



Patents and Designs Act 1907

1907 CHAPTER 29

PART I

PATENTS

Application for and Grant of Patent

1 Application

- (1) An application for a patent may be made by any person who claims to be the true and first inventor of an invention, whether he is a British subject or not, and whether alone or jointly with any other person.
- (2) The application must be made in the prescribed form, and must be left at, or sent by post to, the patent office in the prescribed manner.
- (3) The application must contain a declaration to the effect that the applicant is in possession of an invention, whereof he, or in the case of a joint application one at least of the applicants, claims to be the true and first inventor, and for which he desires to obtain a patent, and must be accompanied by either a provisional or complete specification.
- (4) The declaration required by this section may be either a statutory declaration or not, as may be prescribed.

2 Specifications

- (1) A provisional specification must describe the nature of the invention.
- (2) A complete specification must particularly describe and ascertain the nature of the invention and the manner in which the same is to be performed.
- (3) In the case of any provisional or complete specification where the comptroller deems it desirable he may require that suitable drawings shall be supplied with the specification,

or at any time before the acceptance of the same, and such drawings shall be deemed to form part of the said specification.

- (4) A specification, whether provisional or complete, must commence with the title, and in the case of a complete specification must end with a distinct statement of the invention claimed.
- (5) Where the invention in respect of which an application is made is a chemical invention, such typical samples and specimens as may be prescribed shall, if in any particular case the comptroller considers it desirable so to require, be furnished before the acceptance of the complete specification.

3 Proceedings upon application

- (1) The Comptroller General of Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks (herein-after referred to as the comptroller) shall refer every application to an examiner.
- (2) if the examiner reports that the nature of the invention is not fairly described, or that the application, specification, or drawings have not been prepared in the prescribed manner, or that the title does not sufficiently indicate the subject-matter of the invention, the comptroller may refuse to accept the application or require that the application, specification, or drawings be amended before he proceeds with the application ; and in the latter case the application shall, if the comptroller so directs, bear date as from the time when the requirement is complied with.
- (3) Where the comptroller refuses to accept an application or requires an amendment, the applicant may appeal from his decision to the law officer, who shall, if required, hear the applicant and the comptroller, and may make an order determining whether and subject to what conditions (if any) the application shall be accepted.
- (4) The comptroller shall, when an application has been accepted, give notice thereof to the applicant.

4 Provisional protection

Where an application for a patent in respect of an invention has been accepted, the invention may during the period between the date of the application and the date of sealing such patent be used and published without prejudice to the patent to be granted for the invention; and such protection from the consequences of use and publication is in this Act referred to as-provisional protection.

5 Time for leaving complete specification

- (1) If the applicant does not leave a complete specification with his application, he may leave it at any subsequent time within six months from the date of the application.

Provided that, where an application is made for an extension of the time for leaving a complete specification, the comptroller shall, on payment of the prescribed fee, grant an extension of time to the extent applied for but not exceeding one month.

- (2) Unless a complete specification is so left, the application shall be deemed to be abandoned.

6 Comparison of provisional and complete specification

- (1) Where a complete specification is left after a provisional specification, the comptroller shall refer both specifications to an examiner.
- (2) If the examiner reports that the complete specification has not been prepared in the prescribed manner, the comptroller may refuse to accept the complete specification until it has been amended to his satisfaction.
- (3) If the examiner reports that the invention particularly described in the complete specification is not substantially the same as that which is described in the provisional specification the comptroller may—
 - (a) refuse to accept the complete specification until it has been amended to his satisfaction ; or
 - (b) (with the consent of the applicant) cancel the provisional specification and treat the application as having been made on the date at which the complete specification was left, and the application shall have effect as if made on that date :

Provided that where the complete specification includes an invention not included in the provisional specification, the comptroller may allow the original application to proceed so far as the invention included both in the provisional and in the complete specification is concerned, and treat the claim for the additional invention included in the complete specification as an application for that invention made on the date at which the complete specification was left.

- (4) A refusal of the comptroller to accept a complete specification shall be subject to appeal to the law officer, who shall, if required, hear the applicant and the comptroller and may make an order determining whether and subject to what conditions (if any) the complete specification shall be accepted.
- (5) Unless a complete specification is accepted within twelve months from the date of the application, the application shall (except where an appeal has been lodged) become void.

Provided that, where an application is made for an extension of time for the acceptance of a complete specification, the comptroller shall, on payment of the prescribed fee, grant an extension of time to the extent applied for but not exceeding three months.

7 Investigation of previous specifications in United Kingdom on applications for patents

- (1) Where an application for a patent has been made and a complete specification has been left, the examiner shall, in addition to the other inquiries which he is directed to make by this Act, make a further investigation for the purpose of ascertaining whether the invention claimed has been wholly or in part claimed or described in any specification (other than a provisional specification not followed by a complete specification) published before the date of the application, and left pursuant to any application for a patent made in the United Kingdom within fifty years next before the date of the application.
- (2) If on investigation it appears that the invention has been wholly or in part claimed or described in any such specification, the applicant shall be informed thereof, and the applicant may, within such time as may be prescribed, amend his specification,

and the amended specification shall be investigated in like manner as the original specification.

