

October 29/62

Mr. Ronald S. Kelland,
48 Barnes Road,
St. John's, Nfld.

Dear Mr. Kelland,

You have my deep sympathy, for I had my own long and difficult struggle as a Canadian writing about Canadian themes. However, I must point out that you are under a great and disappointing illusion when you ask me to write a foreword for your book because, as you put it, "the weight of your name would be more than sufficient with any publisher".

Long ago a British firm decided, of their own accord, to bring out a volume of my short stories, which had been appearing from time to time in their own magazine. John Buchan, who had read and liked the tales as they appeared in the magazine, kindly wrote a foreword for the book, in which he gave my work the highest praise. As you know, Buchan stood in the highest rank of British authors in his time, not only for popular novels but for scholarly historical work. Also he had lately become Lord Tweedsmuir and Governor-General of Canada. If anyone's name could sell a book, his could.

Here is the dismal record:-

In the first year of publication	the book sold	333	copies.
" second "	" " "	315	"
" " 3rd, 4th and 5th years	" " "	<u>825</u>	"
	Total sales	1473	"

With that the firm closed out their edition. They had lost money on it. My own royalties came to about \$2/0/0.

During these years I had a wife and children to support, and we had a tough time of it, living on the sale of short stories to magazines. Eventually I got into the Saturday Evening Post, Collier's, and other U.S. magazines of large circulation, writing always about Nova Scotia and its people, past and present, and the time came when Canadian and American publishers were urging me to write novels for book publication. But observe, please, that my work got to that point entirely under its own steam. Tweedsmuir, for all his kindness and his fame, had not been able to do that for me.

Incidentally, my own first novel, written hopefully in the early days, still lies in a drawer, unpublished. I had worked long and hard on it, and it broke my heart when firm after firm rejected it. Today I can see why they didn't want it -- and wouldn't want it even now. The experience of writing it taught me a good deal, however, and so did the pain of rejection. A knock-down isn't necessarily a knock-out.

Sincerely
J. H. R.