

CANADIAN AUTHORS' ASSOCIATION

Report of the British Columbia Delegates

(Mrs. George Black, Judge Howay and Mr. R. A. Hood) To the Second Annual Convention, Held at Ottawa
On 29th and 30th April, 1922.

The Convention opened promptly at nine o'clock on the morning of Friday, 29th April, in the lecture hall of the National Museum. President J. Murray Gibbon called the meeting to order and gave a short introductory address. The Treasurer then presented his financial report for the year which showed a balance in hand of some \$700.00, part of which, however, consisted of dues collected in advance for the coming year.

The Secretary, Mr. Sandwell, then gave his report covering the year's activities, and he also presented the report of the Special Committee on Copyright as regards the amendments to the Copyright Act of 1921 to be recommended to the Government. This report has been printed, and as copies are available for the use of members of our branch, it is not necessary for us to deal with it. The first four amendments are framed to bring the Canadian Act into conformity with the British Copyright Act of 1911.

As the Committee on Copyright is a very strong one, its personnel including Mr. Warwick F. Shipman, K.C., and Louvigny De Montigny, two of the best authorities on Copyright in Canada, the meeting was satisfied to accept the report as presented, and it was unanimously passed.

Arrangements had been made by the Executive for the Association to be received by the Honourable Mr. Robb, Minister of Trade and Commerce, at 11.30. At that time the whole meeting proceeded to the House of Commons by motor. Here on the steps of the building, moving picture operators were waiting our arrival and before entering the party was photographed by the Pathe Company, and again on leaving the building by the special service maintained by the Government for overseas propaganda.

The incident caused an interesting break in the business of the morning, and as an Ottawa paper humourously put it, "The delegates readily cast aside temporarily their roles as authors and authoresses and with apparently remarkable Protean skill took up that of motion picture actors." The delegates were introduced to the Minister by Senator Dandurand, as representing, he would not say, "the brains of the country," but, at least, "the refined brains of the country." On this introduction, President Murray Gibbon spoke forcefully on the objects and aims of the Association and the large influence exercised by its members throughout the country. He put forth a strong plea for the suggested amendments as contained in the report, and for an early action by the Government to put them into the Act. He laid stress upon the fact that the former Government had given its assurance that the Copyright Act of 1921 would not be proclaimed or put into force if it were found that it was not in conformity with the requirements of the Berne Convention. It has now been definitely ascertained that it was not, especially as regards the manufacturing clauses.

He cited the fact that the U. S. Government, which had also put in force an Act containing such manufacturing clauses, had found them to be undesirable, and even the printers themselves had joined with the authors in petitioning that they be repealed. He, therefore, submitted that it would be most unwise for Canada to incorporate in her Copyright Act something that had been found most unsatisfactory by a neighbouring country which had made the experiment.

Several others spoke in support. The Minister then briefly replied declaring his sympathy with the Association's recommendations, and stating that the present Government would adhere to the undertaking given by the former one. He said that he was afraid they could not be taken up this

Session, but he had no doubt that next Session, in view of the strong supporters that were behind them, they would be given favourable consideration.

In the afternoon session, reports were presented from the various branches, which gave an excellent idea of the scope of the work already being done by the Association. Those from the western delegates were especially interesting the Calgary branch giving a very complete account of the authors whom they claimed as belonging to their district. These included Robert J. C. Stead, Isabel Patterson, Sergeant Kendall, Hubert Footner, and Mrs. Winifred Reeve (Onoto Watanna), C. W. Stokes, Frank Houghton and Willard Mack. They also claimed a certain proprietorship in Ralph Connor Morley Roberts, General Steele, Rev. John McDougall, and Rev. R. G. MacBeth, all of whom had to some extent embodied scenes from the district around Calgary in their various works.

On motion of Mr. Lloyd Roberts, of Ottawa, a resolution was passed to make application to the Dominion Government for an annual grant of \$5 000.00 as an award for the most significant literary work by a Canadian domiciled and resident in Canada. It was thought that such a provision would have a great stimulus in encouraging literary talent, as so many Canadian writers had to devote a large part of their energies to work other than literature in order to make a living. It would also provide an agency for the discovery of all work of merit in the committee who would award the prize, as it would be their duty to review all the published work by Canadian writers.

The recent death of Miss Marjorie Pickthall in Vancouver, one of the most honoured members of the Association, cast a shade of gloom over the Convention. A very touching and appropriate reference was made to this in the report presented by the Vice-President for British Columbia, Mrs. Isabel Ecclestone MacKay. A resolution of regret and sympathy to be forwarded to Mr. Pickthall in Toronto, framed in significant and eloquent language, was presented by Judge Howay, and seconded by Professor Pelham Edgar, who read a poem in memoriam written by Katherine Hale, which had been read at the grave in Toronto.

Professor Edgar made a report for the committee appointed last year to choose a version of "O Canada," which might be standardized as the National Anthem, the need for this arising out of the fact that several versions are in use in different sections of the country. The most popular of these, the one used mostly in the West and composed by Justice Weir, of Montreal, was read by the Professor, and also one written by Donald Fraser, of Victoria. Neither of these, however, was considered suitable by the committee, and Professor Edgar then read a version which was made up by combining parts of nine different versions that have been written. This effort, however, was received with considerable amusement by the meeting and voted unsatisfactory. He also read a letter from Mrs. Isabel Ecclestone MacKay, who is a member of the committee, setting forth her views on the subject. Finally it was decided to lay the matter over for another year in the hope that by that time some poet might find the inspiration to write a version that would fit the need and be worthy of handing down to posterity.

The question of the continuance of "The Bookman" as the official organ of the Society came up for discussion. The opinion seemed general that the ideal to be arrived at was an authoritative journal free and clear of any possibility of conflicting publishers' interests; but that, nevertheless, the