Distributors, Agents, and Publishers: Creating a Separate Market for Books in Canada 1900-1920.¹ Part I

George Parker²

If books are to be distributed to Canadian readers, the work must be done by Canadian publishers.

– George N. Morang, “The Development of Publishing in Canada and the Canadian Copyright Question,” 1899³

I. “Toronto’s Wholesale District Swept by Flames”

Around 8:00 on the evening of 19 April 1904 the most disastrous fire in Toronto’s history broke out in the downtown core. A tiny electric wire, “imperfectly insulated,”⁴ started the fire in the elevator shaft at E. & S. Currie Neckwear, at the northwest corner of Bay and Wellington Streets. That night the fire made a u-turn down and up Bay Street and its surrounding area. First, the fire jumped south across Wellington Street to the firm of Rolph, Smith Lithographers, where tons of paper began to burn. Fanned by strong northwest winds, the flames spread down the west side of Bay Street, from Melinda Street south to the Esplanade near Lake Ontario. At Front Street the fire moved westward almost to Lorne Street at the Queen’s Hotel, where the Royal York Hotel now stands. Ladies were removed from the hotel while the male guests helped control the fire here. By 9:30 the conflagration also swept east along Front Street, almost reaching the Bank of Montreal on the corner of Yonge and Front Streets, that

1 This paper is Part I of an excerpt from a longer version that will be a chapter in my work in progress on the Toronto publishing industry in the twentieth century. Part II will appear in the Spring 2006 issue of this journal.

2 George Parker taught English at the Royal Military College of Canada, Kingston, Ontario. He published *The Beginnings of the Book Trade in Canada* (1985), edited *The Clockmaker: Series One, Two, and Three* (1995), and has contributed to all three volumes of the *History of the Book in Canada* Project.

3 George N. Morang, “The Development of Publishing in Canada and the Canadian Copyright Question,” *Publishers’ Circular* 10 June 1899: 654. Morang’s paper was read at the Congress by S.S. McClure of New York.

4 “Business Men Meet the Disaster Bravely,” *The Globe* 21 Apr. 1904: 1.

elegant rococo building that now houses the Hockey Hall of Fame. There were fears that the fire would leap across Yonge Street to the Customs House, where \$1 million worth of goods were stored. At 9:45 pm the first building collapsed, the Davis & Henderson Stationery Co. on the east side of Bay Street near Front Street. Now the fire moved north, up the east side of Bay Street. It reached the Telegram Building on the southeast corner of Melinda and Bay Streets, where it was halted by the efforts of the Telegram employees. The mayor phoned Oshawa, London, Hamilton, and Buffalo for fire brigades, which were transported by special trains on the Grand Trunk Railway.

There were many dramatic incidents. When the street front of the Buntin Reid paper company crashed, it took down electric wires on Wellington Street. Blue and purple flames shot from the trolley and electric wires. Some observers said flames shot hundreds of feet in the air. At Warwick Bros and Rutter, A.M. Dymond (the Law Clerk) and Mr Grant (the assistant Queen's Printer) managed to save the manuscripts of recent provincial bills and reports, but decades of provincial government materials were lost forever. William Rutter glumly told the *Globe* reporter, "the stationery trade of Canada is ruined."⁵ By midnight the crowds behind the barricades at Front Street were getting out of hand and there was some pillaging.

Despite assistance of fire companies from Hamilton and Buffalo, and the efforts of many local firemen and citizens, they were no match for the gale-force winds, Toronto's low water-pressure, and the Dantesque searing heat of the flames. Among the few injured persons was the fire chief, who fractured his leg falling from a drain pipe. Two weeks later a dynamite expert died from injuries received when a dynamite charge exploded in his face at the W.J. Gage building on Front Street. Post-mortems also revealed that the fire brigades could have been better organized. There was need for even more fire-resistant materials in these warehouses because the flames ignited the wood in window frames, open staircases and elevators, empty cupolas, and mansard roofs. Two buildings that resisted the heat had new sprinkler systems, which did not stop their destruction but slowed down the flames.

By morning as the flames subsided, newsboys hawked fire numbers of the Toronto papers replete with drawings and on-the-spot accounts. The *Star* was the first to issue a photo of the devastation, which later was documented with hundreds of photographs and a three-minute

5 "Toronto's Wholesale District Swept by Flames," *The Globe* 20 Apr. 1904: 4.

movie. Twenty acres were cordoned off where venerable firms, some of them in business for over half-a-century, were reduced to rubble overnight. There were 104 factories and warehouses destroyed, which altogether housed about 350 different businesses. Five thousand employees, many of them women and girls, were temporarily out of work. Of the losses estimated at \$14 million, insurance covered about \$10 million. Insurance rates were increased by 75% immediately; "After all," as one insurance spokesman asserted, "the public must pay."⁶ Soon workers were replacing the burnt electrical poles, and owners were unlocking their safes to see what damage the heat had caused. For the next several weeks the area was littered with "crumbling walls and twisted girders."⁷

Such disasters are sometimes blessings in disguise. Even though the city lost many recently-constructed brick factories and warehouses, some of them with handsome stone facings, here was an opportunity for an up-to-date city core to arise phoenix-like from the ashes of the nineteenth century, a fitting emblem of the new, prosperous era that had begun with the Liberal government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier in 1896. The fire changed the course of the city's development; plans for the new Union Station were announced in the summer of 1904, and within several years the financial district, which was east of Yonge Street, shifted to the Bay Street area. After the first stunned responses to the gutted wasteland, most firms immediately began plans for new buildings made of concrete, and the city improved the water pressure. The *Globe* reported on 21 April that "there is no despair. The business community will feel the loss, but it is recognized as only a check on the city's progress. Manufacturers who escaped the fire were offering their former rivals opportunities to re-establish themselves at once, so that the trade can be maintained."⁸

Among those devastated buildings known as the "pride of the city"⁹ were many wholesale stationery firms that served not only Toronto but the whole country from Nova Scotia to the distant Northwest. Brown Brothers' losses were \$235,000; Warwick Bros. & Rutter's, \$280,000. Two publishing houses were also hit. W.J. Gage Ltd. sustained losses of \$250,000, and Copp, Clark & Co., \$175,000. Copp, Clark's safe,

6 "The Great Fire," *Toronto Star* 18 Apr. 2004: A7.

7 Norman Patterson, "Toronto's Great Fire," *The Canadian Magazine* 23 (June 1904): 132.

These articles all contain photographs and drawings.

8 "Business Men Meet the Disaster Bravely," 1.

9 Patterson, 130.

filled with manuscripts and contracts, withstood the heat. Only two stocks of books were lost,¹⁰ and in May, Copp, Clark announced new editions of its burnt stock of textbooks, and reprints of Gilbert Parker's fiction that were produced at its Colborne Street printing plant, which had been untouched by the fire.¹¹ *Bookseller and Stationer* even issued a special Fire Number in late April to describe the impact upon the importing and stationery trades. Fortunately, this fire did not reach the Methodist Book and Publishing Company, whose sales and editorial offices were on Richmond Street West and its printing facilities on Temperance Street. Nor did it touch other publishers and agencies along King and Richmond Streets, nor the booksellers clustered along Yonge Street. Like the other burnt-out businesses, the book and paper firms restocked quickly and by the autumn they were filling orders for textbooks and the Christmas trade. A year later, in June 1905, *Industrial Canada* reported that every printing establishment that was wiped out was now back "in enlarged premises, doing a larger business than ever."¹²

The fact that the damaged firms could spring back so quickly was itself a sign that the wholesale and manufacturing sector of the publishing industry was sharing in the good times that had energized the country for the past eight years. In 1904 alone, the world's tallest hydraulic lift-lock opened in Peterborough on the Trent-Severn waterway, and the Ford Motor company began producing cars in Canada. And despite setbacks like the permanent closing of the great Imperial dockyards at Halifax, which threw 300 persons out of work, the general economic outlook was so promising that Laurier had declared in January, "the nineteenth century will prove to be the century of the United States. I think we can claim that it is Canada that shall fill the twentieth century."¹³ His statement would be a touchstone for Canadian optimism for the rest of the century.

10 "Current Topics," *Bookseller and Stationer and Office Equipment Journal* [Fire Number] 20, No.4A (27 Apr. 1904): 159.

11 "Book Activities," *Bookseller and Stationer* 20 (May 1904): 208.

12 "Printing and Publishing," *Industrial Canada* 5 (June 1905): 765.

13 "Canadian Club Banquet," *The Globe and Mail* 19 Jan. 1904: 8. As if to support Laurier's statement, in 1904 journalist Kit Coleman organized the Canadian Women's Press Club; in contrast, however, that same year Ottawa set the head tax on Chinese women at \$500, which effectively prevented Chinese wives and women from emigrating to Canada.

Far more than good times rejuvenated the book trade: stability in the market, the appearance of new publishing houses, and the existence of writers with international reputations all played a role.

The new American copyright law of 1891, followed by a Proclamation between the United States and Great Britain, put an end to 75 years of book piracy in North America. Canada was no longer deluged with cheap unauthorized books from the United States, which had all but stifled the local publishing industry in the depressed years from the early 1870s to the mid-1890s.¹⁴ The compromises over copyright reached by the British and the Canadians at Ottawa in 1895 allowed local houses to oversee the marketing of foreign books, and these arrangements were entrenched in an amendment to the Canadian Copyright Act in 1900. This act paved the way for new publishers and British branches like Oxford University Press in 1904. The changes in international copyright, then, along with the Liberal government's encouragement of branch-plant industries, including tariff changes in 1897 for importing bound books, sheets, and plates, hastened the transformation of wholesale importing into agency publishing. At the same time, specialization appeared as houses either focussed on mechanical production or on editing and marketing. This is what journalist Arthur Conrad had in mind in 1905 when he described activities among the major houses since the 1890s.¹⁵

The transformation of the English-language book trade began in Toronto, after that city had shed its not undeserved reputation in London and New York as a haven for book pirates and had vanquished Montreal as the distribution centre for the English-language regions of the Dominion. Whereas in the past retailers and jobbers in different regions had imported books for local consumption, the Toronto houses now became *exclusive* agents for their foreign principals in the whole Canadian market.

In the old established houses young men dreamed of agencies of their own and the possibilities of educational and original publishing. Hired as youngsters and rotated frequently among departments, some began as delivery boys. Others edited manuscripts and denominational periodicals, and even dealt with authors. Some gained experience in the library supply and retail departments, and learned about marketing and readers' tastes. Not a few of them were sent out as travellers to

¹⁴ "Booksellers and Stationers," *The Monetary Times* 8 Feb. 1901: 1024.

¹⁵ Arthur Conrad, "Book Publishing in Canada," *Bookseller and Stationer* 21 (Aug. 1905): 293-98.

school boards and bookstores, and saw the Dominion at first hand. It was an ideal decade for a young man to start his own business. A handful of the new firms – call them jobbers, importers, agents, publishers because they wore all those hats simultaneously – had beginner's luck in the form of a profitable best seller in their first year, for the decades on each side of 1904 showed that Canadian enterprise could successfully adapt such innovations from abroad as cheap prices, the blanket marketing of best sellers, and the publication of new fiction in paper covers. These changes would be the distinguishing mark of the Canadian book industry for much of the twentieth century.

A closer look beyond the dust raised by horses, motor cars, and trams in downtown Toronto around 1904 reveals that those young publishers who dreamed of turning Toronto's embryonic publishing trade into a facsimile of London's and New York's bustling scenes believed this would happen in a matter of years once they began selling international and Canadian authors. Their aim was to turn a profit and contribute to the intellectual life of the nation. Either by arrangement with foreign publishers or with the authors themselves, they attracted the likes of Gilbert Parker, Ralph Connor, Robert Service, Nellie McClung, Lucy Maud Montgomery, and Stephen Leacock, who often complained that our magazines and publishers did not pay the same rates as London and New York. This happy convergence of authors and entrepreneurs was activated by William Briggs, a middle-aged Methodist clergyman-publisher; William Copp, a young man who reactivated his late father's business; and George Morang, an expatriate American agency-publisher. The editor of the *Canadian Magazine*, John Cooper, praised the three men for bringing about important changes.¹⁶ Some of their authors became household names throughout the English-speaking world, but the three publishers are now largely forgotten.

II. William Briggs of the "Mother House"

Enlarges his Agency Ventures

So far as Canada is concerned, there are few novels published except those written in other countries. Our publishers do little publishing; they are really the agents for foreign publishers. They exercise no

¹⁶ "About New Books: Canadian Publishing." *The Canadian Magazine* 25 (Oct. 1905): 582-83.

editorial discretion in connection with the authors selected by the real publishers who live in New York and London. They simply take 500, 1000, or 1,500 copies of each new book produced by the publisher whom they represent or with whom they work. In some cases they buy on the open market, bidding against each other for the Canadian edition of a particular work.

– John Cooper, “About New Books,” *Canadian Magazine* 23 (August 1904): 379.

Rev. Wm. Briggs,
Canada's Veteran Publisher.

Reproduced from a copy of the *Bookseller and Stationer* 21 (August 1905): 294, held in the collection of the University of Toronto Libraries.

By 1900 the book market in English Canada was dominated by several houses that were monopolies in all but name. These firms – the Methodist Book and Publishing Company, W.J. Gage, and Copp, Clark – maintained their own printing plants and combined many operations under one roof in a fashion typical of large houses in nineteenth-century Canada and the United States. The three firms

struck gold after 1883, when Ontario minister of education George W. Ross, awarded them ten-year contracts for printing the Ontario Readers. The texts were also adopted in British Columbia, Manitoba, and the Northwest. The profits allowed the three houses to weather the bad times of the 1880s and early '90s.

The Methodist empire originated in 1829 when the Rev. Egerton Ryerson began *The Christian Guardian* and founded the Methodist Book Room in Toronto. In 1846 Ryerson became Canada West's (Ontario) first Superintendent of Education, responsible for the model school system, its libraries, and its Educational Depository, which imported and sold school books at prices that his retail-bookseller competitors could hardly match. After Ryerson left his business for the government appointment, the Methodist establishment evolved into one of the largest printing and publishing companies in Canada. By the 1890s it consisted of eight departments: Printing, Binding, Electrotyping and Stereotyping, Periodicals, Book Publishing Subscription Books, Wholesale Book and Bible Department, and the Retail Bookstore. These were spread over two locations: the production units in a seven-storey building at 30-36 Temperance Street, and the offices and sales rooms at 29-33 Richmond Street West. Along with its Methodist periodicals and Sunday School papers, the house – like its sister houses in Britain and the United States – had always published inspirational books. Meanwhile, following Ryerson's retirement from the Ontario Education Department in 1876, it took almost a decade to close the Depository and recover from one spectacular mess over textbook contracts in 1882 before George Ross came up with his solution that so benefited Methodist and its rival publishers. So the grand old lady of Canadian publishing was supervised by three bookish clergymen, each with a nose for business. The oldest, Edward Hartley Dewart, who had published the first anthology of English-Canadian poetry (*Selections from Canadian Poets*, 1864), was now the editor of the weekly *Christian Guardian*. W.H. Withrow was the editor of *The Methodist Magazine* and had a modest reputation as a fiction writer and biographer. The whole operation was directed by William Briggs, who as Book Steward answered to the Church for the management of this business. Because the Methodist periodicals and books were distributed throughout the country (except for the French-speaking areas) each man used his position wisely to champion literacy and encourage Canadian literature, but it was Briggs whose name still echoes in our own time.

