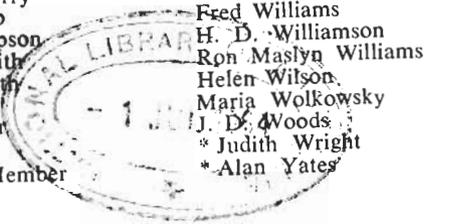


Jessie MacLeod
 Zelia McLeod
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 * Alan Marshall
 * David Martin
 Jim Mats
 Harry Mayfield
 Sir Robert Menzies
 Diana Mercer
 Muriel-Millar
 * Mary Durack Miller
 Mary Mitchell
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 Noel Monkman
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 John Morrison
 Wilda Moxham
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As at 25th May, 1964.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

(This is republished as an aid to our members who are frequently asked this question)

The Society may admit to its membership any author who at the time of his application:

- shall have within the previous seven (7) years had a book published by an established publisher;
- shall have within the previous eighteen (18) months had three (3) works of fiction or non-fiction of a substantial nature published by a major magazine or major magazines, major newspaper or major newspapers of general circulation;
- shall have within the previous eighteen (18) months had a play or other script produced publicly on stage, radio, television or any other medium.
- shall in the opinion of the Management Committee or of the Council be of a professional standing to entitle him to membership;
- shall have work in progress but not yet published which in the opinion of the Management Committee or of the Council qualifies him for membership.

PROVIDED that a member qualified under provision (e) above may be admitted as an associate member only in which case he shall have no voting rights and no right to election to office or the Management Committee but shall otherwise be a full member of the Society.

The membership of an associate member shall be considered as provisional only and the Management Committee shall from time to time consider whether the same should be terminated or changed to full membership.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Full membership	£5 5 0
Associate membership	£3 3 0

BROADSIDE

Vol. 2, No. 1 *Australian Society of Authors* October, 1964

Important Announcement!

COPYRIGHT PROTECTION FOR AUSTRALIAN AUTHORS

On August 10th, your President, Mr Morris L. West and your Vice-President, Mr Dal Stevens, met with Mr George Ferguson of Angus & Robertson and Mr Sam Ure Smith, as a sub-committee of the Australian Book Publishers' Association, to discuss aims and methods of negotiation between the Australian Society of Authors and the Australian Publishers' Association.

We are happy to announce that this first meeting has already borne fruit. On August 28th, your President received the following communication from Mr Sam Ure Smith:

"I think I can say that our Executive welcomed our report which stated that the Society gave the appearance to us of wishing to co-operate to the fullest extent with the A.B.P.A. to the mutual benefit of both author and publisher. I brought up this question you raised with us of including in the publishers' contract as undertaking by the publisher to secure copyright protection for the author's work in the areas where according to the contract he had a right to sell that book. All agreed that this was a reasonable inclusion for a contract.

Shortly I shall send out to all members a recommendation that this suggestion be incorporated in all their contracts in future."

Now that agreement has been reached in general terms with the publishers, it is up to each author to make sure that this copyright protection clause is included in all his future contracts. If in doubt, refer the contract to our Secretary.

In the same letter, Mr Ure Smith agrees to open discussions on the question of a sliding scale of royalties. These discussions will take place at the end of October when Mr Ure Smith returns from Europe.

WHAT ARE WRITERS WORTH

By DAL STIVENS

ONE IMPORTANT MOTIVATION of those of us who launched The Australian Society of Authors, just over a year ago, was the firm belief that good writing was mainly produced by those who were engaged full-time or nearly full-time in this exacting craft. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule but generally it holds good. Consistently good work is usually produced by professionals or near-professionals.

