

March 23rd, 1951

Dear Charles,

It was nice to hear from you and to see your write-of-hand again. It will soon be five years since I was in Ottawa speaking to the CAA branch there. It doesn't seem possible that so much time could have passed so quickly. A sign of age, they say.

Here are the short and simple annals of my lone book for juveniles. When His Majesty's Yankees appeared in the U.S.A. a number of people wrote me, pointing out that this was a chapter of history almost unknown south of the border, a knowledge of which was necessary to anyone trying to understand how two nations, Canada and the U.S., came to exist side by side in the enormous sprawl of the continent. Some insisted that an edition of the book, edited for juvenile reading, should be made available to school libraries in the States. This seemed a good idea, but I was busy with other things and nothing was done until Jacques Chambrun, the New York agent, mentioned the matter to Winston's. I think in the spring of '48. As you know Winston's do a huge business in the U.S.A., mostly in non-fiction, but they have a good list of reading for juveniles. They were keen to bring out an edition of H.M.Y. edited for reading by boys of 12 to 17, were prepared to do the editing themselves (although they wanted me to do that, at first), and to take an option on my other costume pieces, Roger Sudden, and Pride's Fancy, to be edited and published in the same fashion. I agreed, of course. They advanced \$1,000 against royalties and brought out the new edition under the title Son of The Hawk in the spring of '49. 50.

In the negotiations with Winston's I told Chambrun to make it clear that my Canadian publishers, McClelland & Stewart, were to have the Canadian market for the book. However, almost at the last minute, Winston's urged me to let them have the whole North American field, pointing out that they could then print a larger edition. This would reduce their cost per copy and enable them to advertise the book more extensively, and in fact to make a major effort with it, which would mean more royalties for me. When I put this up to McClelland & Stewart they were alarmed, thinking that it was a thin-edge-of-the-wedge sort of business, and that I was contemplating a complete switch of publishers. I reassured them on that point, and they waived any further interest in the book, since they had little or nothing to lose, and I might have a good deal to gain.

Chambrun, in the canny fashion of agents, kept my copy of the contract with Winston's, so that he could "keep a close eye on it". So I can't tell you exactly how it ran. As I recall it the royalty rate was 10% on the first 5,000 copies and a straight 15% thereafter, payable annually. (In other words the royalties for 1949 are due now, and I have received the Canadian royalties, which were payable separately under the agreement.) No mention was made, on the jacket or anywhere else, so far

as I know, that Son of The Hawk was an edited version of H.M.Y. (I wish this had been done, for some of my friends bought copies of the juvenile thinking it was my latest novel.) H.M.Y. was my first novel, and although well received by the critics it did not enjoy a big sale in the U.S., indeed it has been out of print in the U.S. since 1944. Hence I suppose Winston's considered it purposeless to mention the original title, although in Canada the original book had a good sale, is still in print and still has a small but steady sale.

I have found Winston's a very good firm to deal with, aggressive in their business, and I am looking forward with interest to the royalty cheque for U.S. sales, which Chambrun should forward any day now. H.M.Y., as you know, lambasted American as well as British stupidities and cruelties in their treatment of the Nova Scotians, and while some of these matters had to be omitted in reducing the size of the original book, Son of The Hawk contains a good deal of them. Thus it is to some extent controversial on both sides of the border, and the sales may have been affected by that fact, as were the sales of H.M.Y. (You'll be amused at this. Rod Kennedy, who once spent half an hour telling me what a wonderful book H.M.Y. was, refused to let Son of The Hawk be reviewed in his paper. In fact he wrote a violent letter to Winston's, claiming that the whole theme of the book was false, and deliberately anti-British, and practically heresy. He was talking through his hat, a matter at which he is adept; and I daresay a number of American jingoes of the same stamp have objected to the book as anti-American, for no more reason. My book sets forth some harsh facts, hitherto unrevealed or carefully whitewashed in the history books, which won't suit an ardent flag-waver on either side of the border. This is something you don't have to worry about.)

I suggest that you contact Winston's and show them your Secret of The River. The market for juveniles in the U.S. is immense and they are always looking for something new.

Sincerely,

Mr. Charles Clay,
142 O'Connor Street,
Ottawa, Canada.