Up to the 1890s William Briggs (1836-1922) confined his original publications to biographies of missionaries, local histories, poetry, and morally uplifting fiction. Many of those books record the social and cultural growth of the country, appearing at a time when colonial pre-Confederation Canada was becoming a memory. Egerton Ryerson's *The Loyalists of America and Their Times from 1620 to 1816* (1988) mythologized the United Empire Loyalists who, having fled to Ontario after the American Revolution, preserved justice and freedom under the British crown. Another book that mythologized the past was Matilda Edgar's *Ten Years of Upper Canada in Peace and War 1805-1815* (1890). The revered and elderly Catherine Parr Traill (1802-1899), who had herself experienced the cycle from pioneer homestead to urban life with electricity and telephones, published her last books *Pearls and Pebbles; or, the Notes of an Old Naturalist* (1893) and the handsome fourth edition of *Canadian Wild Flowers* (1895). At a time when Canadian publishers expected the author to contribute towards production costs before sharing in the profits, one author cried, "The enemy of Canadian literature is the Canadian publisher," but excepted Briggs, who had a reputation for being "careful and conscientious in making his returns, even in regard to trifling amounts, while other publishers are careless and rather think they honor the author by bleeding him freely and making him no returns."¹⁷

Then in 1894, at almost 60 years of age, Briggs launched into his most productive years with two decisions about agency connections and original publishing that would alter the course of Canadian publishing in the twentieth century.¹⁸ The Methodist church agreed to let him expand the trade book division with history and popular fiction issued under his imprint "William Briggs." He turned to his London and New York principals who already supplied him with religious and educational books: the Religious Tract Society, Thomas Nelson & Son, Blackie, Oliphant, the Chatauqua Library and Scientific Circle, and G.P. Putnam. Briggs secured Canadian distribution for the popular series of *Pansy Books*, written by Annie Swan and Mrs G.R. Alden, and paperback editions of best sellers

17 "Current Notes: A Hit at the Publishers," *Bookseller and Stationer* 24 (Jan. 1898): 2. *Bookseller and Stationer* is quoting a Professor Campbell of the Presbyterian College in Montreal writing in the *Presbyterian College Journal* of Jan. 1898, but attacks this outburst as vague because no names or facts are included.

18 Lorne Pierce, *The House of Ryerson 1829-1954* (Toronto: Ryerson 1954), See Chapter 8; and W.S. Wallace, comp., *The Ryerson Imprint* (Toronto: Ryerson [1954]), 2-3.

such as *David Harum* and *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*. Slowly, the foreign principals began signing exclusive-agency contracts with him and other Canadian houses.

Agencies and the New Distribution Chain

The appearance of exclusive agencies marked the transition from the nineteenth- to the twentieth-century book market, a gradual process between 1890 and 1910 that was greeted with approval by publishers and most trade observers, but with reservations by manufacturers and some retailers. The agency system was part of a trend to consolidate and concentrate on a national scale the publishing and distribution of books from one centre – Toronto, even though regional wholesalers in Halifax, Montreal, Winnipeg, and Vancouver continued to function. This consolidation, already in place in the United States, spelled the end of the traditional distribution chain, which was originally organized for the importation of books and periodicals from France, Britain, and the United States from the earliest days of European settlement. Getting a book moved from author to reader involved printers, ships, wagons, trains, pedlars, and retailers, with the recent addition of wholesalers, department stores, subscription agents, and entrepreneurial publishers. Libraries of all kinds – legislative, private, public, Sunday school, and Mechanics' Institutes – were also part of this chain. For generations printed materials were imported directly by libraries, booksellers, and individuals. After 1867 large wholesale firms in Toronto and Montreal convinced foreign publishers and jobbers that they could supply the whole Canadian market. Loose agency-arrangements became common as Canadian wholesalers began annual buying trips to the United States and Britain in the 1870s and '80s.

The 1900 Amendment to the Copyright Act of 1875 permitted the formal development of the agency system, which more or less worked well enough up to the 1950s. It allowed the local copyright holder – who was normally, like Briggs or George Morang, the representative of a foreign house – the sole and exclusive right to import a work and register it in Ottawa. It provided modest penalties against others who sold that work. The local agent had the choices of importing the bound books, importing sheets and adding his own title page, or renting stereotype plates in order to print and bind the book locally, which would supplement his distribution of the imported book. Naturally, the Employing Printers' Union and the Canadian

Manufacturers' Association supported the local production of foreign books; this provided employment, it answered the Americans for their brand of protectionism, and it was even used as an argument for creating Canadian literature. The role of the local agent, however, was to keep the distribution of the legitimate edition in his hands and prevent "buying around," by ensuring that all Canadian orders for the books of his principals went through his hands. More will follow about these problems.

Briggs's decision, then, to accumulate exclusive agencies coincided with the plan to publish more Canadians. He and his editors, S. Bradley Gundy and Edward S. Caswell, already had a reputation for issuing Canadian books, but now they sought out potential best-selling authors, many of whom were living abroad. The Briggs list included histories such as the Lizars sisters' *In the Days of the Canada Company* (1896). From the late 1890s on there were many more popular literary works than before: Charles G.D. Roberts's *The Forge in the Forest* (1896), W.A. Fraser's *The Eye of a God* (1899), Agnes Laut's historical romance of the Scots and French traders of the Hudson's Bay Company, *Lords of the North* (1900), Ernest Thompson Seton's *Two Little Savages* (1903), and Arthur Stringer's *The Silver Poppy* (1903). Most of the new generation of poets also appeared on Briggs's lists: W.W. Campbell, Frederick George Scott, Thomas O'Hagen, Jean Blewett, Robert Stead, and the two poets who became international best sellers, William Henry Drummond, whose verses about French-Canadian life were distributed by Briggs in the Putnam editions, and Robert Service, whose *Songs of a Sourdough* (1907) made him a household name. Some contracts were arranged with the authors' foreign publishers, as in the case of Edward Thomson's *Old Man Savarin* (1895), but other contracts were signed with literary agents such as A.P. Watt – or with the authors themselves, as happened with Thomson's next book with Briggs. With Service and Nellie McClung, Briggs acted as both Canadian publisher and literary agent for their foreign editions.

Robert Service: "Leave out such rough things as that
McGrew poem ... and the McGee one."

Although at the turn of the century it was not unusual to be both a successful poet and novelist – Charles G.D. Roberts springs to mind – it was Robert Service (1874-1958), hailed as "the Canadian Kipling," who captured the popular imagination with his verses about

the romantic and colourful Northwest in *Songs of a Sourdough*. Born in the north of England and schooled in Scotland, he worked in a Glasgow bank until a taste for adventure and for writing sent him wandering through Mexico, California, and western Canada. As a clerk in the Canadian Bank of Commerce, he worked in Kamloops, Whitehorse, and Dawson, occasionally reciting and publishing his verses. The Yukon communities, slowly becoming civilized, were still filled with restless drifters, miners, dance-hall girls, people like himself with big dreams of striking it rich overnight. Their lives and their popular songs provided him with the melodramatic ballads, generously laced with humour and a Darwinist view of life, of his first two books of verse in 1907 and 1909.

Service had perfected his persona as entertainer with recitations of "Casey at the Bat" and "Gunga Din" but enlarged his repertoire with his own verses. He was encouraged by the editor of the *Whitehorse Star*, Stroller White. Peter Mitham has reconstructed the events surrounding the publication of *Songs of a Sourdough*, a story, like many others involving authors and editors, that appears contradictory in their several recollections.¹⁹ Service explains in his autobiography how the "Missus" – who was the bank manager's wife, and the bank clerks' landlady – told him to publish the verses but to "leave out such rough things as that McGrew poem ... and the McGee one."²⁰ The manuscript no longer exists but the corrected proofs do, and they suggest that Service was careful in polishing his verses.²¹ Ignoring some of her advice, he sent the manuscript with a cheque to his father in Toronto, instructing him to find "a firm of publishers who did amateur work." In late 1906 Briggs did an initial printing, and in January 1907 Edward Caswell handed the proof sheets to salesman Russell Bond, who was just departing for the West. On the train the 23-year-old Bond read the poems to his fellow salesmen, leaving them in stitches. On his western sales trip to book stores in Fort William, Portage la Prairie, Indian Head, Calgary, Lethbridge, and Victoria, he picked up advance orders, and almost accepted some in Seattle until he realized he could jeopardize Service's copyright. Bookseller Jim Linton in Calgary explained to Bond the meaning of "sourdough" – a fermented dough used as a leaven for making

19 Peter J. Mitham, "The Publication of *Songs of a Sourdough*," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 34, No. 1 (Spring 1996): 13-61.

20 Robert Service, *Ploughman of the Moon: An Adventure into Memory* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1945), 327.

21 Peter J. Mitham, 13.

bread rise – and ordered 25 copies.²² No Canadian book, not even Haliburton's first *Clockmaker* (1836), let alone a book of poetry, had ever created such a buzz.

Back in Toronto there were discussions between Ernest W. Walker, the head of the Methodist wholesale department, and John McClelland, in charge of the library department, about the risks of a religious publisher handling such crude subject matter. The title page of the first printing of *Songs of a Sourdough* indicates that this is an "Author's Edition," which suggests two possibilities: either that Service's father paid for the production, or that Briggs as publisher, mindful of his position as Steward of the Methodist house, had to distance himself from the contents. Perhaps there is truth in both explanations. The book was immediately popular, and went through ten printings amounting to 12,750 copies in its first year and over 40,000 by mid-1909.²³ The New York edition, retitled *The Spell of the Yukon*, was reset and published by Barss and Hopkins in 1907. Although T. Fisher Unwin, one of Briggs's London principals, at first refused to publish an English edition, calling it a "feeble imitation of Kipling,"²⁴ he relented and published it in late 1907. Whatever qualms the Briggs people had about *Songs of a Sourdough* and *Ballads of a Cheechako* (which had a first printing of 28,000 in 1909²⁵), they marketed both titles aggressively in a variety of bindings, and periodically updated *Bookseller and Stationer* on their remarkable sales.

Service tallied his royalties until they reached \$5000 a year, and then quit the bank in Dawson when it tried to move him back to Whitehorse. The celebrity and the royalties freed him to write in more pleasant climes, and after one last trip to the Mackenzie River region in 1911, he left Canada for good, visited his New York publishers and hobnobbed for several days with writers George Barr McCutcheon, Hamlin Garland, and Will Carleton. He served as a reporter in the Balkans, moved to Paris, and became a stretcher-bearer and a correspondent for the Canadian government during the War, events that provided him with the stuff of more verses and novels.

22 Russell Bond, "I Sold Service to the Public," *Globe Magazine* 28 June 1958: 7-8.

23 "Gossip of the Month," *Bookseller and Stationer* 25 (June 1909): 50-1.

24 Peter J. Mitham, 17. Quoting "Songs of a Sourdough," *Saturday Night* 18 Jan. 1908: 10. See also Stanley Unwin. *The Truth about a Publisher* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), 98.

25 Briggs's advertisement in *Bookseller and Stationer* 25 (Sept. 1909): 118.

Service mined the Klondike and the North West for the rest of his life from the heights of Monte Carlo, except for a temporary stay in California during World War II.

Nellie McClung: "We want you to hold a mirror up to this country, or perhaps a microscope."

Nellie McClung (1873-1951) always acknowledged that her best sellers helped her career as an activist for temperance reform and women's suffrage. Born in Ontario, Nellie Mooney grew up on a homestead in the Souris Valley of Manitoba, where she devoured the books in her Sunday School library and in the *Family Herald*. As a young druggist's wife in Manitou, she was persuaded by a salesman for a magazine that never materialized to write stories about her community. Telling her she could do what Dickens did for London, and Scott for Scotland, he said, "We want you to hold a mirror up to this country; or perhaps a microscope."²⁶ Then her helpful mother-in-law persuaded her to enter a short-story contest in *Colliers*, which liked the story but thought it was too juvenile for their purposes. But she had the writing bug, and sent articles and stories to the Methodist Sunday School papers edited by the Rev. Withrow in Toronto, for which she received modest payments. The *Colliers'* story about a steadfast farm girl became the first chapter of *Sowing Seeds in Danny* (1908), and she mailed sections of the novel to Edward Caswell, whom she called her "patient, wise, encouraging counsellor."²⁷ He and Jean Graham thought it was publishable, but in 1906 the "head of the publishing department" – Ernest Walker – thought it was "a feeble imitation"²⁸ of *Mrs Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* and would not take it unless an American publisher also wanted it. Clarence Karr records that Briggs on an earlier occasion had told McClung that the firm did not purchase manuscripts but expected the author to pay for publication costs, after which she might receive a 50% share of the profits; Briggs later told her he only accepted Canadian fiction "if there was also an offer from an American publisher, for it 'does not pay us to publish a story from the original manuscript for the Canadian market alone.'"²⁹

26 Nellie L. McClung, *The Stream Runs Fast: My Own Story* (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 1965), 7.

27 Nellie L. McClung, 76.

28 Nellie L. McClung, 77.

29 Clarence Karr, *Authors and Audiences: Popular Canadian Fiction in the Early Twentieth Century* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 65.

Caswell seems to have lost the manuscript temporarily but eventually he obtained an acceptance from Doubleday, Page in New York. McClung was vindicated by its sales of over 100,000 copies and its first place on the 1908 Canadian best-seller lists.

Several months later she was asked to give a public reading in Winnipeg in support of the W.C.T.U.'s Home for Friendless Girls. She had her hair done, a manicure, a facial, applied a little rouge, and armed herself with a new soft blue dress. Thus equipped, she sailed into history with her plain talk and her humour. And what a career! Her campaigning in the 1914 Manitoba elections led to the vote for women in 1916. By that time the McClungs had moved to Edmonton, Alberta, where she sat in the provincial legislature from 1921 to 1925. Her political activities were carried out while she maintained her writing schedule, which involved travelling and lecturing on behalf of authors' rights, and even as she raised her own children she encouraged other women to pursue careers outside the home. Today McClung is best known as one of the "Famous Five" women who won a ruling in 1929 from the Privy Council in London that women were indeed legal "persons" under the BNA Act and were thus eligible for government appointments. McClung and her fellow Albertans, Judge Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Irene Parlby, and Louise McKinney are commemorated in statues on Parliament Hill.

