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THE AUSTRALIAN

# AUTHOR and ARTIST

Official Organ of the A.J.A Authors' and Artists' Section. (N.S.W District.)

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## Australians Fight Coolie Rates

American and English short stories are being offered to Australian magazine publishers at six shillings each. Illustrations are thrown in, free.

Incredible, isn't it? But, if you want documentary proof of what can happen—and is happening—here, turn to page 3. Read, mark, and inwardly digest!

**AND, IF, IN THE READING OF IT, YOU DON'T GET A BAD ATTACK OF INDIGESTION, WE MISS OUR GUESS.**

The letter we've reproduced for you is from United International Features of London and Philadelphia. It was sent out, not so long ago, to Australian newspaper and magazine editors.

You will note the prices sought, the contributions offered:—

• "Treasure Island" story strip (published in "The Sydney Morning Herald"), 16/- each; "Baby Joy" strip, 10/- each; "Who is Who in Crime," 10/- each; a full Women's page, including illustrations, 25/- each. . . ."

And you'll note the qualifying paragraph:—

• "Economical graduating discounts on purchasing a number of our features. . . ."

And if you've got any sense of fair-play in your make-up, you'll ask yourself this:—

"How can Australian writers and artists compete against coolie rates such as that? And if they are allowed to continue, how can Australian standards hope to survive?"

Don't get the idea that United International Features have a monopoly in this Syndicate racket. It's almost as old as the thimble-and-pea trick, and it's getting worse every year.

It's getting so bad that it's time YOU started doing something about it.

Overseas' short stories, sold by syndication agencies at ridiculously low rates, appear with monotonous regularity in Australian magazines. And here, in the art field, are some of the children that Syndication has spawned:

Superman, Brick Bradford, Joe Palooka—not forgetting Poil me Goil—the Katzenjammer Kids, Nancy, Henry, the Little King, Jane, Orphan Annie, Barnaby, The Pussycat Princess, The Lone Ranger, Batman (Consolidated Press); Popeye, Blondie's Family, Pop, Rip Kirby, Prince Valiant, Little Iodine (Associated Newspapers); Tarzan, Red Ryder, Penny, Mr. and Mrs. Vic, Flint, Treasure Island (Sydney Morning Herald), to name only a few.

Not forgetting the 16-page American comic-papers now being reprinted in Australia under licence—American "culture,"

comic-strip culture to Stockholm, Oslo and Amsterdam. They've got local artists and educationists worried from Cape Town to Buenos Ayres.

Don't make any mistake about it, they sell because they're cheap.

They're admitted duty-free, and retailed at cut prices that not only close avenues of employment for Australian authors and artists, but tend to bring down—and have, in fact, brought down—the economic standards which Australians have fought to preserve.



that, on a "duty-free" basis, is threatening to drive independent Australian artists out of business.

Remember this . . .

Those comic strips are sold in Australia at a fraction of the price originally paid for them in their country of origin.

They are, in effect, "second-hand goods" that have circulated in the United States or Great Britain until their initial news value is exhausted.

They've been hawked by the syndication peddlers through the magazine markets in Jerusalem, Cairo, Istanbul, Madrid, Rome, Paris. They've introduced

They undermine educational standards—(don't forget that Leemy and his "goil friend, Poil Moiphy" are read every day by thousands of impressionable Australian children). They're just about as un-Australian as anything could be.

To-day the Australian Journalists' Association stands four-square against the four great evils that threaten both Australian literature and the development of a worthwhile Australian way-of-life.

Those evils are:

• Syndication of overseas' stories, articles and comic-strips that permits syndicated material to compete against

# APPEAL TO FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

## PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLISHING

### Reasons why it should be established:—

- (1) Radio has a Standing Committee, yet publishing, with greater ramifications, has none.
- (2) Quotas for Australian films and broadcast music have been fixed, but any overseas publisher can flood the Australian market with his product, good or otherwise.
- (3) America with its great publishing industry, so organised that it can force its products into Australia and most other countries of the world, even non-English speaking Scandinavia, still has strong protection. This country, which needs no protection, still has a limit on the quantity of literature that may be imported from Australia or any other country, free of duty. Australia, on the other hand, admits American books duty free.
- (4) The number of publications originating in U.S.A. and being printed in Australia is growing at an alarming rate. These are done under licence, are using up Australian material and labour and making it almost impossible for Australian work to be published.
- (5) Syndicated literary and art material are being distributed to Australian newspapers and magazines at prices that make it impossible for Australian writers and artists to compete.

