

# The Canadian Engineer

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## PRINTED COPIES OF PATENTS

SIR ROBERT HADFIELD, president of the Society of British Gas Industries and head of the great firm of Hadfield Limited, of Sheffield, England, in a recent address on patent law reform, made the following statement:—

"As an example of the antediluvian policy of our Empire on this question, an Englishman in this country cannot get a copy of a Canadian patent without sending to Canada, and even then he gets only a typewritten copy, as patent specifications are not printed there."

This condition of affairs in the Patent Office at Ottawa has been brought to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture, of whose department the Patent Office forms a branch, by Mr. Hanbury A. Budden, a well-known patent attorney of Montreal. Mr. Budden marshals some very strong arguments for the attention of the government, and it is to be hoped that his efforts will be successful.

The Canadian patent office has issued over 180,000 patents. Canada ranks seventh among the countries of the world in this respect. A copy of a British patent costs 8 pence, while the U.S. Patent Office sells copies at 5 cents each. A copy of a Canadian patent costs an average of over two dollars and can be obtained only after considerable delay.

In the U.S. Commissioner of Patents' report to Congress for the year ending December 31st, 1917, the following figures are given:—

"Printed copies of specifications and drawings of patents to the number of 2,511,082 were sold at five cents each, bringing to this office on this account \$125,554.10. For 1,277,184 copies sold to libraries, the office received

\$1,612.50. The total received from the sale of copies of patents was \$127,166.60.

"Copies to the number of 1,097,550 were shipped to foreign governments, and 142,640 copies were drawn for office use. The total number of printed copies of patents distributed during the year was 5,354,133."

These figures show that there is a great demand for printed copies.

The public is interested in the publications of patents because it has the right to know the terms of the grant of a monopoly in order to avoid infringement while the monopoly exists, and it has also the right to know what has become public property when that monopoly ceases.

The patentee is interested in the publication of patents as he would readily purchase a number of copies of his patent to assist him in exploiting his invention.

The patent office is urgently in need of printed copies, not only to supply the examiners' files, but also to fulfil an agreement with the U.S. Patent Office to exchange copies.

In Great Britain and the United States, the libraries in all the great centres contain copies of patents for reference. In Canada it is necessary to go to Ottawa to make a search, and even then the cumbersome typewritten copies, which are not properly classified, make a search difficult and tedious.

The Canadian Patent Act, as it now stands, provides for the printing of specifications and drawings subject to the approval of the Governor-in-Council.

Undoubtedly it will take a long time to print the 180,000 patents which have been already issued, but that is a matter for special consideration. There is no doubt, however, that the system of printing specifications and drawings should be adopted at once and thus prevent the increase of arrears.

Canada has reached such a stage in her development that she should endeavor to be among the progressive nations, particularly in matters that concern her intercourse with other nations. The present time of rapid industrial and technical advance demands a change from old methods which may have been suitable for a young country. The contrast between our methods and those of the United States is very striking. An earnest effort should be made to reorganize our primitive system and bring it up-to-date.

## DISTANT CONTROL OPERATION

IN the design of the new hydro-electric generating station at Cedars Rapids, Iowa, a radical forward step has been taken in the elimination of operator's wages in a station of considerable size, without sacrificing complete control. The station consists of three 400-kw., 60-rev. per min., 2,300-volt vertical generating units, tied in to a system of which the main generating station contains about 20,000 kv.a. in steam turbo-generators. One striking feature is the entire omission of the usual governors, the waterwheel gates being motor-driven and controlled by contact-making ammeters. Each unit has its individual control panel, consisting of the necessary contactors and relays to connect it to the bus at the proper time. A motor-driven drum controller gives the proper time element between the different steps in the operation of placing the generator on the line. Any generator can be started either by a float switch when the pond level reaches the proper height or by a remote control button in the steam station. The starting of the first generator throws on the line the motor of one of the two exciter sets, and