In his history *The House of Ryerson* (1954), Lorne Pierce remarks on the emphasis in the 1890s and the 1900s on the House's periodical publishing and the "silence" on book publishing. At this time more fiction was published in the English-speaking world than ever before (1900 was the peak year). Even so, Briggs's annual report for 1906, for all its prolixity, exemplifies in a nutshell the optimism of the decade:

It is satisfactory to find that this Department of our business ... has yet made material advance during the quadrennium, the aggregate sales having reached and passed the million dollar mark. We have grown with the growth of the country; the opening of flourishing communities in the West has made new places of call for our book travellers; the extension of the work of our church has increased the demand for church and school supplies; the increasing population has multiplied the number of readers to be furnished with books. A gratifying feature in the trade of the period has been the growing demand for the better class of books. The establishment of Public and High School Libraries is making a market for books of history, science, and other of the more solid class of reading.

Our publishing interests have made steady progress, both in respect of the character of the works published and their mechanical make-up. Canadian literature has been enriched by the publication of many notable books. These four years have witnessed the issue of more books than in any similar period in the past. With improved facilities, and with the continued support of our churches and schools, we have every reason to expect as rapid progress in the future as has hitherto been the case.³⁰

In the first decade of the century Briggs was surrounded by a group of ambitious and innovative young men, almost all of whom ventured on their own to become their boss's competitors. Tom Allen joined George McLeod in partnership in 1901; S. Bradley Gundy became manager of Oxford University Press in 1904; John McClelland and Fred Goodchild began their partnership in 1906. One who stayed was Ernest W. Walker, who, when Gundy moved on, was told by Briggs in his "most martial manner, 'carry on,'" and took over the publishing department. Before he left, "Sam" Gundy drew a cartoon of Briggs, which Walker showed to *Bookseller and Stationer* forty years later: "a small, crudely caricatured head of a hawk-nosed man wearing a Van Dyke [beard]." Under this Gundy parodied Tennyson, "Men may come and men may go, but Dr. Briggs goes on forever."³¹ We will hear more about these major actors who dominated the Toronto publishing scene into the 1930s and 1940s, while John McClelland was active almost until his death in 1968. He was the only member of that pre-war generation whom I met.

III. The Rise of Professional Authorship

"But even if I were free I wouldn't give the MS. to a Canadian firm. It is much better financially to have it published in the States."

– Lucy Maud Montgomery, 1908³²

While the agency system was in its early stages, Briggs and two of his competitors – Copp, Clark and the Westminster Company – had the good luck to secure Canadians at the top of the best-seller lists.

³⁰ Lorne Pierce, *The House of Ryerson, 1829-1954* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1954), 26.

³¹ Paul Duval, "You Should Know – Ernest Walker," *Bookseller and Stationer* 61 (Nov. 1945): 15.

³² L.M. Montgomery to Ephraim Weber, 22 Dec. 1908, In *The Green Gables Letters from L.M. Montgomery to Ephraim Weber, 1905-1909*, ed. Wilfrid Eggleston (Toronto: Ryerson, 1960), 80.

It was a fortuitous time for our authors. The editor of the *Canadian Magazine*, John Cooper, predicted that the 1900 Copyright Act amendment would be “the first step towards making Canadian authorship a remunerative operation by making the business of publishing itself more remunerative.”³³ It would be hard to prove that any one Canadian author began writing because of this act, but while it was being negotiated the Canadian Society of Authors was organized in early 1899 in order to improve the prospects for professional authorship. Nevertheless, Montgomery’s remark was a truth almost universally recognized by writers of her generation. It was common knowledge that many best-selling authors were young Canadians who published with London and New York houses who had not waited to be discovered by little-known Toronto houses. Each Christmas season they produced books that were puffed in the *Toronto Globe*, *Saturday Night*, and *The Canadian Magazine*.

While they expressed strong feelings for their country, they turned to the international world for literary influences just as they turned to the international English-language market for profits and recognition. They became so well known that the *Dominion Illustrated* carried a spread on them in May 1893. In company with thousands of other Canadians who went abroad to pursue better career opportunities, writers moved south of the border or east across the Atlantic to work as journalists. Among those heading for editorial offices in Boston and bohemian haunts in Greenwich Village were poets Bliss Carman and Charles G.D. Roberts, reporter Norman Duncan, nature writer Ernest Thomson Seton, and novelist Arthur Stringer. Another group gravitated to England, among them Max Aitken (who moved from a financial career into journalism), and novelists Grant Allen, Robert Barr, Sara Jeannette Duncan, and Gilbert Parker. Even those who spent their professional lives in Canada relied on foreign magazines and houses, and especially on the kindness of such editors as Carman and Edward Thomson, to place their poetry and fiction: this stay-at-home multitude included Archibald Lampman, L.M. Montgomery, Marshall Saunders, and Stephen Leacock. Robert Barr advised the ones at home to “Get over the border as soon as you can; come to London or go to New York; shake the dust of Canada from your feet.”³⁴

33 [John A. Cooper], “Book Reviews,” *The Canadian Magazine* 15 (Sept. 1900): 475.

34 Robert Barr, “Literature in Canada,” *The Canadian Magazine* 14 (Nov. 1899): 6.

These writers created the images that the rest of the world associated with Canada throughout the twentieth century. Their idyllic rural communities, endless snow-covered prairies, and turbulent northwest towns, with their hints of disaster below all that surface purity, were peopled by spirited girls, earnest young men, lovable habitants, celibate Mounties, and the sporadic villain of indeterminate European origin. This panorama became more exotic as it was distanced from the Atlantic shores and, with the passing decades, turned increasingly more clichéd. But at the beginning of the century their writings memorialized a Canada that their contemporaries recognized from their own childhood. Using genres and plots familiar in popular fiction and poetry, each introduced readers to a new region and told their stories in distinctive voices. International audiences gobbled up these tales about a vibrant and expanding Canada, and no one asked these writers to Americanize their settings, as happened to later Canadian writers. Yet they usually dealt with problems and struggles familiar to their readers. It is Clarence Karr's contention in his ground-breaking *Authors and Audiences* (2001) that the international reception of these writers was due in part to their ability to confront and come to terms with the modern industrial world.³⁵

Like many of their readers, these popular Canadian writers came from humble but genteel homes, and their successes catapulted them firmly into the middle and upper-middle classes. Most of them came from backgrounds where religion was important, whether they were Anglican, Methodist, or Presbyterian, and not a few were the children of ministers, or themselves ministers or married to ministers. No matter whether they were political Liberals or Conservatives, they shared the same views about nation-building, progress, individual responsibility, and decency. They also shared these values with the Toronto publishers whom they came to know and work with. In short, they embodied and wrote about what we often inaccurately define as WASP values.

As we now know from their published letters, journals, and memoirs, their own lives were much more complex and troubling than those of the fictional people they wrote about. Their long apprenticeships as writers were often hindered by family and career obligations, but perseverance and ambition kept them focussed on the outcome. They were well into their 30s when their books catapulted them into international fame as Canadian authors.

35 Clarence Karr, 25.

"Have We a National Literature?" – Pelham Edgar (1904)

Their successes prompted Professor Pelham Edgar to ask in his year-end essay in the *Globe's* "Saturday Magazine Section" of 31 December 1904, "Have We a National Literature?" Arguing that Canada had contributed nothing to drama, philosophy, criticism, almost nothing to the novel, and little to history and poetry, Edgar explained how literature is affected by geography, politics, society, and race. This was in line with the late Victorian concept of the forces that contributed to the national literatures of Europe. By "nationalism in literature" Edgar meant that it expressed "the faith by which we live" and the inward spirit of Canadian life, "which can only come about from a people's discovery of itself." He pointed to the contemporary Celtic revival in Ireland led by William Butler Yeats and George Russell.

"What trustworthy guide probes our national conscience, and points us on our predestined path?" Edgar asked and then concluded that at present we are indifferent, if not hostile to "ideas," and that we must shed the narrow patriotism of politicians whose aspirations extend only to the export of butter and cheese, draw on the storehouse of European culture, recognizing that the tendency is towards a literature of "enlightened cosmopolitanism" and that this may allow Canada to "speak in accents that are her own."

Debates about the existence of "Canadian literature" recurred every few years as regularly as bad weather. In 1909 a "distinguished writer, now resident in Toronto" stated in a lecture that he would not refer to "so-called Canadian literature, as it was generally conceded by literary men that there was no such thing as a Canadian literature." This prompted a fuming Toronto bookseller to list in *Bookseller and Stationer* the many novelists, poets, philosophers, and historians active in Canada.³⁶ No matter. In October that year *Bookseller and Stationer* asked Lawrence J. Burpee, the head of the Ottawa Public Library, "Is there such a thing as Canadian literature?" Burpee said no, but allowed there were many Canadian writers such as Haliburton, the "father of the American style of humor, the Mark Twain type," and William Henry Drummond, whose "subjects were purely accidental."

36 Bookseller [pseud.], "Canadian Literature," *Bookseller and Stationer* 25 (June 1909): 56. Letter dated 8 May 1909, Toronto. I have not been able to identify the "distinguished writer now resident in Toronto," but this could be Goldwin Smith, who often said provocative things like this about Canadian literature.

Burpee said that “analysis showed that there is nothing distinctively Canadian”³⁷ in all these many writers.

Academics reviewed contemporary Canadian writing, but they would no more teach it than would professors in the United States teach American literature. (Almost alone in this decade, Fred Lewis Pattee was teaching American literature at Pennsylvania State College.) Meanwhile, Edgar’s former schoolmate Stephen Leacock was turning out humorous sketches, and his canoeing companion Duncan Campbell Scott was writing admirable poetry. Sara Jeannette Duncan had compared Canadian and British attitudes in her latest international novel *The Imperialist*, even though *The Globe* trashed it in August 1904. L.M. Montgomery was firing off verses and stories to publishers, and reported that she made \$591.85 from her writings that year. At Christmas 1904 the Canadian best sellers reviewed in the Toronto papers included Ralph Connor’s *The Prospector*, with a first edition of 10,000 copies, Gilbert Parker’s *The Ladder of Swords*, Charles G.D. Roberts’ *The Prisoner of Mademoiselle*, and Norman Duncan’s *Dr Luke of the Labrador*. On balance, Edgar did not find a national literature, even though he believed “our period of tutelage is drawing to a close.” After World War I Edgar would have a change of heart.

IV. Copp, Clark and the Westminster Company and Canadian Copyright Editions

While Service and McClung achieved their first publication through their Toronto publisher, the expatriate Gilbert Parker was published first by London and New York houses before finding a Canadian publisher in Copp, Clark. The distinction of being the oldest family-owned firm belongs to William Copp and his descendants in the Thomas and the Copp families. A native of Torrington, North Devon, Copp (1826-1894) emigrated to Toronto with his family in 1842, and within several months he was apprenticed to Hugh Scobie, the Liberal Reform journalist and bookseller. Copp worked his way up from apprentice in the series of firms that passed from Scobie’s *Examiner* office in the 1840s to Thomas Maclear and then to Dr William Chewett. By the time he and his partner Henry J. Clark (1822- 92) purchased Chewett’s book store in 1866, Copp was

37 “Interviewing a Man of Books in the Midst of Books,” *Bookseller and Stationer* 25 (Oct. 1909): 39.

William Copp,
Manager of the General Book Publishing Department of
the Copp, Clark Company, Limited.

Reproduced from a copy of the *Bookseller and Stationer* 21 (August 1905): 297,
held in the collection of the University of Toronto Libraries.

experienced in all facets of the book business. Around 1873 they dropped the retail department, and in 1883 they struck a goldmine with the Ontario textbook contracts, and incorporated as Copp, Clark in 1885. By the early 1890s their operations were spread between the warehouse and jobbing department on Front Street, and the factory on nearby Colborne Street, so that, like the Methodist Company, they functioned both as printers and publishers.

Copp's son William (1864-1950) joined his father's firm in 1882 after he graduated from Upper Canada College. In 1893 his first cousin, Arnold Thomas, took over as editor of *The Canadian Almanac*, one of the firm's perennial money-makers. Following the elder Copp's death in 1894, young William became vice-president and Arnold Thomas became secretary-treasurer, but the presidency went to a long-time employee, Henry Thompson, who had managed the wholesale and textbook departments. After the 1904 fire, Copp and Arnold Thomas oversaw the construction of a new fireproof five-storey steel and brick

structure on Front Street, and in 1909 they built a new factory on Wellington Street that remained in use until the late 1960s.

Through the first decade of the 1900s, as British firms recognized the importance of having representation in Canada, Copp, Clark became the sole agent for ten houses, including Nisbet, Duckworth, Isaac Pitman, and Blackie, as well as exclusive agent for certain lines of 15 other firms. The British exported to the Colonies and Dominions the popular "Colonial Editions," which were inexpensive cloth-bound books. Because of Copp's success with local editions intended to rival the "Colonial Editions," the British reassessed the Canadian market. The author principally responsible for this interest was an expatriate Canadian now resident in Britain, Gilbert Parker, who became Copp's star author and the first Canadian to appear on the new best-seller lists.

Gilbert Parker: "I have come to write a novel on Quebec.
I want a hero. Can you supply one?"

In the creation of a mythic Canada, the literary career of the social climbing Gilbert Parker (1862-1932) was a triumph of imagination over fact because he barely knew the locales that he exploited in his popular romances. This is unusual, given that verisimilitude in regional local colour was a key requisite of contemporary fiction, whether its mode was realism or romance. Born in Camden, Canada West (Ontario), and educated at Trinity College, Toronto, he contemplated a career in the church, then emigrated to Australia for a brief career as a journalist. Soon after he arrived in England in early 1890, he settled in Bloomsbury and, with his unerring instinct for hobnobbing with the right people, gravitated to the literary circle around William Ernest Henley of the *National Observer*, and went into high gear for the next decade. Some of his inspiration came from a transcontinental train ride across Canada in the spring of 1890, and during the same trip he arranged with editors in Boston – one of them was poet Bliss Carman – and New York to publish his stories in American magazines, which he discovered paid far more than their British counterparts. Still yearning for British recognition, in 1892 he published *Around the Compass in Australia* and *Pierre and his People*, and it was the stories in the latter book about an exotic, imaginary Northwest that won him acclaim. In late 1892 he was back in New York arranging for a hasty printing of *The Chief Factor* in order to secure American copyright (under the new 1891 law) prior to its British serialization in *Good Words*.