### What It Could Do For the Publishing Industry.

- (1) Investigate all phases of the Australian publishing industry by taking evidence from time to time and keeping abreast of latest developments that might operate to the detriment of the local industry.
- (2) The scope of the committee would include: Bound books, syndicated comic strips and other art work, syndicated short stories and articles, publication within Australia under licence of foreign periodicals, the reprinting of overseas books.
- (3) Place a tariff upon imported comic strips, other art work, short stories and magazines to prevent their publication within Australia at rates below those paid to Australian writers and artists.
- (4) Place a tariff upon imported books (fiction) to bring them up to a price at which the Australian article could compete, or alternatively place a quota upon overseas books.
- (5) Control the reprinting of overseas works of fiction in Australia. This could be done by making it necessary for publishers to make application to a central body for permission to print. The central body would then grant priorities, ensuring that local works were not left on the shelves unprinted for years, while the limited resources of paper and printing were made available to overseas reprints.  
(It is understood that a similar scheme already exists in India.)
- (6) Prohibition, while publishing facilities are limited, of local editions of overseas books for export. As an example we quote the American novel "King's Row," a large edition of which was printed and bound, using high-grade material; half of the edition was sold within Australia, but the other half was exported to Britain. Consequently, Australian works suffered.
- (7) Overhaul of the copyright laws. The United States is not a member of the International Convention governing copyright and it is possible for an Australian work to be "pirated" in America.
- (8) Extension of the Commonwealth Literary Fund.

### Great Writers Started the Fight

Fight of the Australian Journalists' Association to secure a fair deal for the Australian author and artist has been a long and eventful one.

The first Authors' and Artists' Section of the A.J.A. was formed in Melbourne on Saturday, June 11, 1921.

Mr. Roy Bridges presided, and among those present were Messrs. Edward Dyson, Jack McLaren, Bernard Cronin, Bernard O'Dowd, E. M. Webb, Mrs. Marie Pitt, and Misses Myra Morris, Doris Kerr, and Gertrude Hart.

Objects of the Section were stated as follows:—

- (1) To enroll all Australian authors and artists as members of the A.J.A.
- (2) To work through the A.J.A. for the benefit of the authors and artists.
- (3) To secure from the various newspaper and periodical proprietors in Australia preference for the work of Australian authors and artists.
- (4) To combat the position set up by the importation into Australia of cheap syndicated drawings, serial and short stories.
- (5) To secure adequate rates of pay and payment on acceptance.
- (6) To ensure that the works of Australian authors are adequately reviewed in Australian journals.
- (7) To induce booksellers to give a proper display in their shops and windows of the works of Australian authors.

### ACTION IN N.S.W.

Activists in New South Wales met at 51 Elizabeth Street on Friday, August 5, 1921, when the N.S.W. Section was formed.

Included among the founders were such well-known literary names as A. B. "Banjo" Paterson, Kenneth Slessor, Dame Mary Gilmore, Bartlett Adamson, Con Drew, Sydney H. Deamer, C. H. Bertie, J. H. M. Abbott, and Randolph Bedford.

The Federal Authors and Artists Section of the A.J.A., which consisted of a branch in each capital city, was founded in Sydney on November 26, 1921.

Frequently the efforts of the A.J.A. have been misrepresented in the daily Press and Australian literature and art have been falsely held up as something mediocre and not worth bothering about.

One general manager declared, despite Will Dyson, David Low, Phil May, Geo. Finy, Will Mahoney, Wep and scores of other front-rank men, that artists produced in Australia "couldn't draw."



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THE RENDEZVOUS OF JOURNALISTS