

when I say that I mean that we hope, before parliament next meets, to be able to remedy many of the current inadequacies.

The type of questions he has placed before the committee to-night were put to me earlier in the evening by the hon. member for Peel, who had to leave the house and who asked me if I would let the item stand. Since I did not wish to accede to that request, it was suggested that he might leave the questions with me in writing, and that I would make replies forthwith.

His first question is: What is the lapse of time between the arrival of a patent application at the patent office and the issue of the official filing receipt? The answer is, about two years. This includes delays of replies by and to solicitors in answer to letters which have to do with patent applications. The statutory period for answering letters is six months. There is also a delay of six months in the payment of the final fee before the patent is issued. There are about 20,000 applications now before the patent office, and these are being actively prosecuted.

His second question is: How many applications now in the patent office have been there for (a) three years or (b) for four years or more? The answer is that there are over 10,000 applications at present in the patent office which are three years old. The proportion that have been in the patent office for four years is difficult to estimate, since all secret applications filed during the war could not be examined, for security reasons. These applications are only now being released from secrecy. There were between 4,000 and 5,000 secret applications filed, most of these emanating from Great Britain and the United States. The patent examining staff was reduced by twenty-five per cent during the war, on account of examiners being lent to other war departments, and because a number of the staff went on active service.

The third question is: How many applications have been in the patent office (a) for four years and (b) for five years or more? As I have already said, secret applications could not be examined during the war years. There are between 5,000 and 6,000 applications in the office for over four years. For over five years, these consist principally of secret applications, of which there are probably about 4,000. They are now being withdrawn from secrecy and being examined as quickly as possible.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): I am not thoroughly familiar with this. There is reference to applications which have been there four or five years. Does that mean

[Mr. Martin.]

that probably some important business operations are being held up because of the delay in issuing patents?

Mr. MARTIN: No, an effort is made to deal with the more important applications. But I am frank enough to say that there are delays; and these delays are due to the fact that the applications require very close attention on the part of the examiners. When I point out that at the present time we have thirty-eight per cent more applications than we had in 1939, with our staff twenty-five per cent reduced, the hon. member will understand our present difficulty.

I am faced with the difficulty of trying to meet a legitimate request for economy in expenditures. One is torn between that very proper desire at this time and the necessity for meeting a growing demand. However, we shall have to increase the staff; there will be no alternative.

Steps have already been taken. The civil service commission is advertising for some special technicians who will serve as examiners, in an effort to meet this growing problem, one which, I may say, is not found only in this country, but is common to Great Britain and particularly the United States.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): Did I not understand the hon. member for Ottawa East to say that the patent office is self-sustaining?

Mr. MARTIN: Up to \$350,000 this year.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): It pays its way?

Mr. MARTIN: It is a revenue-producing department.

Mr. MACDONNELL (Muskoka-Ontario): Then surely the argument for economy is almost in reverse. However keen one may be for economy, one does not wish a profitable business to be held back.

Mr. MARTIN: I may say the hon. member's observations are most helpful.

Item agreed to.

Public Printing and Stationery—
270. Departmental administration, \$40,490.

Mr. KNOWLES: Earlier in the session, on another item, I asked a number of questions of the Secretary of State respecting the work of the printing bureau. In a number of instances he said consideration was being given to the matters concerning which I had questioned him. Has anything come from the consideration being given to the use of the union label on government printing?