

Announcement

from the Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20559

COPYRIGHT REVISION BILL APPROVED BY SENATE

The U. S. Senate by a vote of 70 to 1 approved on September 9, 1974, the bill for the general revision of the copyright law. The bill, S. 1361, which was introduced by Senator John L. McClellan, who is chairman of the Subcommittee on Patents, Trademarks, and Copyrights of the Senate Judiciary Committee, was amended in some particulars on the floor of the Senate before passage.

This bill, which is entitled An Act, as passed by the Senate, is in its general terms the same as the measure approved by the House of Representatives in 1967. The Senate bill does contain, however, a number of provisions not in the version passed by the House, including one relating to cable antenna television, the problem which was largely responsible for the delay in approval of the bill by the Senate. Also, the Senate bill includes, as Title II, a provision for the establishment of a National Commission on New Technological Uses of Copyrighted Works and, as Title III, a measure for the Protection of Ornamental Designs of Useful Articles.

The Senate version requires action by the House, which is not expected to occur in the present Congress. Thus the bill will presumably be introduced in the House next year and hearings held before the Subcommittee on Courts, Civil Liberties, and the Administration of Justice of the House Judiciary Committee.

The revision bill, which would supersede the present copyright statute enacted in 1909, is a general modernization of the U. S. copyright system. Among other things, it would provide for

(OVER)

a single term of statutory protection for works created after the new law takes effect; instead of the present 28-year first term plus a renewal term, the period of protection for most such works would be the life of the author plus 50 years after his death, which is the term in most of the other developed countries of the world. Also, the revision bill specifically recognizes the principle of fair use and lists certain factors to be considered in determining whether a particular use falls within this category; and the bill exempts from liability certain reproductions of copyrighted works by libraries or archives.