

to get to the bottom of this matter; I have spent a lot of time on it and I confess I do not fully understand it now. My suggestion to the minister, when the bill was last up, was that he appoint a small committee, as was done in 1921, before whom the authors, publishers and printers can appear and state their claims. The committee will have to go to the bottom of the matter and report on this bill. I understood that my suggestion on that occasion agreed with the view of the minister. The hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Forke) backed up the proposal very emphatically. He said that he did not understand it, that the committee did not either, and he refused to commit himself to legislation which he did not understand. I do not know anything quite as complicated or quite as involved as the copyright question. I do know this, however: In 1921 a special committee was appointed, the various interested parties were heard, and they agreed on the legislation then passed. The bill was passed but it was not proclaimed because under the peculiar situation which exists, as between Dominion laws and Imperial laws, it was necessary, or at all events it was deemed proper, to submit the legislation before proclamation to the Imperial authorities, because they reserved the right to proclaim our act in the London Gazette which is the official communication between Great Britain and the Berne convention. The bill was not proclaimed.

The minister says that intimation has come from the authorities of the British government that the particular provisions mentioned in section 3 are objectionable, that they are not in conformity with either the letter or the spirit of the Imperial act. Well, that is rather an old complaint in regard to copyright by the Imperial government. In 1910 when the late Sydney Fisher was minister he attended an Imperial conference upon this very question. An agreement was then reached between the Imperial authorities and the authorities of the various dominions represented at that conference, and the Imperial act of 1911 was passed which practically recognized the agreement that was then come to. So far as I can understand the Imperial legislation of 1911 and the act passed by this parliament in 1921, I do not see that we have come in conflict in any way with the Imperial act, nor do I believe that we have in any way come in conflict with the Berne convention. The authors and writers in Canada say we have. I do not see in what respect we have come in contact. The publishers and printers in Canada say we have not. They desire to

have the act passed in 1921 put in force. The minister intimated when this bill was last discussed that he would produce a communication the department had received from the British government. I have not had the opportunity of seeing that communication, nor do I know just what the objection of the Imperial government is. It was stated that the copyright convention had made objection. My information is that it has not done so; but objection had been taken at the instance of a certain civil servant who had sent forward the article referred to for publication in Switzerland.

I am now going to renew my request to the minister that he appoint a special committee to consider this bill. I have said all that I can say on that subject. I know there is a great deal more to be learned on the subject than I know; there is a great deal more to be said than I have said. If the government take the responsibility of passing this bill—they have a majority and can do so—they will only do it over my protest. Again I ask that the minister, who admits he does not know the substance of the Copyright Act or what the effect of the amendment will be, let this bill go to a special committee. He has handed me the draft of an amendment which has been prepared since the matter was last before the House. I think it is a decided improvement on the bill which he introduced. I am neither going to consent to it—I have no power to do so—nor am I going to oppose it. But if this bill goes through in the form in which it has been introduced, or in the shape in which the minister wants it, he must take the responsibility. I know the publishers all object to it, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association object to it, and the printing trades throughout Canada object to it. Those in favour of the bill are apparently the authors or writers of the country. Their reason for supporting this legislation is this: If this bill, or if the amendment to the act of 1921 passes, it will not be necessary for writers to have their books published in Canada; they can publish them in the United States and avoid publication in this country. Under the law passed in 1921 where an author publishes his work in the United States provision was made for publication in Canada on payment to the author of the exact royalty or fee which he received from the American publisher. If the author would not agree to that then the publisher had the right to go to the Secretary of State, I think it was, or to the commissioner and get a license for the publication of