On that 1892 trip he also travelled to Canada in search of material for stories and novels about Quebec. The Clerk of the House of Commons, John Bourinot, put him in touch with James MacPherson LeMoine, an elderly antiquarian in Quebec City who was a goldmine of stories and incidents extending back to the eighteenth century. On his way to visit LeMoine, Parker stayed in Montreal with William Van Horne, the president of the CPR, who provided him with story ideas for *An Adventurer of the North* (London: Methuen, 1895), which was re-titled as *A Romany of the Snows* (New York: Stone & Kimball, 1896). Parker told LeMoine, "I have come to write a novel on Quebec. I want a hero. Can you supply one?"³⁸

Favourably impressed by the handsome, bearded, young author, Le Moine showed him around the old city and provided him with leads for the central events in his novels *When Valmond Came to Pontiac* (1895), *The Pomp of the Lavillettes* (1896), and the romance that secured his international reputation, *The Seats of the Mighty* (1896). LeMoine introduced him to another antiquarian in Quebec, George M. Fairchild, Jr, in whose library Parker found a small volume, the *Memoirs of Major Robert Stobo*, a participant in the British conquest of Quebec. This account was fictionalized by Parker during 1894-95. He hit upon its marvellous title as he told the story to Grant Richards, the journalist who would soon become a publisher himself. Parker's previous books had been published simultaneously in London and New York, but *The Seats of the Mighty* was the first to have a separate Toronto publication.

In June 1896 William Copp issued a Canadian Copyright Edition of *The Seats of the Mighty*, which was arranged with Parker's New York publisher D. Appleton and Company, and registered in Canada by Appleton's agent Theodore Gregory. Coming soon after its London and New York appearance, this was considered almost a simultaneous edition, and a revolutionary innovation in Canadian publishing.³⁹ In an interview with *Bookseller and Stationer* in 1912, Copp explained that in the 1890s there was practically no publishing in Canada of

38 John Coldwell Adams, *Seated with the Mighty: A Biography of Sir Gilbert Parker* (Ottawa: Borealis, 1979), 73.

39 In spite of many cases of simultaneous Canadian editions with London and New York, the practice was never universally adopted. In 1897 *Bookseller and Stationer* reported on one of many refusals that year. "Smith, Elder & Co. sold the Canadian market for 'With Edged Tools' to Messrs Harper of New York, and declined, as they had a perfect right to do, to give us an edition of our own." "The Canadian 'Sheep' Kicks," *Bookseller and Stationer* 13 (May 1897): 3.

cloth-bound fiction, that is, new fiction. Copp came up with a new idea: to issue the book in June in both cloth at \$1.25 and paper at 75¢. There was a second printing in July and a third in October. In the summer of 1897 he came up with another innovation: "It was my own idea to bring out a paper edition the following year for the summer trade, to retail at 75¢, in order to compete with the paper-covered English Colonial editions, which were much in vogue at that time."⁴⁰ By September 1897 there was a sixth printing in the works, and by August 1899 another printing, which would put the sales over 10,000 copies.⁴¹ It was number three on the American best-seller list in 1896 and has never been out of print, partly because it was a textbook for generations of Canadian school children. Parker dramatized the novel and it was staged by Herbert Beerbohm Tree in Washington in the winter of 1897-98, and in London at Tree's rebuilt Her Majesty's Theatre, Haymarket, in 1898.

Parker's reputation as a novelist, along with his marriage in 1895 to American heiress Amy Vantine, secured his entry into lofty social circles, and helped get him elected in 1900 as an Member of Parliament to Westminster. An ardent imperialist, in 1902 he was knighted, and in 1916 was created a baronet for his war services, particularly as a propagandist in the United States on behalf of the Allied cause. Always sensitive about his reputation as a quality writer, he persuaded a reluctant Macmillan in London and Scribner's in New York to issue the "Imperial Edition" of his *Works* (1912-1923; 23 volumes), just as Macmillan had done for Henry James. Parker's gossip and reminiscences turned his Prefaces into a running memoir of writing, politicking, and mixing in the best circles.

Copp was so pleased with the continuing success of *The Seats of the Mighty* that he issued more of Parker's books in uniform covers in 1898, and arranged for cloth and paper editions of other expatriates, Robert Barr, Charles G.D. Roberts, and Sara Jeannette Duncan. So began a trend, lasting almost 15 years, for new 75¢ paper editions that were more popular than the \$1.25 new cloth editions. Usually printed

40 "Back from the Old Land," *Bookseller and Stationer* 28 (Jan. 1912): 15.

41 Information about the first Canadian editions of *Seats of the Mighty* (1896), its registration in Ottawa, and its subsequent six and more printings, known as "editions," up to 1899, are found in brief notes in *Bookseller and Stationer*: 12 (Apr. 1896): 5; 12 (May 1896): 21; 12 (June 1896): 12, 14; 12 (July 1896): 18; 12 (Aug. 1896): 24; 12 (Oct. 1896): 12, 21; heavy Christmas sales in Toronto and Montreal, 13 (Jan. 1897): 12; 13 (Sept. 1897): 14; 15 (Aug. 1899): 4. I am indebted to Thomas B. Vincent for most of these citations.

on rented plates so that the type and pagination would be the same as the expensive foreign edition, the paper, binding, and covers were of poorer quality than the original edition. A reviewer in *The Canadian Magazine* of February 1898 complained about the appearance of the first cloth-covered reprints of Parker's books from Copp, Clark:

The cover of the same before us is very pretty and perfectly suitable, but the binding and the press work are of an inferior grade. Of course, the publishers are working in a small market and among a people who are not always careful to give home productions a preference, nor to encourage Canadian literature. Still, whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well.⁴²

Intended as "disposable" and summer reading, few of the paper-covered editions have survived because public libraries and serious collectors purchased either expensive cloth editions or Colonial Editions. While it lasted, the trend for the Canadian Copyright Editions and other reprint editions taught Canadian publishers that there was a reliable market for books geared to the pocketbooks of consumers. The paper edition of *Seas of the Mighty*, then, was more than a landmark in publishing; it was a sign that an international best-selling Canadian author could help the fortunes of a publisher and lay to rest the notion that Canada could not forge a literary culture.

Best Sellers

Through the nineteenth century Canadians had a reputation as respectable best sellers rather than as high-brow writers for a select elite. Thomas C. Haliburton devised a slick-talking Yankee, May Agnes Fleming exploited the silver-spoon society novel, and James De Mille entertained readers with hair-raising adventures of North Americans at home and in Europe. By the turn of the century the enormous sales of best sellers were associated with the commodification of literature, in which the book as a seasonal consumer product is packaged and marketed for maximum exposure and immediate sales. While the *Bible*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold well for generations, the term *best seller* referred to a work with phenomenal sales for one or more seasons. In the United States these were sales between 50,000 and 500,000 and upwards. The first annual best-seller list was compiled in 1895 by Harry Thornton Peck, a reviewer

42 "Books and Authors," *The Canadian Magazine* 10 (Feb. 1898): 375.

in *The Bookman*, and it was soon expanded to include non-fiction and poetry. Even newspapers compiled their own lists of city and regional best sellers. *Bookseller and Stationer* began its best-seller compilations in September 1897, from information provided by Bain's Book Store of Toronto. Canadian figures were more modest but impressive enough, according to William Copp in a 1902 interview with *The Westminster*:

Four thousand copies is a good sale for a novel in Canada, and I gather that the average is quite under two thousand. Of course, there are a few books which have passed the twenty thousand mark. Gilbert Parker's *The Right of Way* in cloth last season and in paper this summer was one; and Ralph Connor's *The Man from Glengarry*, in cloth only, passed twenty-five thousand in Canada within ten months of its publication. But that is a rare experience for a publisher.⁴³

Best-selling writers are often pressured by their publishers and an adoring public to stick with tried-and-true formula plots and familiar fictional characters. Lucy Maud Montgomery complained of being stuck with juvenile heroines, and Stephen Leacock parodied genre fiction in his *Nonsense Novels* (1911). Although they were later snubbed by modernist authors and critics, they were a mainstay of popular culture in Canada and the English-speaking world.

The Westminster Company's Bonanza: Ralph Connor

The author with the most spectacular sales was Rev. Charles Gordon (1860-1937), whose novels appeared under the pseudonym "Ralph Connor." He singlehandedly jump-started two publishers: Westminster in Toronto and George H. Doran in New York. He too climbed the social ladder but his real mission was to awaken his Presbyterian Church in eastern Canada to the "mighty religious adventure" in the Northwest, and he took great satisfaction that his first book, *Black Rock* (1898), was "that rare thing in writing, a successful novel with a purpose."⁴⁴ Both the pioneering community of his childhood in Glengarry County in Eastern Ontario and his western experiences in the ministry provided Gordon with the models

43 Quoted by Gordon Roper, "New Forces: New Fiction," *Literary History of Canada*, ed. Carl Klick (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1965): 270-71.

44 Charles Gordon, *Postscript to Adventure: The Autobiography of Ralph Connor* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 148.

for the idealistic clergymen and noble women who march through his novels confronting the evils of drink, gambling, and brutishness. Following graduation from the University of Toronto, he served in Presbyterian missions in the Northwest, first at Banff, Alberta, and then (in 1894) at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg, which was his home base throughout a full career as novelist, soldier, and lecturer.

In order to help his Toronto friend the Rev. James A. Macdonald with his new *Westminster Magazine*, in 1897 he sent an unsigned sketch "Christmas Eve in a Lumber Camp." When Macdonald required a *nom de plume*, Gordon decided on "Cannor," an amalgam based on the British Canadian Northwest Mission, but the telegraph clerk sent this as "Connor," and to this name Macdonald added the "Ralph." When similar pieces caught on, his friends at the new Westminster Company asked for a book, and the result was *Black Rock* (1898). Its first edition of 5,000 soon escalated into so many reprints and pirated editions that there is no accurate count of its sales, which probably numbered in the millions over the years. George Doran, a young Canadian at the Chicago religious house of Fleming H. Revel, read the *Westminster* sketches and offered to publish the American edition. Doran and Gordon became close friends, and when Doran set up his own publishing house in New York in 1908, his first hit was Connor's *The Foreigner* (1909). It sold 125,000 copies, "a rather large operation for a small publisher,"⁴⁵ Doran noted, and he went on to become one of the major publishers in the United States. Connor's publishers estimated that *Black Rock* (1898), *The Sky Pilot* (1899), and *The Man from Glengarry* (1901) sold over five million copies.⁴⁶ Up to World War I Connor was nearly a one-man industry, keeping not only Doran in the black but also his friends Macdonald and W.H. Robertson at Westminster. When the latter firm ceased book publishing in 1917, Connor was published in Canada by another Presbyterian friend, John McClelland of McClelland, Goodchild, and Stewart.

45 George H. Doran, *Chronicles of Barabbas* 1884-1934 (Toronto: George J. McLeod, 1935), 36.

46 Charles Gordon, *Postscript to Adventure: The Autobiography of Ralph Connor* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 150.

V. George Morang's Fights for Authors' Rights

George N. Morang,
Founder and Head of Morang & Co., Limited.

Reproduced from a copy of the *Bookseller and Stationer* 21 (August 1905): 296,
held in the collection of the University of Toronto Libraries.

Like William Copp, George Nathaniel Morang also arranged for Canadian Copyright Editions and used this experience to help draft the legislation that shaped the book trade in the twentieth century. Born in Eastport, Maine, of New England and French Huguenot stock, Morang (1866-1937) joined D. Appleton & Company in New York and was sent to Toronto in 1888 as their agent. Appleton was well known for its dictionaries, encyclopedias, and multi-volume series on American history, literature, and biography, and Morang modelled his Canadian projects on some of those American ventures. His brief 1897 partnership with another employee of the Toronto Appleton agency, Theodore Gregory, ended when the 25-year-old Gregory decided to resume book selling on his own, but Gregory died from an appendix operation in 1898. At 68 Yonge Street Morang was agent

for Appleton and the Macmillan Co. of New York. He aggressively began to change the publishing landscape in Toronto and, indeed, the whole Dominion. By and large, he was successful for ten years until debts from overexpansion devastated him.

A literate and litigious businessman with a flair for controversy and public relations, he was determined to make his Canadian Copyright Editions profitable and to protect any infringements on his books with speedy court injunctions. In August 1897 he secured the Canadian rights for Hall Caine's *The Christian* from the author himself rather than from, as was common, the New York or London publisher. This looks like a trivial distinction compared with Copp's arrangement with Appleton for *The Seats of the Mighty*, but had Toronto publishers continued to make similar arrangements with authors or their literary agents rather than with other publishers, the character of Canadian publishing might have been quite different in the twentieth century. As the author of popular novels about muscular Christians, Caine represented British authors at the 1895 Copyright Conference in Ottawa, and soon demonstrated his support for the emerging publishing industry in Canada.⁴⁷ Morang's 75¢ edition was issued simultaneously with the other editions and within three months *The Christian* went through three printings amounting to 7,800 copies, and by mid-1898 had sold over 10,000 copies.⁴⁸ It passed the test for any best seller: people read it on trains, electric tram cars, steamboats, in waiting rooms, and at dining-room tables. Caine told Morang that its success was "practical proof of my desire to do what I could to give the publishing interest of Canada a separate existence"⁴⁹ The delighted Morang sent a copy of Caine's letter to Sir Wilfred Laurier as a postscript to their discussion of copyright in March 1898.

Morang negotiated for local editions of Edward Bellamy's *Equality* (1897), Anthony Hope's *Rupert of Hentzau* (1898), and Charles G.D. Roberts's *History of Canada* (1898), which had an edition of 500 copies. He arranged with publisher Grant Richards for Arthur Conan Doyle's *A Duet with Occasional Chorus* (1898). His local editions, however, still had to compete with British editions imported directly by book

47 Hall Caine to George Morang, 2 Apr. 1898, Laurier Papers MG 26, Vol. 74: 2303, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (hereafter LAC).

48 "Books and Periodicals," *Bookseller and Stationer* 13 (Oct. 1897): 4; and "Books and Periodicals: A Letter from Mr Hall Caine," *Bookseller and Stationer* 14 (May 1898): 3-4.

49 Hall Caine to George Morang, 2 Apr 1898, Laurier Papers, LAC.

stores and with American reprints that crept past customs, especially continuing best sellers such as Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Quo Vadis* (1896), the English-language translation of which had no American copyright.⁵⁰ He clashed with Montreal booksellers William Drysdale and Norman Murray in the winter of 1897-98 when they imported the British Colonial Editions of his authors.⁵¹ He defended himself in the pages of *The Publishers' Circular* by asking if Conan Doyle and his publisher, Grant Richards, would want the Morang edition of *A Duet with Occasional Chorus* competing with their English edition in Oxford Street. Richards supported Morang but claimed that he could not stop British jobbers from exporting his edition to Canada.⁵² The same thing happened with Morang's major coup, a 15-volume Canadian edition of Kipling's works (1899), reprinted in 1,000 sets, and sold in cloth (\$1.00) or paper (50¢). Morang brought an injunction against Simpson's for illegally selling five Kipling titles in another edition.⁵³ (I believe this was the Kipling edition that was arranged with Frank Nelson Doubleday, while he was an editor at Charles Scribner's of New York. Scribner's published Kipling's Outward Bound Edition in 1898.) Morang contributed between 300 and 400 sets to the boys of the Canadian Contingent to the Boer War, and the Toronto *Globe* approved of Morang's "public spirit."⁵⁴ The Kipling edition and Morang's 11-volume *Works of George Eliot* were the first such standard editions of contemporary authors with a Canadian imprint. In another court case over illegal imports, Morang's fight with The Publishers' Syndicate, a new bookstore that ran afoul of Morang patrolling, probably hastened that firm's liquidation in 1901.⁵⁵

50 John Tebbel, *A History of Book Publishing in the United States* (New York: Bowker, 1975), II: 260, 651.

51 William Drysdale, "Colonial Editions," *Publishers' Circular* 28 Jan. 1899: 104; and Norman Murray, "Colonial Editions," *Publishers' Circular* 1 Apr. 1899: 347.

