

Copyright Lore

■ Frank Evina

In 1954, the Copyright Office Reference Division undertook the monumental task of compiling a complete bibliography of all the works of Sir Winston Churchill that were registered in the Copyright Office from 1898 to 1953.

On June 25, 1954, a few hours after Churchill's arrival in Washington and in the presence of President Dwight Eisenhower at the White House, a handsomely bound, gold-lettered copy of the 35-page bibliography was presented to Sir Winston by Acting Librarian of Congress Verner Clapp, Register of Copyrights Arthur Fisher, and Reference Division Chief Richard MacCarteney, under whose direction the bibliography was prepared. The dedication page, personally signed by each of the presenters, reads as follows: "To The Rt. Hon. Sir Winston Churchill, K.G. in his character as Voluminous Author on the occasion of his visit to the White House, June 25, 1954, this list of his writings recorded in the Copyright Office of the United States."

In accepting the volume, the prime minister remarked that he still has a "modest" work to add to his bibliography—a history of the English-speaking peoples in some 800,000 words! In a follow-up letter to the prime minister, Register Arthur Fisher recalled this statement and said, "We look forward eagerly to receiving this and many other of your literary and artistic works for protection under the copyright laws of this country and registration in this Office."

The message from Fisher also included a letter from Reference Division Chief Richard MacCarteney outlining the basis upon which the bibliography was developed. MacCarteney explained, "The bibliography was not the result of any special request.... It grew out of a realization of the tremendous effect Sir Winston Churchill's utterances have had upon world history and thus our obligation to develop as nearly complete a copyright record of them as possible. Later it seemed felicitous to have bound a unique copy for presentation to the great man."

MacCarteney's letter was prepared at Fisher's request after Churchill asked Fisher about the basis upon which the bibliography was prepared. During the presentation at the White House ceremony, Fisher promised Churchill that he would send him an explanation.

The bibliography identified 556 registrations, including American and English book publications and contributions to English periodicals; contributions to magazines in the United States; separately copyrighted installments and syndications of the

Churchill Memoirs and *World War II*; prints, photographs, and reproductions of works of art; and even three musical compositions.

A copy of the Churchill bibliography together with a framed, autographed letter of appreciation for the gift were prominently displayed 11 years later in a special Library exhibit, *In Memoriam: Sir Winston Churchill, 1874–1965*, which was mounted in 1965 after his death on Jan. 24, 1965.

In anticipation of increased public interest in the works of Churchill after his death, the Reference Division prepared an update of the bibliography. In 1966, a copy was forwarded to his family "as a token of respect for a master of our language...." ©

BELOW: *The cover of the Churchill bibliography and the presenters' signatures*

Richard S. MacCarteney
Chief, Reference Division, Copyright

Arthur Fisher
Register of Copyrights

Verner W. Clapp
Acting Librarian of Congress

