RECENT LEGAL DECISIONS.

PRITCHARD v. MERCHANTS' MARINE INSURANCE Co.—A and B each owned 32-64ths of a vessel. A insured his "on account of whom it may concern," the insurance really being effected on behalf of himself and B. A condition in the policy was as follows: "The interest of the assured in this policy or any part thereof, or in the property hereby insured, or any part thereof, is not assignable without the consent of the company in writing, and in case of transfer or termination of any such interest of the insured, either by sale or otherwise, without such consent, this policy shall from thenceforth be void and of no effect." B afterwards, without the consent of the company, transferred one-third of his share to A by a bill of sale, which, though absolute on its face, was in reality given for security for advances made by A to fit out the vessel. The Supreme Court of New Brunswick held that the policy was not void, since the condition therein prohibited an absolute transfer only, and not a transfer by way of mortgage.

DOLBEAR v. AMERICAN BELL TELEPHONE Co., AND FIVE OTHER CASES AGAINST THE SAME DEFENDANTS.—All these cases were brought by the Bell Telephone Company, as owners of two patents known as the Bell Telephone Patents, to enjoin the several defendants against infringing those patents. The two patents alleged to have come into the ownership of the complainants were No. 174,465, dated March 7, 1876, granted to Alexander Graham Bell for new and useful improvements in telegraphy; and No. 186,787, dated 30th January, 1877, granted to the same inventor for new and useful improvements in electric telephony. The gist of the elaborate judgment of the Supreme Court of the United States, which establishes the validity of the patents and enjoins the defendants against infringing the same, is as follows: It appears from the proof in these causes that Alexander Graham Bell was the first discoverer of the art or process of transferring to, or impressing upon, a current of electricity in a closed circuit, by gradually changing its intensity, the vibrations of air produced by the human voice in articulate speech, in a way to cause the speech to be carried to and received by a listener at a distance on the line of the current; and this discovery was patentable under the Patent laws of the United States. In order to procure a patent for a process, the inventor must describe his invention with sufficient clearness and precision to enable those skilled in the matter to understand what his process is, and must point out some practicable way of putting it in operation; but he is not required to bring the art to the highest degree of perfection. Bell's fifth claim under his patent of March 7th, 1876, No. 174,465, is not confined to the magneto instrument, or to such modes of creating electrical undulations as could be produced by that form of apparatus. This fifth claim also covered his invention of an apparatus to make useful his discovery of an art or process for electrical transmission of speech, and this invention was patentable under the laws of the United States. The discovery and invention patented by Bell by his patent of March 7th, 1876, was not described in the publication made by Charles Bourseul in Paris in 1854, nor in the publication in Germany in 1861-63 respecting the experiments and inventions of Philip Reis, nor in the publication in Germany in 1862 of what are known of the Reis—Legat experiments; and they were not anticipated by the experiments of Dr. Vander Weyde in New York in 1869, nor by the invention of J. W. McDonough of Chicago in 1876, nor by the invention patented in the United States to C. F. Varley of London, June 2nd, 1868, nor by the invention patented to said Varley in England, October 8th, 1870. For reasons stated in its opinion, the Court holds that the alleged invention of the telephone by Daniel Drawbaugh, prior to Bell's discovery and invention patented to him March 7th, 1876, is not made ont; and that the charge of a fraudulent interpolation in Bell's specification after the filing of it in the Patent Office, between February 14 and February 19th, 1876, is not sustained; furthermore, that not a shadow of suspicion can rest on anyone growing out of the misprint of the specification in the Dowd case. The authority conferred by the special Act of Massachusetts "to incorporate the American Bell Telephone Company" authorized the corporation organized under 3, Mass. Stat., 1870, 6,224, to select its corporate name, and made the statutory certificate provided for by paragraph 11 of that Act conclusive proof of its corporate existence. There is nothing in the revised statutes to invalidate an American patent which bears a different date from that of a foreign patent for the same invention, except to limit its term to the term of the foreign patent. Letters patent No. 186,787, dated January 30th, 1877, granted to Alexander Grahame Bell for an improvement in electric telephony, is a valid patent, and the fifth claim under it was not anticipated by the magnet described by Schellen.