52 Morang's three letters, each entitled "Colonial Editions," appeared in *Publishers' Circular* 31 Dec. 1898: 777; 4 Mar. 1899: 237-238; and 27 May 1899: 584. Grant Richards's comments followed Morang's letter of 27 May 1899.

53 "Current Notes and Comments of Trade Interest: Copyright is Ownership," *Bookseller and Stationer* 15 (Nov. 1899): 1; and "Current Notes and Comments of Trade Interest: The Copyright Action," *Bookseller and Stationer* 15 (Dec. 1899): 1.

54 "Kipling's Works. Handsome Gift by a Toronto Publishing House," *The Globe* 23 Oct. 1899: 10.

55 "Canadian Trade Notes," *Bookseller and Stationer* 17 (Oct 1901): 21.

In January 1899 Morang incorporated as George N. Morang & Company, Ltd, and moved to 90 Wellington Street West. This formerly private residence was renovated with electric lights, hot-water heating, stock rooms, shipping rooms, an editorial office for his editor, Bernard McEvoy, and a private office for himself. In quarters that evoked the richly appointed publishing houses of Britain and the eastern United States, Morang and McEvoy held a splendid open-house on the weekend of 3 and 4 February, a reception that also generated publicity for the organizational meeting of the Canadian Society of Authors on Monday, 6 February. The Society was the brainchild of McEvoy (1842-1932) and several prominent men of letters: Goldwin Smith, Professor James Mavor, and George Ross, the Ontario minister of education. Morang was an active supporter of the Canadian Society of Authors and always emphasized the links between local publishing and support for Canadian writers.

That summer in London at the International Congress of Publishers, Morang and Mavor were invited to give papers, which argued that book publishing in Canada would develop if the local representative were permitted to choose between importing or printing a book from his principal. Both men were instrumental in having an amendment to the 1875 Canadian Copyright Act passed in 1900, and both of them, along with Arnold W. Thomas of Copp, Clark, were in London in June 1900 to help the Colonial Office straighten out friction between the new Canadian amendment and a British Bill, which ultimately became the 1911 Imperial Copyright Act. With Hall Caine's support, Morang and Gilbert Parker tried to persuade British authors to make separate contracts for Canada, but American publishers insisted that Canada be treated as part of their North American market. Morang's efforts to improve copyright relations were recognized in 1901 when he was elected Vice-president of the International Congress on Copyright held in Leipzig.

The Agency System Divides the Publishers and the Printers

The other problem for the agent-publishers, especially when it came to best-selling fiction that could be manufactured in part or wholly in Canada, was the perseverance of printing firms to build a Canadian publishing industry on these mostly foreign titles in Canadian Copyright Editions.⁵⁶ In 1901 there were over 3,000

⁵⁶ "Canadian Publishers Want to Reprint Works of British Authors Without their Consent," *Publishers' Circular* 7 Dec. 1901: 600-01.

employees in the printing, bookbinding, and allied trades in Toronto alone, and that year Canadian Copyright Editions were cheaper than competing British and American editions.⁵⁷ For manufacturers, the new prosperity in the book market justified their long-held views that a strong publishing industry would be built on book production, as had happened in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century under the umbrella of protectionist copyright laws. They could point to the success of cheap American editions in Canada, and especially the well-made "Colonial Editions" produced in the United Kingdom for the overseas Dominions and colonies. These editions consisted of recent fiction and non-fiction titles, along with popular classics such as Routledge's editions of Haliburton's *The Clockmaker*. Bound books entered at a duty of 10%, but because of problems determining authors' royalties on agency books imported into Canada, it was more profitable to import sheets at 25%. The Canadian publisher took between 500 and 1,000 sheets of a novel, or even as few as 250 sheets. With best sellers such as Gilbert Parker and Ralph Connor, the Canadian publisher rented or purchased stereotype plates from the foreign publisher, duty free as an encouragement for local manufacture. The agency publishers, however, were not as easily convinced that a law requiring local manufacture as a condition of copyright was economically or ethically desirable. They argued for flexibility, so that they could both distribute their own local editions and import copies of the same title from their principals.

In January 1901 the *Canadian Magazine* reported that "the sale of Canadian publications and editions has increased fully one hundred per cent during the last five years and has been especially marked in the year that has just closed."⁵⁸ Such statistics encouraged printers to continue the fight for a manufacturing clause as a condition for copyright protection, a battle that seemingly had been laid to rest with the copyright amendment in 1900. In both 1901 and 1902 the Toronto Board of Trade and the Canadian Manufacturers' Association passed a Resolution demanding that Ottawa revise the Copyright Act of 1875 with a strong manufacturing clause, something they claimed had been promised in the 1895 Ottawa Conference on Copyright. Morang dashed off two pamphlets, one to the Board of Trade and another to the Canadian Society of Authors. Any act framed from that Resolution

57 "Topics of Trade Interest: Features of the Book Trade," *Bookseller and Stationer* 17 (July 1901): 3.

58 "Literary Notes," *Canadian Magazine* 16 (Jan. 1901): 292.

would remove Canadian authors and publishers from the benefits of imperial copyright, exclude Canada from the Berne Convention, and cause loss of protection to Canadian authors outside Canada. For years the disagreements festered between the manufacturers, led by William Briggs, W.J. Gage, and Copp, Clark on one side, and the agency-publishers, led by George Morang, George McLeod, Thomas Allen, and S. Bradley Gundy on the other side. In fact, there were disagreements within the Briggs and Copp, Clark establishments between the printing and publishing departments. Meanwhile, growing specialization in the trade was tacitly acknowledged within the Wholesale Booksellers' and Stationers' Section of the Toronto Board of Trade. In 1910 it was reconstituted as the Publishers' Section, still within the umbrella of the Board of Trade but on its 40-year journey to becoming a national association dominated by the agency publishers. The printers' hopes were shelved temporarily because of the new Imperial Copyright Act of 1911 and the priorities of World War I. Besides, the trend to issue new books in Canadian Copyright Editions began to wane by 1910, and publishers began to issue 50¢ reprint editions. Westminster, Briggs, Macmillan, Musson, and Copp, Clark all jumped on this bandwagon.⁵⁹

Morang's great achievement was the first series of biographies, *The Makers of Canada* (1903-1911). It was part of the academic enthusiasm for the colonial past, along with the founding of the *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada* (1898), the predecessor to the *Canadian Historical Quarterly*, and the publication of bibliographies of Canadian imprints and surveys of Canadian literature. The 21 volumes were edited by poet and civil servant Duncan Campbell Scott and Professor Pelham Edgar of Victoria College in the University of Toronto. But the scholar who did the "serious and constructive editing"⁶⁰ was William Dawson LeSeuer. Morang had the series printed and bound in Canada, and sold by subscription. The results were for the most part worthy of all the time and attention lavished on them, and for years several of the volumes remained models of style and accuracy, in particular Jean McIlwraith's *Sir Frederick Haldimand* (1904) and Adam Shortt's *Lord Sydenham* (1908).

Morang was also involved in the University Company, a printing firm that produced *The University Magazine* (1901-1920), which was

59 "Gossip of the Month," *Canadian Bookman* 2 (Apr. 1910): 50-51.

60 Kenneth N. Windsor, "Historical Writing in Canada (to 1920)," *A Literary History of Canada*, ed. Carl F. Klick (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1976), I: 242.

underwritten by his friend Sir Andrew MacPhail, the literary-minded professor of medicine at McGill University. But the real money was in textbooks for schools, and in 1902 Morang hired a young school-teacher and lawyer from Winnipeg, John Cameron Saul (1869-1939), to be his textbook salesman and editor. Together they developed the Alexandra Readers, and Saul himself in 1906 alone issued three little series of handbooks: *Hawthorne's Wonder Book*, *Selections from Longfellow*, and *Narrative Poems*. When in 1906 Morang was awarded a major contract by the Ontario government, he established the Morang Educational Company Ltd, and arranged for William Briggs to be the selling agent for the Morang trade editions. Briggs also took over from Morang the Canadian agency for all of Ernest Thompson Seton's books of animal life.

Meanwhile, Morang married Sophia Longworthy Heaven, whose mother invested heavily in his enterprises. They moved from Beverly Street uptown to 266 Bloor Street West, and joined the Toronto Yacht Club and the Toronto Hunt Club. Then in 1911, in his 45th year and in his prime, Morang suffered a bad fall while he was watching progress on a construction site in downtown Toronto. After a lengthy convalescence he had to reduce his activities.⁶¹ Because he had also financially overextended himself, the Morang Educational Company was merged in 1912 with the Toronto branch of the Macmillan Company, an appropriate union if only because Morang had formerly distributed Macmillan educational books. Until his death in 1937, the book world heard little news about Morang, although he continued to publish subscription books and magazines. In the first decade of the century, however, Morang was a driving force in the fight for international copyright protection, in his support for the Canadian Society of Authors, and as the publisher of quality trade books.

VI. A New Generation: Looking North and West

One of the least known names in the annals of Toronto publishing, Robert Glasgow, a sometime employee of George Morang, eschewed conventional trade publishing for a career in prestige subscription books. Born in Danville, Quebec, the handsome and charming Glasgow (1875-1923) was mainly self-educated, and at 15 years of age was a subscription book salesman in his rural home district. Through

61 "Macmillan-Morang Merger," *Bookseller and Stationer and Office Equipment Journal* 28 (July 1912): 25.

the 1890s he was employed with one of Canada's most aggressive and successful subscription houses, the Bradley-Garretson Company of Brantford, Ontario; then, after a brief spell with Morang, he joined the New York subscription house of R.S. Peale, which sent him to New South Wales to sell Charles Dudley Warner's popular *Library of the World's Best Literature*, and later sent him back to Canada to sell the *Encyclopedia Americana*.

When he established his first company in 1906 to issue a new illustrated edition of George Morang's 1903 series, *The Makers of Canada*, he already knew how to market subscription books, those expensive and prestigious volumes hawked all over Canada and the United States by travelling salesmen. Glasgow next formed Glasgow-Brooke & Company, in order to produce *Canada and Its Provinces* (1913-1917), a monumental 23-volume historical project. He hired as General Editors two respected scholars, Professor Adam Shortt of the University of Toronto and Arthur G. Doughty, the Dominion Archivist, themselves no mean self-promoters, who assembled a staff of over 100 historians as researchers and writers. Glasgow moved to Edinburgh to supervise the printing of this series, which was the first of many group efforts in the twentieth century to present Canadian history in an attractive and scholarly format. The individual volumes were received with acclaim. While *Canada and Its Provinces* was getting under way, Glasgow organized the Publishers' Association of Canada in order to issue a similar but more popular series known as *The Chronicles of Canada* (1914-1916), which was designed with four ideals: "historic accuracy, vividness of presentation, brevity, and beauty of mechanical workmanship."⁶² Its 32 volumes were prepared by such leading journalists and academics as Stephen Leacock, T.G. Marquis, Thomas Chapais, W.S. Wallace, Agnes Laut, Archibald McMechan, Sir Joseph Pope, and O.D. Skelton. Meanwhile, in late 1914 he conceived a series of classic Canadian books, and wrote Archibald MacMechan at Dalhousie University that he had already set up in type six volumes consisting of Thomas C. Haliburton's *The Old Judge* (two volumes), *The Clockmaker* (two volumes), and *The English in America* (two volumes). He speculated on the possibility of establishing a Haliburton Society to publish important early works. Nothing came of this venture.

62 A.L.T., "Robert Glasgow," *A Standard Dictionary of Canadian Biography. The Canadian Who Was Who. Vol. I*, ed. Charles G.D. Roberts and Arthur L. Tunnell (Toronto: Trans-Canada Press, 1934): 221.

Even before those projects were finished, the ever-restless Glasgow was blocking out his next one, this time in the United States. In 1916 he organized the United States Publishers' Association with the intention of updating Warner's *Library of the World's Best Literature* and of publishing in association with Yale University Press a 50-volume series called *The Chronicles of America*. This series of books was even produced as a motion-picture series, *The Pageant of America*. While he was working on *The Chronicles of America*, he learned that his son Theodore, of the Royal Naval Air Service, was killed in action at Ypres. A friend anonymously established a foundation in the boy's memory for the publication of books by the Yale University Press, and in 1920 Yale conferred upon him the honorary degree of Master of Arts in recognition of his contribution to American historical literature. In the midst of all these activities, Glasgow developed influenza, and then died suddenly of a heart attack at his desk in New York in April 1922.

Glasgow's boyish enthusiasm and talent for finding the right experts for his ventures endeared him to a host of scholars and associates. Never one to think small, Glasgow brought to the staid world of Canadian books a flair for the mega-deal. With his death there disappeared from public consciousness one of the great visionaries in Canadian business, a man whose dedication to preserving the past and encouraging a sense of national destiny was so characteristic of young people of his generation. His heirs, Lorne Pierce, Professor George Brown, Jack McClelland, and Mel Hurtig, also designed major projects that appealed to the appetite for books on all aspects of Canadian society.

