

# CANADA LIBELLED BY AUTHORS FROM ALIEN COUNTRIES

## Onota Watanna Pleads For Cultivation of Canadian Authorship

Canada, particularly the west, has suffered and is suffering greatly from gross misrepresentation of the facts concerning this country, its climate and the people who live in it by writers of the United States and Great Britain, according to Mrs. Winnifred Reeve, speaking before the Canadian club at luncheon at the Hudson's Bay Wednesday. Mrs. Reeve said that through books and films written and produced without the writing coming into actual contact with this country people of foreign nations have obtained distorted ideas of this country. They think Canada is a land of ice and snow all the year around, inhabited principally by Esquimos and wolves.

Mrs. Reeve, who is one of the best known of Canadian authors, writing under the pen name of "Onota Watanna," spoke on "The Canadian Spirit in Our Literature."

Canadian authors, because of lack of means to support themselves, have, of necessity, to work at other occupations, she said.

"There are men of great literary talent and even genius, but those who remain at home instead of going to other countries, are working with the cards stacked against them, under conditions that are discouraging and heart-breaking," Mrs. Reeve declared.

### Canada Has Suffered

"However, the Canadian author has by no means suffered to the extent that Canada itself has through the loss of many of her best authors; for in their places have slipped in the smart charlatans of the pen of other countries, and these have exploited, misrepresented and libelled Canada, both in story and in motion pictures, so that there has gone forth to the world a grotesquely, unvarnished and absurd portrayal of our country," she said.

"Spread abroad in magazines and books and sprawled upon the screen, we behold our country as one everlasting expanse of ice and snow. I do not recall ever seeing a Canadian screen play that did not specialize on snow as the main product of Canada. Calgary has gone down to dubious fame as a small cowtown of the wild west type. Winnipeg, Montreal, some of our important cities have fared even worse. Our prosperous Canadians are revealed as a sort of cross between lumberjacks and hoboes, and most of our citizens appear in parkas and mukluks, the garb of the Arctic regions.

### Snow, Ice and Indians

"We do not ride in automobiles and carriages, according to these pictures, but go forth on our streets on skis and snowshoes, or are drawn around on dog sleds. There is a monotonous similarity in all these pictures of Canada, the same bag of tricks rattled over and over again, snow, ice, beautiful Indian maidens, prairie fires, noble mounted police, French-Canucks, bears and sleigh dogs, innocent fugitives from justice, a lone waste of

## TONIGHT'S RADIO CONCERT

8:45—Opening announcement.  
8:47—Musical selections.  
9:00—News bulletins from The Albertan press wires, market reports and any important local news.  
9:05—Intermission (a government regulation).  
9:10—Musical selections.  
9:25—Intermission (a government regulation).  
9:30—The correct time, supplied by H. R. Chauncey, Ltd.  
9:31—Announcements.  
9:35—Musical selections.  
9:45—Goodnight, everybody!

Operated by W. W. Grant of W. W. Grant Radio, Limited, 703 Second street west, for The Morning Albertan.

The instrument used is a Victor-Victrola and His Master's Voice Records supplied by C. B. Clarke of Eight, avenue west.

The piano is a Willis Art upright, kindly loaned by W. M. Howe, proprietor of the Willis and Knabe Showrooms, 323 Eighth avenue west.

Broadcasting station—Phone H1777.

land and the wolf's lone howl. To be typically and perfectly Canadian, the story must reveal an utterly cold aspect of complete desolation.

"Now, of course, in all this pudding it may be you will find a Canadian spirit, but it is the kind of spirit that makes a real Canadian hot under the collar, because he knows it is a gross libel upon his native land. I ask you to consider the effect of such stuff upon the world. Thousands of persons see these films and read these stories," she said.

"I assert that it is of vital importance to Canada that its authors should remain at home, not merely because of the honor and the prestige that will reflect upon the country, but because of their intrinsic and practical value to Canada. They are needed to offset and undo the harm and the injury already done to Canada by others. They are needed because no country can hope to achieve greatness without her dreamers, and to the clan of dreamers the author pre-eminently belongs.

"With very few exceptions, there has come out of Canada, thus far, no important literary production, in which a typically Canadian spirit is revealed," Mrs. Reeve said. "True, there has been a considerable output of stories and poems of mediocre merit. These are, however, of but questionable value. Canada has produced men and women of literary talent and even genius; but many of these, forced to go outside to find a market for their work, have written of the country where they have their residence.

### Work at Disadvantage

"On the other hand, with scarcely an exception the Canadian author, at home, is obliged to earn his living at something else, and to do his writing in such spare hours as may be left to him. Imagine a doctor, a lawyer, or a man in any of the professions or businesses, working all day long at some other employment, and attempting to carry on his profession as well. Yet that is exactly what the Canadian author at home is doing. It means writing under pressure, when fagged and worn and tired. Work produced under such conditions cannot possess the fire, the freshness and the charm of a spontaneous piece of writing done when the mood and inspiration was upon the author. Writing is essentially a work of the brain and to do it well one needs freedom from the one thousand and one cares and interruptions that beset the working day.

"Comparatively speaking, we are a young nation, but we are old enough to recognize the thing of value when we possess it, and I do not think that anyone can question the statement that literary talent is a national asset more important than mere gold, and it is, therefore, hard to estimate the value of a truly great author to his country.

"President Wilson recognized this, when he sent authors as ambassadors to nearly all the courts of Europe," Mrs. Reeve said.

