The final session of the Copyright Conference was held in Washington during the week ending March 17. The draft of the proposed copyright law as agreed upon by those present, and as it will probably be submitted to Congress by the Copyright Office, contains a section with regard to the importation of American copyright books, permitting such importation in the following cases:

First—Not more than one copy at a time by any person purchasing for use and not for sale with the written permission of the copyright owner.

Second—One copy at a time for the use of the United States.

Third—One copy at a time for the use of any society or institution incorporated for educational, literary, philosophical, scientific or religious purposes, or for the encouragement of the fine arts, or any free public library, or any institution entitled under the customs regulations of the United States to import books free of duty, except in case of foreign reprints of books by American authors.

Fourth—Books forming parts of libraries or collections, for use of institutions designated in the foregoing paragraph, or belonging to persons or families arriving from foreign countries and not intended for sale.

Fifth—All books and pamphlets in raised characters for the use of the blind.

Sixth—All American books that are out of print.

If this part of the law as drafted is adopted by Congress, free public libraries will enjoy all their present privileges of importation with the exception that only one copy at a time may be imported instead of two, and that no book by an American author printed in a foreign country may be imported, unless out of print here.

The above is the substance, not the exact wording. The corresponding paragraphs as drafted in the Copyright Office will be sent out from that office shortly to every member of the A. L. A.

The draft as proposed by the authors and publishers at the first session of the conference in New York absolutely prohibited the importation of any American copyright book, including those of foreign authorship reprinted in the United States. Against this proposed section the delegates of the A. L. A. protested, according to instructions, and after conference with the representatives of the interests desiring such a section succeeded in coming to an agreement with them on the provision that has now been approved by the Conference.

This section is now the official expression of the desires of the American Library Association, having been unanimously approved by the Executive Committee and also, though not unanimously, by the Council. It does not, of course, bind either individuals or libraries, in any way, or prevent them from taking such action as they may deem proper; but it is only fair to the delegates that no such action be taken without full knowledge of the circumstances under which they thought it best to urge the compromise that has now
been approved by the Association.

The names and addresses of the delegates are:
Frank P. Hill, President A. L. A., Brooklyn Public Library, 26 Brevoort Place, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Arthur E. Bostwick, Chairman of this Committee, New York Public Library, 209 West 23rd Street, New York City.

"Copyright must be a compromise, and the present arrangement is an exceedingly clumsy makeshift. Its defects and inconsistencies have been so fully recognized, and the difficulty of reconciling the conflicting claims has been so apparent, that the Senate committee on patents, in whose hands the matter rests, arranged in April, 1905, through the librarian of Congress, for a series of conferences at which the various interests involved should be represented. These discussions have been very profitable, and have resulted in a clearer understanding as to what each side asks and is prepared to concede. * * *

"The case seems to be fully met by the proposal of Mr. Cutter, that only the works of citizens or residents of the United States be thus barred out. It is as simple as the egg of Columbus. There is ordinarily no reason except cheapness for importing a foreign edition of an American book, whereas in the case of foreign books reasons are as plentiful as blackberries. The case of the general reader has not been presented in this controversy, because he is not an organized body, but there are a good many scholarly people scattered through the country who have a vital interest in the matter. Is there any sound reason why an American should be forbidden to buy an English edition of Swinburne, William Watson, Thomas Hardy, George Meredith, merely because there happens to be a copyrighted American edition? The author is protected—what protection does the publisher need beyond what the tariff gives? As every book lover knows, the only first edition that has value to a connoisseur is the original edition, the first English edition of an English book, the first American edition of an American book, and the few people who have taste in such things ought to have freedom to possess the book that best answers their needs. It is most desirable that specimens of contemporary foreign book-making be accessible, both to individual purchasers and in libraries. Book-making is an art in itself, and what one purchases is often not the words of the author, but the "format"—the artistic contribution of the typesetter, printer and binder.

"The proposal that Americans shall not be allowed to buy at any price an English edition of an English book is worthy of the dark ages. Mr. Cutter's amendment, which the librarians seem willing to accept, fully protects the American author, and the libraries seem willing to substitute one copy for the two copies now allowed. On some such lines it should be possible to come to an agreement that will measurably content all, and yet not be injurious to the public interests."—Springfield Republican, March 9, 1906.