Several other firms outside the Briggs and Methodist orbit made their mark in trade and agency publishing. John Cooper's 1905 tribute to Briggs, Copp, and Morang, along with mention of Westminster and of McLeod and Allen, omitted one of the big three textbook producers. For a brief span W.J. Gage and Co., Ltd, was involved in trade publishing, but never was thought of as one of the new-style publishers. The firm dated its beginnings to 1844 when Robert and Adam Miller opened their Montreal book shop. Adam opened their Toronto branch in 1860, dissolved their partnership the following year, and conducted the textbook firm under his own name. William James Gage (1849-1921), a native of Brampton, spent several years as a teacher before joining Adam Miller in 1873 as a bookkeeper. Between 1876 and 1883 he conducted the business first with Miller's widow, Mary Ann, and then briefly with S.G. Beatty. Having operated under

his own name since 1880, he incorporated in 1893 with a capital of \$150,000, with himself as president and William P. Gundy as general manager and treasurer. They established a subsidiary firm in 1897, the Educational Book Company. Gundy (1858-1919) served in the firm until the middle of World War I, when he was seconded by the Union Government to the War Purchasing Board. He died of heart failure in Ottawa. After the premises were destroyed in the 1904 fire, W.J. Gage moved to a new five-storey building at 82-94 Spadina Avenue, which it occupied until the move to the suburbs in 1958. When the firm celebrated its 65th anniversary with a large banquet in the Spadina warehouse on 7 June 1909, Gage, the wealthiest and most philanthropic publisher in the country, donated \$5000 for a "Benefit Fund for those who may be sick and a Pension Fund for those who may grow old in the service of the House."⁶³

Despite the modest foray into trade books between the mid-1890s and World War I, the emphasis at Gage was always on the production of textbooks, stationery, and blank books. The paper was supplied by Gage's own mill in St Catharines, the Kinleigh Paper Company, Ltd. Gage was an active member of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and the protectionist Canadian Copyright Association. Directorships gravitated to him, from the Traders Bank, the Imperial Bank, the Ontario Sugar Company, and the Anglo-American Fire Insurance Company. The public knew him best for his charitable and philanthropic works. He presented a public park to Brampton in 1902 and donated ten acres to Toronto for a botanical garden in 1911. His fame, however, rested on his fight against tuberculosis. Along with his fellow Methodist, Hart Massey, whose son Fred Victor had died of the disease, Gage established the first sanatorium in Canada, at Gravenhurst in 1898, and donated funds for medical research and free hospitals – one of which became Toronto Western Hospital. He helped organize the first Christmas Seal program in Canada in 1908, and five years later he raised \$1 million to replace the Toronto Free Hospital; for these services he was knighted in 1913. When the free hospital he built in Muskoka burned down in November 1920, Gage was so shaken that he died several weeks later at his beautiful mansion on Burnside Drive.⁶⁴

63 "W.J. Gage Honoured by Three Hundred Employees," *Bookseller and Stationer* 25 (June 1909): 31.

64 Donald Jones, "Gage Fought TB and Won a Knighthood," *The Toronto Star* 26 July 1975: G10.

Another young publisher outside the Briggs orbit was Charles J. Musson (1869-1947), who learned the trade at Johnson Bros., booksellers, but left them in 1893 to become the city traveller for Hunter, Rose. A year later he opened a book store at Yonge and College Streets, at which corner was the entrance to the University of Toronto grounds. His book store carried greeting cards, calendars, and a large supply of the latest craze in Canada, post cards.⁶⁵ He reorganized as the Musson Book Company in 1898, and incorporated in 1901 with himself as president and J.H. Charles as secretary treasurer. The company moved downtown to 17 Richmond Street West and acted as the publisher for the Church of England in Canada. Musson represented British firms such as the S.P.C.K., T.N. Foulis, and S.W. Partridge, and was one of the few Canadian firms to open a branch in London, England, following the practice among London and New York publishers to establish overseas offices. The company had a long connection with Hodder & Stoughton and Harper Brothers. Musson carried prayer books, hymn books, bibles, and cookbooks. The firm also issued many Canadian Copyright Editions, among them in 1906 Ellen Glasgow's novels *The Voice of the People* (1900), *The Deliverance* (1904), and *The Wheel of Life* (1906).

"Charlie" Musson, as he was affectionately known throughout the trade,⁶⁶ was one of the first of the new generation of publishers to build a Canadian list, including Arthur Stringer's *The Wire Tappers* (1906) and Frederick William Wallace's *Blue Water* (1907), W.W. Campbell's *Sagas of Vaster Britain: Poems of the Race, the Empire, and the Divinity of Man* (1914), and Susie Frances Harrison's *Ringfield* (1914). Journalist Robert Stead, whose volume of embarrassingly patriotic poems *The Empire Builders*, (1908), his *Prairie Born and Other Poems* (1911), and his first novel *The Bail Jumper* (1914) were published by Briggs, shifted to Musson with one of the earliest and best realistic novels of western life, *The Homesteaders* (1916). One of the most successful books was *Flint and Feather* (1912), by the beautiful Mohawk princess, Pauline Johnson, one of the international celebrities of the age who captivated audiences from London to Victoria with her recitations. Musson's career as publisher demonstrated the possibilities of success with a variety of writers who expressed the breadth of Canadian experience to their countrymen and to international audiences.

65 "The Musson Book Co. Expands," *Bookseller and Stationer* 21 (Apr. 1905): 142.

66 "The Musson Book Company," *Bookseller and Stationer* 50 (Mar. 1934): 26.

Charles J. Musson,
President and Manager of The Musson Book Co.,
Limited.

Reproduced from a copy of the *Bookseller and Stationer* 21 (August 1905): 296,
held in the collection of the University of Toronto Libraries.

The exodus from William Briggs and the Methodist Book and Publishing Company was most pronounced in the decade between 1897 and 1908. In order to survive, each firm established by the former Briggs employees specialized in one or two areas, even though they were all agency publishers. One young man, George J. McLeod – like Morang, an American working out of Toronto as an agent and traveller – recognized from his visits to booksellers the great opportunities for this country, and the careers of both men are indicative of the close connections between American and Canadian houses. Before settling in Toronto, McLeod (1870-1936), a native of Wakefield, Massachusetts, had travelled for Rand, McNally and worked in John Wurtele Lovell's United States Book Company, the first conglomerate in the American publishing industry and one of the first combines to be liquidated under the 1891 United States anti-trust law. At the Lovell organization he became friends with three young men who would later become major publishers in the United

States: the Canadian-born Alexander Grosset, George T. Dunlap, and A.L. Burt.

In 1898, after travelling in Canada for several years, McLeod decided not to join Grosset and Dunlap's new firm in Chicago, and instead took the advice of Frank Lovell, who "urged him to quit his sales job and open an office as a publishers' representative for Canada."⁶⁷ McLeod opened a small wholesale jobbing firm at 7 King Street West, on the second floor above Michie's grocery store. As so often happens with new publishers, an immediate success placed him on his feet. The company's 50th anniversary pamphlet tells this exciting story:

At that time he sold, on behalf of his principals, editions in sheet form to wholesalers for their respective territories and bound editions of other books and series to the trade. His first big seller and the first book which he manufactured in Canada with his imprint in 1899 was Charles Major's *When Knighthood Was in Flower*. This title was followed by a succession of best sellers, including *Grustark* by George Barr McCutcheon, one of the first novels to carry a coloured wrapper.⁶⁸

In 1901 McLeod formed a partnership with Thomas Allen (1872-1951), who had joined the Methodist Book and Publishing Company in 1888 as a delivery and stock boy. By 1893 this ambitious young man had obtained his commercial traveller's certificate and was one of the first publishers' representatives to travel to the West by the new Transcontinental train in 1894. On his departure from Briggs's employ his colleagues presented him with a "valuable locket and chain, accompanied by an address."⁶⁹ McLeod and Allen acquired many agencies; by 1907 when they moved from 37 Melinda Street to lease a building at 42 Adelaide Street, they were jobbing agents for 16 American firms. McLeod and Allen handled some of the most successful and controversial American authors and books, among them Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906).

One Saturday afternoon in the spring of 1906 two other employees of the Methodist Book and Publishing Company decided to strike out on their own; John McClelland and Fred Goodchild began their partnership as a library-supply firm, the Book Supply Company. They

⁶⁷ "McLeod's Fortieth Year," *Quill & Quire* 4 (Nov. 1938): 40.

⁶⁸ *Our Wish for You as We Celebrate Our Fiftieth Anniversary, 1898-1948* [Toronto: George J. McLeod, 1947?], [5].

⁶⁹ "New Book Firm," *Bookseller and Stationer* 17 (Jan. 1901): 8.

George J. McLeod

Thomas Allen

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cautiously remained employees of Briggs for the rest of the year. From the beginning the active partner was John McClelland (1876-1968), an astute and reserved young man with an excellent sense of what would sell. He was born in Glasgow to Scots-Irish parents who emigrated to Toronto when John was four; and because of his father's drinking problem, his mother opened a store on Gerrard Street to support her five children. When he was 14, John left school and joined the Methodist Book Room in order to help the family, and by the late 1890s was one of Briggs's Western travellers. McClelland's partner, Frederick D. Goodchild (1883-1924), joined Briggs's Periodicals Department in 1899.

By 1906 McClelland was manager of the Library Supply Department, a position that gave him experience in reading and editing manuscripts, and in the selection of books for libraries. His part in the publication of Robert Service's *Songs of a Sourdough* encouraged him to strike out on his own. Almost 20 years later he told his friend, the author Rev. Hiram Cody, the story of that best seller:

It was the custom of the House that new books were first submitted to the trade department, which was done in the case of *Songs of a Sourdough* and it was turned down by Mr. [Ernest] Walker's

J. A. McClelland.

F. D. Goodchild.

Reproduced from a copy of *Bookseller and Stationer* 30 (Jan. 1914): 34, held in the collection of the University of Toronto Libraries.

Department. Mr. Caswell, who was then literary editor, turned the manuscript over to me and I decided to take it for our Department, for I could see the possibilities in it. It just so happened, however, that at this particular time, the Western representative of the Trade Department, Mr. Bond, was in the West and he heard here and there reports of the work of Service and he wrote his chief, the result being that the book was taken again to the trade department and finally accepted by them. Mr Caswell and myself were of a decided opinion that the book was one that was sure to have a book sale but the others, at the time, could not see it.⁷⁰

Although the name "The Library Supply Company" was retained on paper until 1958, by early 1908 the partners styled themselves as McClelland and Goodchild. They borrowed money from their friends George McLeod and Thomas Allen, and this capital was used to cover the cost of renting quarters in the McLeod and Allen building, office supplies, travel expenses, and books. Even though McClelland and Goodchild advertised themselves as "publishers" in 1907, they were wholesale agents, and even during the war years their McClelland, Goodchild and Stewart letterhead still carried the phrase "Wholesale

⁷⁰ John McClelland to Hiram Cody, 7 Mar. 1923, George Parker Notes, 1966, Box 1, McClelland and Stewart Papers, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, McMaster University Library, Hamilton.

and Import Booksellers.” At first they were out on the road much of the time, visiting towns in southern Ontario where there were no public libraries, walking the main streets, and persuading the town merchants to contribute money towards a local library. If townspeople would put up money, the Carnegie Library Foundation would contribute a similar amount to assist the community in stocking the library. In 1902, when McClelland was doing similar work at the Methodist Company, the Carnegie Foundation awarded grants of \$719,500 to cities across Canada, about \$280,000 of it marked for Ontario.⁷¹ It is not far-fetched to attribute the founding of many local Carnegie libraries in Ontario to the efforts of John McClelland, for the promotion of reading, in line with his business activities, would be a lifelong concern. He always maintained an interest in religious books and in education, and was pleased when he was elected to the Toronto Board of Education in 1917, and served as its Chairman in 1921.

Booksellers feared that the Carnegie grants to build public libraries and stock them with books would curtail consumer book-buying. Edward Caswell, having left Briggs to become secretary of the Toronto Public Library, argued that in fact the reverse was true, and that all encouragement and promotion of reading would benefit book production and distribution by the book industry.⁷² This is, of course, the reason why McClelland and Goodchild set up their own business, having seen its success at the Methodist Book and Publishing Company.

They incorporated as McClelland and Goodchild in March 1911, and from that year their profile in the trade grew more prominent. In January, for instance, McClelland was in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia arranging his 1911 lists of imports. In August, after entertaining Alex Dunlap of Grosset & Dunlap and F.L. Howell of McClurg at the golf links, he paid a “flying visit” to Boston and New York, and later that month Goodchild was calling on booksellers in Western Canada.⁷³ At their second annual meeting in March 1913 McClelland as president announced a stock dividend of 40% upon the paid up capital of the company. Three months later they moved, along with McLeod and Allen, to 266-268 King Street West into

71 “The Library Column,” *Bookseller and Stationer* 18 (Apr. 1902): 18.

72 E.S. Caswell, “Canadian Books for Canadian Readers,” *Bookseller and Stationer* 23 (Aug. 1907): 26.

73 “News of the Publishing Houses,” *Bookseller and Stationer* 27 (Feb. 1911): 30; “The Holiday Season,” *Bookseller and Stationer* 27 (Aug. 1911): 27.

spacious and elegant offices that were finished in fumed oak and divided by “frosted glass partitions of ornamental design.”⁷⁴ Business was so good by 1914 that they took on a new partner, George Stewart, whom they enticed from Oxford University Press.

VII. The British Invasion

In the spring of 1904 the Oxford University Press announced the opening of its Canadian branch when its Canadian traveller, S.G. Wilkinson of London, England, succeeded in inviting S. Bradley Gundy to become the first Manager. Gundy immediately set sail for London on the *Oceanic* to make arrangements with Oxford for the 10 August opening. Gundy (1869-1936), entered the book world in 1884 as a junior clerk at W.J. Gage & Co. Ltd, where his elder brother William P. Gundy remained all his career. After four years he was sent out as the 18-year-old traveller for Gage in Eastern Ontario. He proved to be an “energetic, successful and popular traveller,”⁷⁵ and in 1893 he was invited to become Manager of the Wholesale Department of the Methodist Book Room. In that position he made annual visits to London and New York and actively sought out best sellers; among them he secured for Briggs the rights for the Canadian Copyright Editions of *David Harum* (1898) and *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* (1901), two of the most popular novels of the day.

The Oxford branch opened in August by assuming the premises and stock of the Fleming H. Revell Company in the Clarendon Building at 25-27 Richmond Street. Long established in Toronto, Revell was a religious book house with a Presbyterian emphasis, headquartered in Chicago, that had another Canadian connection. George Doran, now Revell’s Chicago manager, had begun his career in the Toronto branch, and had enticed Charles Gordon – “Ralph Connor” – to take Revell as his American publisher. Doran, in fact, was in Toronto in June to oversee the transfer to Oxford University Press. In Canada as in the United Kingdom, the manager of the Press was permitted to issue books in his own imprint, which is how Gundy published many Canadian writers. Gundy’s first book, arranged with Revell’s New York office, was a Canadian edition of *Dr. Luke of the Labrador* (1904), the fictionalized story of Dr Wilfred Grenfell by

74 “News of the Book Trade,” *Bookseller and Stationer* 29 (June 1913): 33.

75 “Oxford University Press in Canada,” *Publishers’ Weekly* 45 (23 Apr. 1904): 1138.

S. Bradley Gundy,
Manager of the Canadian Branch of the Oxford Press.

Reproduced from a copy of *Bookseller and Stationer* 21 (August 1905): 297,
held in the collection of the University of Toronto Libraries.

a well known Canadian journalist in New York, Norman Duncan. Duncan already had a reputation for popularizing the harsh lives of Newfoundland fishermen as a result of his convalescence there in the late 1890s.

