask for the appointment of a small committee, have the various interests brought together and see if we could not get to the bottom of the grievance, as we did in 1921. I think it would shorten the matter and would produce a much more satisfactory result than for us as a committee to pass this clause repealing four important sections of another act, without understanding just what the real situation is.

Mr. ROBB: My hon. friend admits the value to Canada of the Berne convention, and of our joining in that convention. I take it that the only objection he has to the bill is this provision contained in section 2. I would suggest that we pass all the other sections of the bill, and in the meantime, before committing the government, I would like to consult counsel as to the observations of my hon. friend regarding the appointment of a committee. I would point out however, that we are approaching the time now when we cannot delay legislation. If we pass the minor clause we might let this clause stand for further consideration.

Mr. BOYS: Is it a fact that the publishers and their employees are opposed to the provisions of this bill?

Mr. ROBB: If my hon. friend had asked me if the authors were favourable to it, I would have said yes. I will say that some publishers have offered objections to it, and representatives of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association have objected to it, but the authors are very strongly in favour of it, and the government has on record representations from men very prominent in boards of trade who are favourable to it and who are congratulating the government on their courage in dealing with it.

Mr. BOYS: I understand the publishers are opposed to it. I at once admit that I am not sufficiently familiar with the subject matter to reach a conclusion at this stage as to who is in the right, but that there may be no misunderstanding regarding the position of the publishers I will place on Hansard a letter addressed to the right hon. leader of the Opposition (Mr. Meighen) which reads as follows:

[Mr. Guthrie.]

Rt. Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN, P.C.,
Leader of the Opposition,
House of Commons,
Ottawa.

Dear Honourable Sir.—At a regular meeting of the Ottawa Typographical Union held on Saturday evening last, the proposed amendments to the Canadian Copyright Act, introduced in the House of Commons by the Hon. J. A. Robb, Minister of Trade and Commerce, were very carefully considered. We are unanimously of the opinion that the proposed amendments are not in the best interests of the Canadian printers. We most strenuously protest against their enactment and would request you to use your influence to have Bill No. 24 withdrawn.

We also respectfully request that the Canadian Copyright Act of 1921, as it now stands, be immediately carried into full force and effect.

Trusting that you will give this matter your earnest and most sympathetic consideration, and thanking you in anticipation, I am,

Yours very sincerely,
J. A. P. HAYDON,
Secretary.

I am not rising to offer any objection to what the authors think they are entitled to, but it looks as if there was a difference of opinion between these two important classes, and I would like to support the suggestion of the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie) that a small select committee be at once appointed. I do not think it would take more than four or five days and this matter could be fully investigated. I have been requested to ask a number of questions for the purpose of securing certain information from the minister and I would very much sooner ask these questions before such a committee, but if that cannot be done, I suppose the only course would be to ask them here for the purpose of eliciting the information which is sought.

Mr. ROBB: We will allow this item to stand, and I will not give an answer at the moment as to whether we shall appoint a committee or not, but we will take into consideration the observations of members who have opposed this section. In the meantime may I suggest that, as the only objection apparently is to clause 2, we should pass the other clauses and get them out of the way?

Mr. GUTHRIE: Clause 2 is the whole act.

Mr. ROBB: Referring to the letter which my hon. friend has placed on Hansard, I desire to make this observation. It contains two statements, one that the Typographical Union of Ottawa are opposed to this measure, and the other that they are offering indirectly a rebuke to the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Meighen) in that he was Prime Minister from June to December when he had an opportunity of proclaiming this measure.