

took out patents on means of propelling boats. On the same day Nathan Read received one on a process for distilling alcohol.

More than fifty patents were granted under the Patent Act of 1790, and mechanical devices were coming in so thick and fast that the department heads apparently found it inconvenient to hear applications. So the Act of 1790 was repealed. The second Patent Act (1793) provided that a patent should be granted as a matter of routine to any one who swore to the originality of his device and paid the sum of thirty dollars as a fee. No one except a citizen, however, could receive a patent. This act, with some amendments, remained in force until 1836, when the present Patent Office was organized with a rigorous and intricate system for examination of all claims in order to prevent interference. Protection of the property rights of inventors has been from the beginning of the nation a definite American policy, and to this policy may be ascribed innumerable inventions which have contributed to the greatness of American industry and multiplied the world's comforts and conveniences.

Under the second Patent Act came the most important invention yet offered, an invention