Because Gundy's chief responsibility was to distribute the Oxford Bibles, hymn books, and its list of poets, his Toronto showroom was a well-stocked reference library of these works in a variety of bindings and prices. He also persuaded a friend at the Methodist House, George Stewart, to join OUP and bring along the lucrative Canadian agency for the Cambridge Bibles. It was a small branch to begin with. Stewart and Walter Mainprice were the travellers, and the inside staff, besides Gundy himself, consisted of Arthur Smart the book-keeper and R.Y. Eaton's sister as stenographer. The messenger boy, Wilfrid Ford, recalled four decades later how electricity replaced the gas lights. Ford also remembered Oxford's \$30,000 warehouse fire on 27 December 1905. In April 1906 Gundy proudly showed

W.A. Craick, the editor of *Bookseller and Stationer*, the renovations on the ground floor of the Clarendon Building, moving from front to back through the handsomely furnished private office to the business office and then to the impressive stock room: "Down the centre on a special sloping stand are spread out the sample books, while to left and right high and deep shelving admits of the storage of an immense stock of books. The depth of the shelves, which furnish room for four, five and six rows of books, makes the arrangement of the stock most convenient."⁷⁶ At the back of the building were the shipping department and the freight elevator. Before that elevator was installed, young Wilfrid Ford had several close calls with heavy crates of books about to descend on him. While the mess from the fire was being cleaned up, the employees moved to the top floor, and when renowned Dr William Osler – then a Delegate of the Oxford University Press in the UK – came to visit, Gundy sent Ford downstairs to ride up with Osler on the freight elevator. "Not only was the great man not so Olympian as I had feared, but, having enjoyed his creaking ride up in the elevator, he presented me with a quarter which I cherished for a number of years." Ford identifies himself as "the ubiquitous messenger boy who trotted round the town pulling after him a little red express wagon."⁷⁷

Oxford's arrival was followed by Macmillan's in December 1905, to the great satisfaction of *Bookseller and Stationer*, which saw both events as "another evidence of the growing importance of the Canadian field in the eyes of English publishers" because "for a long time it has been the habit of English publishers to disparage Canada."⁷⁸ In fact, the Toronto office was an offshoot of the New York house because George P. Brett, the president of the Macmillan Company, sent Frank Wise to survey trade conditions in Canada and open a branch to carry the agencies of the New York house. Even though New York and London had shares in the Toronto operation, officially Macmillan of Canada was a branch of London Macmillan's, and it also carried

76 "Publishers' Announcements: The Oxford University Press," *Bookseller and Stationer* 22 (Apr. 1906): 11.

77 Wilfrid Ford, "Early Days with Oxford in Canada, Some Reminiscences." In *Oxford University Press, Canadian Branch, 1904-1954* ([s.l.]: Oxford University Press, [1954]), 18-9.

78 "English Publishers and Canada," *Bookseller and Stationer* 21 (Nov. 1905): 505. See also "The British Publisher and Canada," *Bookseller and Stationer* 22 (Feb. 1906): 9, which is a letter from T. Fisher Unwin asserting that he, as an English publisher, did not ignore Canada, often visiting the country and maintaining an agent in Toronto.

such British agencies as J.M. Dent, the Bohn Libraries, and the Cambridge University Press. At this point Copp, Clark and George N. Morang lost some of their British Macmillan lines. First located at 25-27 Richmond Street West in the Clarendon Building (which later generations of Torontonians knew as the location of the car park for Simpson's department store), Wise's office had no desk or stockroom, but only a file box. Within months his office was "tastily finished in dark-stained wood and dark green paper, with office furniture and rugs to match," and he encouraged patrons to browse the bookshelves stocked with "literary treasures."⁷⁹ By 1910, the revenues had grown so well that Wise moved the Macmillan quarters to a new five-story building, St Martin's House, at 70 Bond Street.

Born in Boston, England, Frank Wise (1868-1960) emigrated to the United States as a young man and worked in banks and on the *Kansas City Times* before joining the New York Macmillan firm under George Brett. He had recently married Gertrude Sergeant of Kansas City, Missouri, and in Toronto they soon became involved in the social life of the city, as Wise made useful contacts in business, government, and with departments of education. He was a member of the National Club, the Empire Club, and the Royal Canadian Yacht Club. Given Wise's success as head of the education department at Macmillan in New York, his role in Toronto was to push the Macmillan school and college texts, which involved meeting school boards, teachers, and authors. He was also instructed to improve the promotion of Macmillan's Colonial Library. Nevertheless, Wise published books about one of his own interests, Canada's connection to the Empire, such as George T. Denison's *The Struggle for Imperial Unity* (1909) and his own pamphlet *The Empire Day by Day* (1910). Although one of the earlier Macmillan imprints in Canada was Sara Jeannette Duncan's *Cousin Cinderella* (1909), arranged with the Macmillan Company of New York, Wise's attempts to publish original books brought a stern rebuke. "The primary business of the Macmillan Company of Canada is to sell the publications of the New York and London houses, and the only kind of publishing which ought to originate in Canada is the production of school books authorized by one or other of the Provincial governments,"⁸⁰ Sir Frederick Macmillan told Wise because neither he nor George Brett was interested in publishing

79 "Items of Interest," *Bookseller and Stationer* 22 (Apr. 1906): 40.

80 Bruce Whiteman, "The Early History of the Macmillan Company of Canada, 1905-1921," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 23 (1985): 68-69.

Canadian writers. Of more commercial value were the authorized Canadian textbooks that he secured in 1912 when Wise bought out the Morang Educational Co. for a bargain.⁸¹

The First Buyout of a Canadian Company by a Foreign Subsidiary

Failures and buyouts were relatively rare in the 1900-20 period. In 1901 George Morang indirectly brought about the demise of the Publishers' Syndicate, when his successful law suits against their importation of his copyrights caused their failure. In 1912 Frank Wise engineered a successful "merger" between the Morang Educational Company and Macmillan of Canada. The implications of this venture shed light on the financial precariousness of Canadian publishers, the competition among Canadian firms for the lucrative educational market, and the competition among British publishers for that same market. Even American firms had an interest in the outcome of this episode.

As we saw earlier, Morang in 1906 established the Morang Educational Company Ltd as a means of breaking the Gage and Copp, Clark monopolies in text books. He incorporated with a capital of \$200,000 and split his educational books from the George N. Morang Company Ltd.⁸² Partly as a result of John Cameron Saul's editorial and sales capacities, there were wide adoptions of their Alexandra Readers. Frank Wise considered Saul "the best educational business-getter in Canada."⁸³ In 1908 Morang and Saul beat out Gage, Macmillan, Thomas Nelson, and Copp, Clark to win the Alberta and Saskatchewan readers.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, after six years the company had made no profit although it had never lost money, and it had used up its credit line with the Dominion Bank.

When Wise had an opportunity in 1911 to buy the nearly bankrupt firm of Morang, Sir Frederick Macmillan encouraged him to buy it

81 A.B. McKillop, "Mystery at Macmillan: The Sudden Departure of President Frank Wise from Macmillan of Canada in 1921," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 38:1 (Spring 2000): 81. Much of the information in these two paragraphs is recounted in detail in this article.

82 W.A.C., "Toronto," *Bookseller and Stationer* 22 (Oct. 1906): 41. See also Finances and Miscellaneous Records, Box S/W 596, Macmillan Canada Fonds, William Ready Division of Archives and Research Collections, Macmaster University Libraries (hereafter Macmillan Canada Fonds).

83 Frank Wise to Sir Frederick Macmillan, 3 June 1911, Sir Frederick Macmillan, Correspondence with Frank Wise 1911, Box 8, Folder 17, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

84 "Readers for Western Provinces," *Bookseller and Stationer* 24 (Feb. 1908):15

at a "bargain"⁸⁵ if George Brett also approved. With Morang's school contracts Macmillan would secure a foothold in Ontario, Manitoba, and the West, keep Gage and Copp, Clark at bay, frustrate Nelson especially, and even hold off Blackie and Longmans from developing Canadian markets. In the end the purchase price was \$270,951.84, but much of the negotiations in 1911-12 involved the amount of cash Morang demanded and London's refusal to take on the Morang Educational Co.'s liabilities.

As negotiations proceeded in 1911, John Saul acted as an intermediary between Morang and Wise, and at one point he brought all the contracts and financial statements to Wise.⁸⁶ Morang first held out for \$200,000 cash, but the London Macmillans authorized Wise to offer only \$115,000;⁸⁷ otherwise, Macmillan of Canada would carry too much debt in relation to its capital. This price would include plates, copyrights, and the value of the manufactured stock. The original plan, according to Sir Frederick Macmillan, had been to cover the purchase price by an increase in Macmillan of Canada capital with shares taken by London and New York in proportion to their stake in the Toronto branch. Morang was given until 15 July 1911 to accept the offer, but the expiry date passed with no word from him.

By January 1912 the "irrepressible Morang" visited Wise and asked for \$125,000 cash.⁸⁸ Wise reported that Morang was being actively pursued by Nelson's, who were successfully wooing the Ontario and Manitoba governments, and in fact would open their Canadian branch in 1913 under a personable Scot, Sidney B. Watson. But Morang's two other chief creditors (besides the Dominion Bank), his mother-in-law, Mrs Heaven, and the Norwood Press, of Boston, did not like the Nelson offer of \$125,000 in preferred shares and \$125,000 in common shares.⁸⁹ Morang was "hopelessly swamped"

85 Frederick Macmillan to Frank Wise, 26 May 1911, Sir Frederick Macmillan, Correspondence with Frank Wise 1911, Box 8, Folder 17, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

86 Frank Wise to Sir Frederick Macmillan, 9 June 1911, Sir Frederick Macmillan, Correspondence with Frank Wise 1911, Box 8, Folder 17, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

87 Frank Wise to Sir Frederick Macmillan, 3 June 1911, Sir Frederick Macmillan, Correspondence with Frank Wise 1911, Box 8, Folder 17, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

88 Frank Wise to George Brett, 10 Jan. 1912, Correspondence re Purchase of Morang 1911 - May 1912, Box 43, Folder 4, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

89 Frank Wise to George Brett, 30 Jan. 1912, Correspondence re Purchase of Morang 1911 - May 1912, Box 43, Folder 4, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

with high interest rates and a low credit rating, Wise told Sir Frederick Macmillan,⁹⁰ and the Dominion Bank wanted the best possible terms from Macmillan of Canada to recoup its equity of at least 40%. The Norwood Press of Boston was owed about \$40,000 (later it told Wise the amount was more like \$70,000⁹¹), which included the costs of printing Morang's texts and a new edition of *The Makers of Canada* series. If Morang failed to get \$115,000, he was desperate enough to "wreck his company," that is, let it slide into bankruptcy. Then the Ontario government could sell his contracts to the printer with the lowest bids. It would mean that the Bank and Norwood would lose heavily on their investment. Norwood's lawyer, George W. Anderson, saw a chance for Norwood to gain a monopoly in Canada. In the spring of 1912 the Bank and Anderson tried to arrange for Morang to lose control so that a man by the name of Beattie could administer the firm to their advantage. Ironically, Beattie was the manager of the Gage/Copp, Clark "book ring"⁹² that Morang had broken up in 1906. Wise had just built the new office on Bond Street with the excellent profits since 1905, and was obligated to repay the bank and the London and New York Macmillans over the next six years. He schmoozed Morang and Saul, used George Brett as his father figure (who advised him to be cautious), but was somewhat afraid of the London Macmillans. He and Anderson loathed each other, traded rhetorical insults, and quibbled over \$5,000 expenses that Norwood added as the negotiations reached a climax in the spring of 1912. The Bank and George Brett argued over the financing arrangements.

On 8 April Wise told Brett he was tired of "shilly shallying about" and had decided to take over the stock, bonds, and other known liabilities beyond those of the bank and Norwood, which possibly included the debenture issued by the Toronto General Trust at the

90 Frank Wise to Sir Frederick Macmillan, 27 Jan. 1912, Correspondence re Purchase of Morang 1911 - May 1912, Box 43, Folder 4, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

91 George Brett to Frank Wise, 14 Mar. 1912, Correspondence re Purchase of Morang 1911 - May 1912, Box 43, Folder 4, Macmillan Canada Fonds. Brett claims over \$40,000. In his letter to Wise, 30 Apr. 1912, Brett says the Norwood people told him confidentially that Morang may owe them up to \$70,000, distributed among printers, binders, and paper makers.

92 Frank Wise to George Brett, 11 May 1912, Correspondence re Purchase of Morang 1911 - May 1912, Box 43, Folder 4, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

time of the 1906 incorporation of Morang Educational Co.⁹³ In mid-April John Saul returned from his western trip and reported to Wise that educational authorities and retailers were “delighted” to be rid of Morang and to deal with Macmillan.⁹⁴ As time ran out for Fall orders, the Ontario government assured Wise and Saul there would be no problem over the transfer of contracts.⁹⁵ Wise insisted that Saul work at home and persuaded his wife to make him stick to this plan. The Sauls, of course, felt “deep sympathy” for their friends the Morangs and their children.⁹⁶ On 30 April 1912, Macmillan of Canada agreed to purchase Morang Educational Co. for \$270,951.84, with an amended statement, showing a spread of \$122,236.08.⁹⁷ On 1 May Sir Frederick cautioned Brett against forcing Morang into bankruptcy because Macmillan wanted only his assets, not his liabilities,⁹⁸ although this advice had come too late to stop the sale.

The bank refinanced Morang’s debt for another 5 years, Wise secured another loan from the Bank for \$115,000 and found another \$5,000 expenses for Norwood and its lawyer’s expenses. The Norwood group and New York put up \$60,000. Morang’s mother-in-law, Mrs Heaven, lost \$20,000 equity. Morang retained the plates for *The Makers of Canada*, and Robert Glasgow bought 1,500 sets of it for \$10,000. Morang & Co. would continue to publish the *Canadian Medical Journal* and the *University Magazine*, which Wise claimed were money-makers. Morang agreed not to engage in educational publishing for ten years. It was almost the last public notice of the man who had contributed so much to the character of Canadian publishing in the first decade of the twentieth century.

For Wise it was “a most disagreeable and apparently impossible task ... Morang is still inclined to be obstreperous, but of course he

93 Frank Wise to George Brett, 8 Apr. 1912, Correspondence re Purchase of Morang 1911 - May 1912, Box 43, Folder 4, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

94 Frank Wise to George Brett, 23 Apr. 1912, Correspondence re Purchase of Morang 1911 - May 1912, Box 43, Folder 4, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

95 Frank Wise to George Brett, 15 Mar. 1912, Correspondence re Purchase of Morang 1911 - May 1912, Box 43, Folder 4, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

96 Frank Wise to George Brett, 13 May 1912, Correspondence re Purchase of Morang 1911 - May 1912, Box 43, Folder 4, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

97 Clarkson & Cross [lawyers] to Frank Wise, 7 Nov. 1912, Morang Co. Correspondence between Frank Wise and Others re Sale to Macmillan of Morang, June 1912 - 1913, Box 43, Folder 5, Macmillan Company Fonds.

