

Patent Act

be done in many ways that have not been attempted in the past. We in Canada are now embarking upon what we hope is an industrial era, and we could afford to extend inducements to inventors who have produced inventions that will be of advantage to the nation. Surely he can provide patent facilities, particularly in view of the fact that the government has made a substantial profit each year out of those who apply for patents and who pay for what is ordinarily regarded as a service but is actually a profit to the Dominion of Canada.

Mr. RICHARD (Ottawa East): Last year, when we discussed the estimates of the Secretary of State's department I suggested that we should have a special committee to deal with the revision of the Patent Act. This suggestion was not adopted. Instead, the Secretary of State has submitted to the house a bill with certain amendments to the Patent Act. That is all very well, but I still think much will have to be done at a future date, because the scope of the committee's work was limited, although, mind you, they did deal with a great number of matters which were not already within the scope of the amendment suggested by the Secretary of State.

Generally speaking, the difficulties in the patent office at present relate to accommodation and staff. I trust that the Secretary of State and the Minister of Public Works will find some way to secure decent accommodation for this highly technical department, which renders such good service to the public.

I had heard that it was the intention to move the patent office out to the experimental farm. That is absolutely absurd. The patent office renders a service which should be within the reach of those who practise before the office, and within the reach of the public who come to this city. To move the patent office such a distance from the city would be a great disadvantage to the public and to the people who are concerned with patents.

Another matter which is of great concern in connection with the administration of the Patent Act is that of securing competent personnel. I have the greatest admiration for the men and women who work in the patent office. I have been dealing with them for the past twenty years, and I should have a fond recollection of that office because my own father was commissioner of patents at one time. But these technical men have been working under circumstances which are not befitting that type of personnel. Down by the Ottawa river similar personnel are to be found in the national research council which is housed in a beautiful, well-lighted edifice, with all the facilities that technicians should

[Mr. Boucher.]

have at hand. The personnel of the patent office is, as I said before, competent. There is no blame for any delays or lack of service to be attached to the competency of the officials and officers of the patent office. But if we wish to secure more technicians in the patent office we must also pay them wages which should be paid to technicians. It is hard to believe that we ask engineers to become examiners on the staff of the patent office, with salaries under \$3,000, to examine and pass upon inventions of technicians who earn ten times as much. It is also much harder to ask them to remain for a great length of time in the patent office at such salaries. I hope that the Secretary of State will see to it that decent salaries are paid in the future to the examiners and the staff of the patent office. I have particularly in mind now the salary of the assistant commissioner of patents and the principal examiner. These men's salaries range around \$4,200, if I remember rightly. You cannot expect in the future to attract the best brains in the engineering class to continue to occupy the post of assistant commissioner, after twenty or twenty-five years of service, at a salary of \$4,500.

I wish to make only these remarks at the present time, Mr. Chairman, I will come back to the sections when they are called, but I thought this might be the only opportunity I would have to speak about accommodation, staff and wages, which are really the essentials. I think that once the commissioner of patents, who is an efficient man, is given the tools, he will give the public the service for which we all are asking.

Mr. COLDWELL: Mr. Chairman, I think it is indeed time that we went into this business of patents and I am very glad that something has been done at the present session. I agree with the hon. member who has just taken his seat that if we wish to have efficiency in any of these government departments we must get qualified people, and we must pay them salaries commensurate with the responsibilities which they carry. But there is an aspect of patents which I think has not been gone into sufficiently.

It has always seemed to me that the patent situation in Canada is one which, from time to time, has enabled powerful corporations and interests to exact from the people of Canada dues to which such corporations and interests were not entitled. I am thinking at the moment particularly of the radio business. Why should a Canadian who buys a small radio in the United States, declares it at the point of entry and brings it into Canada,