novelty; their system is simply registration. If it is deemed expedient, the examination may be covered by regulations to be approved by order in council when the new act comes into force. If we were to extend the examination as urged by the member for South Wellington—

Mr. GUTHRIE: I do not want it extended.

Mr. ROBB: Let us take the experience of the United States patent office. On their own statement, they have failed to have a proper examination. United States patents are frequently set aside by the courts on the ground of lack of novelty in the invention—quite as frequently as our Canadian patents.

9 p.m.

Mr. PUTNAM: As frequently in proportion to their number?

Mr. ROBB: In proportion, yes. In order to make such examination as the law requires now we would have to make our examining staff at least equal in proportion to the number of patents issued to that of the United States. In the United States, for the year ending December 31, 1922, they issued 38,670 patents; in Canada during the last fiscal year over 12,000 patents were issued. The examining staff in the United States is over 400; in Canada it is about 25. To make the Canadian examining staff proportionately equal to that of the United States, about 100 examiners would have to be added at an annual salary of, say, $2,500 each, making a total of $250,000, and in addition, to provide the material for the examiners, that is to say, copies of all the patents of the world, and publications relating to inventions, including assembling, classification and translation of the same, there would have to be an annual appropriation of $250,000. So that it would mean an increased expenditure of $500,000 to this country.

Mr. McMASTER: How many applications do we have in a year?

Mr. ROBB: We put through 12,000 in the last fiscal year. At present the examination in the Canadian Patent office is confined to our own records, with a view to seeing that a patent for the invention has not already been granted, and that we are consequently in a position to grant one. If it be found that no patent is already granted and the inventor meets the other requirements of the law, the patent is granted. The inventor swears he is the first to make the invention, and his statement is accepted. If it turns out that he has made a misrepresentation and that the invention has already been patented, so much the worse for him, because his patent will be set aside by the courts. The responsibility is upon him, and the country is thus saved a vast sum of money. We have now a net revenue from that department of over $250,000. If we carry out the ideas suggested by my hon. friend, instead of having a surplus of $250,000 we shall have an additional expenditure of $500,000.

Mr. BOYS: Is it the intention of the department to relax activity in the examination of patents?

Mr. ROBB: No.

Mr. BOYS: If it is the intention to maintain the same degree of care in the examination, why not leave the clause as it is? The clause does not give any guarantee to a patentee; it merely provides that there shall be a thorough and reliable examination. It does not say that the examination is final or anything of that kind, but it does guard against the granting of patents where they should not be granted. I have had some little experience in connection with applications for patents, and I know that people in the country have not the facilities to find out whether or not a given article can be patented; they could only do it if they had access to an extensive library. I have sometimes taken the precaution to write to Washington to get what information I could, but that information is not always reliable. Where there is no suggestion to guarantee and where the minister intends to make the same careful examination—and he will require the same number of officials to do it, why not leave the provision as it is? I have in mind two cases where after an examination the patents were refused. Now, if there is any relaxation, patents may be granted when they should not have been granted and the money of the applicants will be thrown away. I certainly want to strongly support what the hon. member for South Wellington (Mr. Guthrie), and the hon. member for Brome (Mr. McMaster) have said. If the idea was to give a guarantee I certainly would agree with the minister. I do not think that precautions should be done away with entirely. There should be a reasonably careful examination of the patent to see whether or not it should be granted and thereby stop the issue of patents for which there is not justification.

Mr. ROBB: There would be no objection to leaving in the words "reasonable examination". If you adopt the words "thorough and reliable examination" that will not be a reasonable examination.