98 Sir Frederick Macmillan to George Brett, 1 May 1912, Correspondence re Purchase of Morang 1911 - May 1912, Box 43, Folder 4, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

is harmless.”⁹⁹ Brett congratulated Wise on a good deal that cost him about \$120,000: The sale price of \$270,951.84 was secured “without the expenditure of any cash on your part, and without calling upon your London directors to furnish any part of the purchase money.”¹⁰⁰ Wise graciously complimented Brett, “I am deeply grateful for all the part you have taken.... I always remember your counsel to me when I was about to make my first trip on the road for you ... having always the profits of the Company in mind.”¹⁰¹ Frank Wise – long-winded, argumentative, and defensive, inclined to annoy his authors and booksellers, not quite the ideal colonial branch manager – had won a major victory for the Macmillan fortunes in Canada.

While Macmillan and Oxford evolved into important Canadian publishers through the century, other British branches also made important contributions as Canadian publishers. By 1914 they included Cassell (1907), Hodder & Stoughton (1911), J.M. Dent (1913), and Thomas Nelson (1913). Intent on improving their sales in Canada, they wanted a better presence than representation by a local agent, and were concerned that their authors were shipped into Canada in American editions on which they received no payment. Cassell’s, for example, established its Toronto branch on 1 July 1907 to distribute educational and reference works.¹⁰² Under manager Henry Button sales were so good in the first year that in early 1909 he enlarged the Cassell premises in the new McLeod and Allen building at 42 Adelaide St, using the second floor for general offices and the fourth floor as a stock room. The sample rooms were furnished in the *de rigueur* style of the day, Old English, with lots of dark wood. In late January 1909 Button spent six weeks in Britain arguing with head office for “improved bindings for the Canadian trade.”¹⁰³ In 1911 Cassell issued its first Canadian book, Judge Emily Murphy’s travel book *Janey Canuck in the West* (London: Cassell, 1910), which was

99 Frank Wise to Sir Frederick Macmillan, 3 June 1912, Morang Co. Correspondence between Frank Wise and Others re Sale to Macmillan of Morang, June 1912 - 1913, Box 43, Folder 5, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

100 George Brett to Frank Wise, 5 June 1912, Morang Co. Correspondence between Frank Wise and Others re Sale to Macmillan of Morang, June 1912 - 1913, Box 43, Folder 5, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

101 Frank Wise to George Brett, 7 June 1912, Morang Co. Correspondence between Frank Wise and Others re Sale to Macmillan of Morang, June 1912 - 1913, Box 43, Folder 5, Macmillan Canada Fonds.

102 “Canadian Branch Opened,” *Bookseller and Stationer* 23 (July 1907): 20.

103 “Personal Paragraphs of Interest,” *Bookseller and Stationer* 25 (Jan. 1909): 35.

produced in London and shipped in many reprints to Canada.¹⁰⁴ The success of Murphy's books, along with Isobel Ecclestone MacKay's novel *The House of Windows* (1912) prompted Cassell to look for more Canadian writers.

By the time Hodder & Stoughton established its branch in 1911,¹⁰⁵ J.E. Hodder Williams had made several annual trips across Canada, including one 1905 stop in Winnipeg to discuss publishing arrangements with Rev. Charles Gordon.¹⁰⁶ As Gordon's English publisher, Hodder & Stoughton (founded by two Scottish Calvinist Presbyterians), already had a connection with Gordon's Toronto publisher, the Westminster Company. Back in 1908 Hodder & Stoughton took a 25% share in ex-Torontonian George H. Doran's New York house, but in order to "circumvent some established connexions," Doran and Hodder & Stoughton first incorporated the George H. Doran Company in Toronto (with a capital of \$40,000), and among the directors was William Robertson, the manager of the Westminster Company.¹⁰⁷ Hodder & Stoughton were publishers of religious and theological works, with agents already in place, so they arranged for Doran to carry their new lines of fiction, art books, and children's books. The 1911 branch of Hodder & Stoughton, located in the Westminster premises, looked after the "heavy class of books" while jobbers would handle their fiction.

J.M. Dent's Toronto branch opened in January 1913 with the intention of improving its distribution of the Everyman series and the Temple Shakespeare, and to protect its copyright from American intrusion. Hugh Dent, one of the managing directors in London, came to lend a hand to the new manager, Henry Button. A year earlier Button had left the Cassell branch and returned to England to recuperate from an illness, meanwhile encouraging the Dents about prospects in Canada. Now the reinvigorated Button announced that Dent would "in the near future make a specialty of books about Canada by Canadian writers."¹⁰⁸ Dent represented Burns & Oates, Sidgwick & Jackson, the Sunday School Union, and the Cambridge University Press. The next year J.M. Dent and his

104 "Canadian Books and Authors," *Bookseller and Stationer* 27 (Jan. 1911): 22.

105 "Hodder & Stoughton Open in Canada," *Bookseller and Stationer* 27 (May 1911): 24.

106 "Personal and Trade Notes," *Bookseller and Stationer* 21 (Feb. 1905): 70.

107 "What Men and Firms in the Trade Are Doing this Month," *Bookseller and Stationer* 24 (Oct. 1908): 54-55.

108 "Dents Open Canadian Branch," *Bookseller and Stationer* 29 (Feb. 1913): 34.

wife visited Canada and the United States, which included a visit to Winnipeg to promote his textbooks. He talked to Sir Wilfrid Laurier about the abuse of copyright by American publishers "who printed English copyright books and sell them in Canada without royalty or even acknowledgement under the English prices."¹⁰⁹ Laurier could no longer help, as he had been turfed from power in the 1911 election. That summer in Toronto the Dents were entertained by Button and his wife in their "shack" on Toronto Island.¹¹⁰ In 1915 Dent spoke to university groups at McGill, Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, and British Columbia about adopting the *Everyman* books on university curriculums.¹¹¹ Hugh Dent, in an addition to his father's history of the house, stated "after some eight or nine years [after 1913] of uphill work and many disappointments the tide turned and profits were shown each year, instead of substantial losses."¹¹²

Bookseller and Stationer pointed out the stodginess of British books limited their sales in competition with attractive American books, and observed that English novels published only in England were not advertised in Canada. In June 1909 *Bookseller and Stationer* was pleased, however, by the "increasing interest of Old Country houses in the Dominion," especially when they came as "specialists in a particular field," but was concerned that the rapid increase in branches would be hard on the local firms.¹¹³

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Much of our knowledge about the emerging publishing industry in the early twentieth century is found in the pages of *Bookseller and Stationer*. This trade magazine, published by the Maclean Brothers, informed publishers and booksellers about trade problems, travellers' trips, gossip about members of the trade, listed books registered at the Copyright Office in Ottawa, and provided seasonal catalogues of forthcoming books. Two of its editors, John A. Cooper from 1892 to 1895, and William Arnot Craick from 1902 to 1913, were energetic boosters of Canadian authors and Canadian literature. In 1910-11 Craick even issued *The Canadian Bookman*, an insert in *Bookseller and Stationer* that featured reviews and notes about authors.

109 Joseph Mallaby Dent, *The House of Dent* (London: Dent, 1938): 169-70.

110 J.M. Dent: 167.

111 J.M. Dent: 180.

112 J.M. Dent: 201.

113 "Editorial Comment." *Bookseller and Stationer* 25 (June 1909): 23.

Although there is no one simple explanation for the emergence of a large group of writers just as new publishing houses appeared on the Toronto scene, their appearance is not a co-incidence. Professional authorship was a reality once international copyright was stabilized, and authors could expect a decent remuneration from publishers abroad and a pittance from publishers at home. The search for best sellers encouraged young men and women into writing careers and ambitious publishers to market books in all manner of attractive ways, from handsome paper covers and pleasing illustrations, to tie-ins with stage plays and movies of fiction and plays. Best-selling authors were celebrities and the press played up their interviews and covered their lecture tours. Authors clearly benefited by foreign publication and reviews, and their Canadian publishers made sure that booksellers and consumers heard about these glowing international reports. Toronto publishers also issued them in Canadian editions, in part as an appeal to national feelings and in part to cream off profits from new and reprint editions. Established Canadian authors with a foreign publishing connection had little trouble arranging a Canadian imprint, but unknown authors usually were told that publication in Canada alone was a risky and expensive business.

The local publisher, then, was at once jobber, importer, agent for foreign publishers, literary agent for Canadian writers, and occasionally a real publisher. How else to survive? In order to survive and grow, a publisher must change and take risks. The publishing industry took a great leap forward between 1896 and 1912 with the wide-scale evolution of the agency system. And there was enough room, it seems, for foreign publishers to market their products through incorporated branch plants. These were chiefly British houses with an eye on the growing school and college trade – for textbooks and reference books. The epigraph at the beginning of this paper, George Morang's 1899 challenge to an international audience of publishers that books for Canadian readers should be distributed by Canadian publishers, was a reality by 1914. But the "ownership" of those books and the disposal of rights, remained firmly in the hands of British and American houses. Soon enough, a different kind of ownership would emerge to plague the Canadian industry.

The first takeover of a Canadian house by a foreign branch, the purchase of the Morang Educational Company, was not viewed at the time as a threat to Canada. The pattern in which foreign principals began to hold financial stakes in local firms – their agents – did not significantly emerge until the 1920s and 1930s, and was a useful means

of forestalling bankruptcy during the Great Depression. World War II delayed any attempts to change or reverse foreign ownership, which by the late 1960s was no longer undertaken by limited companies abroad but by international corporations. The takeovers of Gage and Ryerson by foreign corporations, the sale of Macmillan to a Canadian media giant, and the threatened sale of McClelland and Stewart awakened the public to the possible loss of autonomy in the cultural industries. Now, a century after 1912, the pattern has escalated since the 1970s: again we have a robust stable of Canadian authors who are recognized with good sales internationally, but we have an ailing group of local houses in a publishing industry dominated by branch plants such as Random House, HarperCollins, and Penguin. The second part of this paper, covering the years between 1912 and 1920, will continue in the Spring 2006 number of the *Papers*.

APPENDIX: A Selection of Best Sellers in Canada, 1896 - 1910

This list is assembled from the monthly lists that appeared in the trade magazines and in occasional notes in contemporary magazines and newspapers; we have evidence of a remarkable change in buying habits among Canadians:

1896

Gilbert Parker, *The Seats of the Mighty*. The book was in third place on the United States annual list. Over 16,000 copies were sold in Canada by 1899.

William W. Withrow, *Valeria*. A new edition of 3,000 copies was issued.

1897

Hall Caine, *The Christian*. A Canadian edition of 3,000 was issued, and 10,000 copies were sold by May 1898.

1898

Ralph Connor, *Black Rock*. In the United States, over 600,000 copies were sold by 1945, not including pirated editions. An all-time best seller.

1899

William Henry Drummond, *The Habitant*. Over 12,000 copies were sold.

William McLennan, *The Span O' Life*. The first Canadian edition of 2,000 copies sold out.

Gilbert Parker, *The Seats of the Mighty*. Another Canadian edition of 10,000 copies was printed.

Ralph Connor, *The Sky Pilot*. In the United States over 550,000 copies were sold by 1945. An all-time best seller.

Kipling's *Works*. A 15-volume edition, and 1,000 sets sold in Canada.

1900

Ripley Hitchcock, *David Harum*. Over 34,000 copies were sold in Canada.

Marie Corelli, *The Master Christian*. A first edition of 5,000 copies sold out in five days.

1901

Ralph Connor, *The Man from Glengarry*. Over 20,000 copies of the Canadian edition sold in Canada.

Gilbert Parker, *The Right of Way*. The book reached fourth place on the United States annual list. Over 20,000 copies were sold in Canada that year.

1906

Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*. Selling at the rate of 1,000 a day in September.

Ralph Connor, *The Doctor*. The first Canadian edition of 25,000 copies was considered to be the largest first edition in Canada up to that date.

1907

Robert Service, *Songs of a Sourdough*. By December nearly 10,000 copies had been printed; by June 1909, 28,000 sold; by June 1910, 40,000 sold.

John Richardson, *Wacousta* (1833). A third edition was printed within eight months, for a total of 5,000 copies.

1908

L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*. Over 812,000 copies were sold by 1945. An all time best seller.

Nellie McClung, *Sowing Seeds in Danny*. The book was first place in Canada that year.

1909

Robert Service, *Ballads of a Cheechako*. 28,000 copies had been printed by September.

1910

In December 1910 practically all the best sellers in Canada were by Canadian writers (Beach is the only American):

Ralph Connor, *The Foreigner*.

Robert Edward Knowles, *The Attic Guest*.

L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of Avonlea*.

Robert Service, *Ballads of a Cheechako*.

Gilbert Parker, *Northern Lights*.

Rex Beach, *The Silver Horde*.

SOMMAIRE

L'industrie de l'édition torontoise a commencé de connaître une période de prospérité soutenue entre les années 1900 et 1920 qui s'explique par plusieurs facteurs en relation avec le droit d'auteur canadien et international. La fin des activités anglo-américaines dans le domaine de la contrefaçon en 1891, la reprise de la croissance économique à partir de l'année 1896 suite à une récession prolongée et l'acceptation par les Britanniques que le Canada devait être considéré désormais comme un marché distinct (en théorie du moins) assurèrent une stabilité à la diffusion du livre au Canada. Les éditeurs et les intermédiaires torontois devinrent des représentants exclusifs auprès des firmes britanniques et américaines. Aux trois maisons déjà établies soit la Methodist Book and Publishing Company (connue également sous la dénomination de William Briggs), Copp, Clark Co et W.J. Gage Co se joindront des noms qui domineront le monde de l'édition durant une grande partie du vingtième siècle comme George J. McLeod, Thomas Allen, C.J. Musson ainsi que John McClelland et ses partenaires Fred Goodchild et George Stewart. Parmi la demi-douzaine de succursales britanniques établies durant la première décennie, on compte la présence de Oxford University Press et de Macmillan of Canada. C'était aussi la première fois qu'une maison d'édition canadienne, la Morang Educational Co., était acquise par une société filiale, la Macmillan of Canada, signe évident que les éditeurs étrangers reconnaissaient l'existence modeste quoique précieuse du marché du livre scolaire au Canada. La progression rapide du marché du livre dans les provinces de l'Ouest a réduit certains des risques associés traditionnellement au marché canadien. La popularité des auteurs à succès canadiens au pays et à l'étranger (tels que Ralph Connor, Gilbert Parker, L.M. Montgomery et Nellie McClung) a

donné un nouvel élan tant aux éditeurs qu'aux lecteurs. Les années de la Première Guerre mondiale, soit de la fin de 1914 jusqu'en 1919, connurent une autre période d'intense activité commerciale avec la parution entre autres de nombreux ouvrages canadiens décrivant notre effort de guerre. En 1919, l'industrie de l'édition canadienne entrevoyait avec optimisme et enthousiasme une prospérité toujours grandissante justifiée par son adhésion à la Convention de Berne, une diminution significative des coûts de diffusion et la présence sur son territoire d'intermédiaires étrangers.