

Patent Act

is any strong partisan division in the house—as effective as possible for its purpose. I would welcome, as I know my colleagues and I am sure everyone would, all the assistance that all hon. members on either side of the house can give in this matter.

I repeat that the sole purpose of the bill is to put the patent office on a paying basis. I doubt whether there will be any difference of view about the desirability of doing that. I do not think any hon. member would seriously argue that this particular amendment to the Patent Act should be postponed until the inquiry had been held. That is the reason this bill is being offered at this time.

Mr. Speaker: The minister has indicated that perhaps hon. members would like to make suggestions as to the inquiry which he will have established at a later date. Of course this procedure would be out of order. What we have before us now is a bill to amend the Patent Act only in a few particulars. The principle of the bill is what must be discussed on second reading, and in this case the principle is the desirability of increasing the tariff of fees. If hon. members agree with the suggestion the minister has made and if that is the wish of the house, all right. I shall leave it up to them.

Mr. Fulton: No.

Mr. Speaker: If they do not agree to accede to the minister's suggestion that at this stage they give their own views on the proposed inquiry, I will have to ask that the discussion on second reading be relevant to the principle, as is provided for by the rules.

Mr. E. D. Fulton (Kamloops): To deal first with the point you have just mentioned, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that I should say this. We welcome the spirit in which the minister has made his suggestion. We on this side of the house do not like to turn down opportunities for discussion. But, having regard to the circumstances under which the invitation has been extended it seems to me that we are really not in a position to take advantage of it because no one of us had any idea that this subject would be raised. Certainly, speaking for myself alone—but I imagine that there are quite a number of other hon. members who are in the same position, probably the majority of them—I have not had any opportunity to marshal any thoughts on the subject.

I should therefore like to make this counter-suggestion to the minister. I hardly imagine that there is any great urgency, in the usual sense of the word, with regard to the proposed inquiry. I appreciate that the government, having decided to embark upon

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

this inquiry, would like to get ahead with it as soon as possible, but there is no urgency in the sense that the affairs of the nation are really going to suffer if it does not get under way immediately. I would therefore suggest that possibly a more logical way to deal with the matter would be to wait until the minister's estimates are reached, at which time there would be the fullest opportunity for discussion of the matter and for the making of suggestions as to the terms of reference of the inquiry and so on. I think that would be the better way to deal with the matter.

Mr. Pickersgill: I think the hon. member's suggestion is a most happy and sensible one. I am rather sorry that I was not bright enough to think of it myself. I would certainly be very happy to agree with it.

Mr. Fulton: I thank the minister for accepting the suggestion. I have just one other comment to make. The bill itself—I am now dealing with the bill, not with the other subject—is relatively simple and certainly, at the outset, appeared to be completely non-controversial. I had some doubts on that score when the minister, I thought, was in danger of both obscuring the clarity of the bill and destroying its non-controversial aspect when he appeared to be trying to drag into it stamps on cheques, whose relationship to the bill I was not able to appreciate although the motive behind the minister's method was more obvious. However, we shall not let that spoil the discussion. Being as simple as it is in purpose and in scope, I think the bill really does not require any extended remarks at this stage, although I shall have some questions to ask the minister when we go into committee.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I think we all agree with the result of this discussion so far as the minister's announcement about the inquiry is concerned, and I shall concur in the suggestion that has now been made. As a matter of fact, I have in my files upstairs a few letters which may now be sent to the minister as suggestions rather than bringing them here to the floor of the house. What is good about the announcement made by the Secretary of State (Mr. Pickersgill) today is that it gives to the public advance notice that such an inquiry is to be made, and any people who are interested in the Patent Act, the Copyright Act or the Industrial Design and Union Label Act will now be in a position to forward their suggestions either to the Secretary of State or to members of parliament so they may transmit them to the Secretary of State.