It goes without saying, therefore, that professional work can only be produced if writers are adequately rewarded as are people in other professions such as law and accountancy. We know that this is not so. The writing profession is almost certainly the poorest paid of all. In a recent book,

The Writing and Selling of Non-fiction, the leading American agent Mr Paul R. Reynolds discusses the earnings of authors of 7,822 non-fiction books published last year in the United States. (of these 95 per cent were first published in hard covers.) Mr Reynolds thinks that the total (presumably,

gross) earnings of these non-fiction books were probably distributed in this way: Over £20,000 each to 50 authors; over £8,300 to 250 authors; and £1,600 to 2,000 authors; and less than £1,600 to 5,550 authors. Mr Reynolds says, to the point, "Obviously, five out of seven of these writers will be poorly paid for the time and labour expended. This is characteristic of the writing trade in all mediums." What Mr Reynolds says of the writing of non-fiction books would also be true of fiction, not only in America, but elsewhere. Only a handful of writers in England, America or Australia are adequately rewarded. And, worse, few Australian writers are full-time, whether adequately or inadequately rewarded. In other words, about seventy per cent of writers everywhere receive the rewards of unskilled labourers.

It is grossly inequitable when the writer is the key ingredient of the great profitable publishing complex in which others are, for the main part, in receipt of good dividends, salaries, and wages. Most writing on which publishers and periodical managements make their profits is paid for at sub-economic rates. It is sometimes claimed that the situation reflects no honour on writers because they have allowed themselves to be exploited in a way that no other profession would permit. There's probably some truth in this but writing is a profession without close parallels with any other. It is claimed that writers would not be under-paid if writing was a closed profession such as the law or accountancy. But writing is not a closed profession because of the very nature of its practitioners. Or, if all writers were to think of themselves as professional men in the way that, say, lawyers and accountants do. There's some sense here. Imagine, for instance, if I were to say to my solicitor that I would seek the opinion of ten other solicitors and would pay the one I chose what I felt was an economic rate! Or, imagine if I were to say to a dozen builders that they could all build a house and that I would pay for the one I liked best at a rate which I considered was an economic one!

It is also said that writers have only themselves to blame because they are unbusinesslike, but the troubles of writers are inherent in the economic base on which writing has been founded. In English-speaking countries writing has been largely a middle-class part-time profession. It has been subsidized by private incomes or by the earnings of husbands and wives; it has been made up largely of those for whom writing is only a second profession and who have been willing and able to accept rates which have been uneconomic. The word "willing," perhaps, needs qualification because most part-time writers are not happy about some of the conditions which they are forced—or *think* they are forced—to accept.

Because of the very way which they begin writing, most writers are ill-equipped to cope with publishers and the other businessmen with whom they have to deal. When a part-time writer makes his first few sales, he is inclined to think that the fees he receives are net or nearly net because he believes that his overheads are slight. An accountant, or a lawyer when he sets up in business for himself, is aware from the first of overheads and he (and others in his profession) assess the fees accordingly to cover these overheads and show a profit. It is only when the part-time writer becomes a near or full-time professional, that he becomes aware that his overheads are in the vicinity of 30 per cent or 40 per cent or even 50 per cent.

Another way for writers to assess the true value of their work is to equate it with the salaries currently paid to journalists — bearing always in mind that salaried journalists have no overheads. Recently a member approached the Management Committee for advice about a fee offered by a publisher for the preparation of a book. The work involved about four months' work and the writer was, in effect, offered the equivalent of a D-grade or junior journalists salary, without the benefits of sick pay, holiday pay or long service leave! And it was *gross*, too, without taking overheads into consideration.

There is a widespread practice of newspapers and magazines to offer sub-economic fees to contributors. Recently a member of The Society was offered £15/15/0 to write an article which he refused. The organization which sought to buy this article at such cut rates would have had to spend £40-£60 to have had it written within its own walls — provided it had had a journalist with the particular knowledge and experience which was sought. This cost would have included the salary of a senior journalist for up to four days, plus other costs including typing, stationery, office rent, rates, heating, depreciation, etc. etc.

However, the position is changing swiftly and more and more Australian newspapers, magazines and publishers are recognizing that you can no longer get Rolls Royces at Holden's prices, that if good professional writing is to be found, then fair prices must be paid for it.

More and more Australian writers are asking for—and getting—economic fees. Fair fees and fair royalties won't be achieved overnight but they will be inevitably if members of this Society continue to take a thoroughly professional attitude to their work and regard themselves as at least the professional equals of solicitors, accountants and salaried journalists.
