

reign of our present Gracious Sovereign a blessing not only to her own subjects, but to the age in which we live.

Having thus cursorily reviewed the history of the Patent Laws of the mother country, let us turn to our own Canada and see what has been done here for the protection and encouragement of the inventor, and how the Government of Canada recognizes the validity of the inventor's claims.

The introduction into the Province of grants of this description is of recent date, the first statute having been signed on the 9th March, 1824. It consisted of ten short sections, whereby any British subject residing in Canada could obtain a patent (extending over 14 years) for the invention of any art, machine, manufacture or composition of matter not known or used before in this Province by presenting to the Governor General a petition setting forth these facts, and filing therewith a specification, drawings and a model in the office of the Provincial Secretary. The fee for a patent was £3 10s. or \$14. The first Canadian patent was granted under the provisions of this act on the 8th of June of the same year 1824, three months after this act came into force.

The Government of Canada having published lately the specifications of patents issued in both Provinces, before and after the Union, from the year 1824 to January, 1844, and the specifications and drawings from the latter period to May, 1849, I am enabled to call your attention to some of the patents granted during those periods, that you may see how little attention the applications must have received before being granted. During 1824 but three patents were granted. (*See Patents.*) In 1825 there was but one grant. In 1826 there were three. In 1827 and '28 no grants were made. So that from 1824 to 1828, a period of five years, but seven Canadian patents were granted.

On the first of May, 1828, this statute expired by limitation, and no further action was taken until the following year, when an act was passed reviving and continuing the provisions of the first act until the first of May, 1831, with an additional clause extending its provisions to British subjects, residents of this Province, who, while travelling in foreign countries, discovered any invention not in use in Canada, and allowing them to take out a patent for its introduction, and placing them on the same footing and subject to the same conditions as inventors.

From the 31st October, 1826, to the 3rd October, 1829, not a single patent was issued in Canada.

In March, 1831, an act was passed extending the last act until 1836, and limiting patents of introduction to inventions discovered by Canadians while

travelling in countries other than the United States and the British dominions.

In 1836 all acts passed on this subject were repealed and another passed, whereby it was provided that application for Letters Patent should be made by petition to the Governor General; that a specification and drawings and a model should be deposited with the Provincial Secretary, who should make out the patent and submit it to the Attorney General, who should, within fifteen days, certify at its foot the correctness or incorrectness of the grant and return it to the Provincial Secretary, who, if correct, should submit it to the Governor General for signature, and then record it in a book to be kept for that purpose, after which it was to be given to the patentee.

It was further provided that the discoverer of any improvement in the principle of any machine, &c., could patent the improved article, but the two patents were held to be distinct, and neither the original patentee was permitted to use the improvement nor the patentee of the improvement to use the original invention.

With the exception of the fee, which was reduced to \$10, the other sections were those of the previous act.

In the spring of 1840, the Special Council, sitting at Montreal, passed an ordinance declaring the provisions of this act to be permanent. In 1849 an act repealing the Patent Laws in force was passed, and another enacted, which was again amended in 1851. From the 9th of March, 1824, to the 11th of May, 1849, inclusive, a period of over 25 years, there were granted in Canada 290 patents, being at the rate of eleven per annum.

The two acts of 1849 and 1851 now merged into the 132nd chapter of the Consolidated Statutes of Canada, form the Patent Laws of this Province, as they exist at the present day, and are common to both sections.

(*To be continued.*)

## NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF PETROLEUM OR ROCK OIL.

By T. STERRY HUNT, M.A., F.R.S., of the Geological Survey of Canada.

Abridged from the *Canadian Naturalist*, July, 1861.

Public attention has lately been drawn to the petroleum furnished by the oil wells in Canada and the United States, and we have therefore thought it well to bring some few facts which may serve to explain the origin of this and of similar substances, including naphtha, petroleum or rock oil, and asphalt or mineral pitch, all of which are forms of bitumen, the one being solid and the others fluid at ordinary temperatures. These differences are, in many cases at least, due to subsequent alterations; the more liquid of these substances are mixtures of oils differ-