

NEWS COPYRIGHT NOT LEGAL.

In a lecture before the University Law School of New York, Professor James A. Whitney, LL. D., alluded to Mr. Watterson's scheme for copyrighting news, and said:

"The legal obstacles appear to me to be insuperable. In the first place, it is only the 'writings' of an author which Congress is authorized by the Constitution to protect. There can be no copyright on news alone; the copyright must be on the verbal form. Further, if such right exists, it must be a matter of public record and must exist as a grant before a right of action could accrue. Further, the author is the person who gives verbal form to the writing, not the newspaper owner who publishes it, and before the latter could avail himself of the right he would have to show a written assignment from the author. The time proposed is so short that no application for an injunction could be made; and if there were, and there were several alleged owners of the right, all would need to be joined as complainants. If an action for damages was brought there would need to be the same joinder of parties, and actual damages would need to be proved. All this on the supposition that the matter would be copied verbatim. But, as a matter of fact, it would be as easy to abridge or to put the ideas or information in totally different and original language, and this would constitute a new and distinct writing, wholly independent of the other and which the other could not reach."

THE GLOBE made substantially the same criticism on Mr. WATTERSON'S queer scheme when it was first proposed. We are inclined to believe that the Associated Press will have to take its chances with the rest of the journalistic world in getting the news.