

M. Plaisant, in his concluding remarks, reminded the Conference that his distinguished predecessor, M. Louis Renaud, had closed the Berlin Conference forty years ago, in 1908, by flattering himself in the name of his colleagues of having remained faithful to the spirit of his predecessors. M. Plaisant did not similarly pride himself, and, indeed, thought perhaps that such a thing would not be desirable. In international law, more than anywhere, he claimed, it was necessary to reconcile the inner voice of tradition with the trend of outward movements. But when it became a matter of fixing the rights of two widely varying categories, of which the outlook in each case was eminently proper, it was incumbent on one to act above all in accordance with the lessons of life. For twenty years they had witnessed such prodigious development of invention and of the means of diffusing that they remained astonished in the face of scientific evolution and of the unforeseen forms which this might impose upon dealings in intellectual works. Now, as the result of long war and its consequences, the world in general, and Europe in particular, had undergone quite profound political and social consequences that M. Plaisant considered the delegates were powerless to conceive its passing patterns in a society in the full course of evolution. Their mission, he said, was to assure protection to authors' rights in a period when the written work was being outstripped by electrical, mechanical, and other means of exploitation arising from future and unknown inventions. The Conference had been primarily concerned with broadcasting, with records, with the cinema, and perhaps its greatest achievement was that by artificial and material means it had blended copyright, which was in essence an intellectual right, with material realities of a powerful and overwhelming character.

In M. Plaisant's view the delegates had had to take account in another direction of the existence of new forces in the world arena. Literary salons, he said, had been displaced by broadcasting and by the cinematographic screens, thanks to waves of mysterious character. It was now entire peoples and hungry crowds and no longer the select few who wished to drink at the fountain of knowledge, and who demanded to be allowed to participate freely at the feast. In all countries organizations were formed, and news, teaching, and even culture tended to assume national forms or even, to use such a barbaric expression, nationalized forms. The delegates would recollect that on several occasions they had been compelled to take account of these modern needs. Meritoriously they had understood them, and at the same time they had imposed just conditions upon them. In this report, M. Plaisant thought the Conference would go down to posterity as a success. Nevertheless, whilst they had given due regard to the contemporary aspirations, the delegates had remained faithful to and even inheritors of a tradition. The Conference had felt that an author's right was one of the manifestations of the right of man, and it had always sought to assume protection of such rights throughout all changes. Those among them who had remained faithful to individualistic philosophy might deplore the change which facilitated such exchanges of idea between civilized peoples. But M. Plaisant could not concede that they would have been true humanists if, despite obstacles and apprehensions, they had not been preoccupied above all with the safeguarding of the dignity of mankind, and with assuring the reflection of the most precious fruit of human intelligence for the reception of others. He liked to think, he said, that the delegates had succeeded in this respect thanks to the admirable spirit of international understanding which had so often raised the Conference above its objectives. Those who came after should give them credit for their supreme gesture both to mortal man and to immortal thought.

The Convention, if accepted by New Zealand, will require to be ratified and such ratification deposited at Brussels not later than the 1st July, 1951.

I desire to place on record appreciation of the valuable service rendered by Sir Harold Saunders in representing New Zealand at the Conference.

H. G. R. MASON, Minister of Justice.

APPENDIX

BERNE CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF LITERARY AND ARTISTIC WORKS, SIGNED ON THE 9TH SEPTEMBER, 1886, COMPLETED AT PARIS ON THE 4TH MAY, 1896, REVISED AT BERLIN ON THE 13TH NOVEMBER, 1908, COMPLETED AT BERNE ON THE 20TH MARCH, 1914, REVISED AT ROME ON THE 2ND JUNE, 1928, AND REVISED AT BRUSSELS ON THE 26TH JUNE, 1948. (The portions in italics indicate the changes from the Rome Conventions of 1928).

AUSTRALIA, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Morocco, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tunis, the Union of South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,

Being equally animated by the desire to protect in as effective and uniform a manner as possible the rights of authors over their literary and artistic works.

Have resolved to revise and to complete the Act signed at Berne on the 9th September, 1886, completed at Paris on the 4th May, 1896, revised at Berlin on the 13th November, 1908, completed at Berne on the 20th March, 1914, and revised at Rome on the 2nd June, 1928.