- (3) If the comptroller is satisfied that no objection exists to the specification on the ground that the invention claimed thereby has been wholly or in part claimed or described in a previous specification as before mentioned, he shall, in the absence of any other lawful ground of objection, accept the specification.
- (4) If the comptroller is not so satisfied, he shall, after hearing the applicant, and unless the objection is removed by amending the specification to the satisfaction of the comptroller, determine whether a reference to any, and if so what, prior specifications ought to be made in the specification by way of notice to the public.

Provided that the comptroller, if satisfied that the invention claimed has been wholly and specifically claimed in any specification to which the investigation has extended, may, in lieu of requiring references to be made in the applicant's specification as aforesaid, refuse to grant a patent.

- (5) An appeal shall lie from the decision of the comptroller under this section to the law officer.
- (6) The investigations and reports required by this section shall not be held in any way to guarantee the validity of any patent, and no liability shall be incurred by the Board of Trade or any officer thereof by reason of, or in connexion with, any such investigation or report, or any proceeding consequent thereon.

8 Investigation of specifications published subsequently to application

- (1) An investigation under the last preceding section shall extend to specifications published after the date of the application in respect of which the investigation is made, and being specifications which have been deposited pursuant to prior applications; and that section shall, subject to rules under this Act, have effect accordingly.
- (2) Where, on such an extended investigation, it appears that the invention claimed in the specification deposited pursuant to an application is wholly or in part claimed in any published specification deposited pursuant to a prior application, the applicant shall, whether or not his specification has been accepted or a patent granted to him, be afforded such facilities as may be prescribed for amending his specification, and in the event of his failing to do so the comptroller shall, in accordance with such procedure as may be prescribed, determine what reference, if any, to other specifications ought to be made in his specification by way of notice to the public.
- (3) For the purposes of this section an application shall be deemed to be prior to another application if the patent applied for when granted would be of prior date to the patent granted pursuant to that other application.
- (4) This section shall come into operation at such date as the Board of Trade may by order direct, and shall apply only to applications made after that date, and the order shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament.

9 Advertisement on acceptance of complete specification

On the acceptance of the complete specification the comptroller shall advertise the acceptance ; and the application and specifications with the drawings (if any) shall be open to public inspection.

10 Effect of acceptance of complete specification

After the acceptance of a complete specification and until the date of sealing a patent in respect thereof, or the expiration of the time for sealing, the applicant shall have the like privileges and rights as if a patent for the invention had been sealed on the date of the acceptance of the complete specification. Provided that an applicant shall not be entitled to institute any proceeding for infringement until a patent for the invention has been granted to him.

11 Opposition to grant of patent

- (1) Any person may at any time within two months from the date of the advertisement of the acceptance of a complete specification give notice at the Patent Office of opposition to the grant of the patent on any of the following grounds:—
 - (a) that the applicant obtained the invention from him, or from a person of whom he is the legal representative ; or
 - (b) that the invention has been claimed in any complete specification for a British patent which is or will be of prior date to the patent the grant of which is opposed, other than a specification deposited pursuant to an application made more than fifty years before the date of the application for such last-mentioned patent ; or
 - (c) that the nature of the invention or the manner in which . it is to be performed is not sufficiently or fairly described and ascertained in the complete specification ; or
 - (d) that the complete specification describes or claims an invention other than that described in the provisional specification, and that such other invention forms the subject of an application made by the opponent in the interval between the leaving of the provisional specification and the leaving of the complete specification,but on no other ground.
- (2) Where such notice is given the comptroller shall give notice of the opposition to the applicant, and shall, on the expiration of those two months, after hearing the applicant and the opponent, if desirous of being heard, decide on the case.
- (3) The decision of the comptroller shall be subject to appeal to the law officer, who shall, if required, hear the applicant and the opponent, if the opponent is, in his opinion, a person entitled to be heard in opposition to the grant of the patent, and shall decide the case ; and the law officer may, if he thinks fit, obtain the assistance of an expert, who shall be paid such remuneration as the law officer with the consent of the Treasury may determine.

12 Grant and sealing of patent

- (1) If there is no opposition, or, in case of opposition, if the determination is in favour of the grant of a patent, a patent shall, on payment of the prescribed fee, be granted to the applicant, or in the case of a joint application to the applicants jointly, and the comptroller shall cause the patent to be sealed with the seal of the patent office.
- (2) A patent shall be sealed as soon as may be, and not after the expiration of fifteen months from the date of application, provided that—
 - (a) Where the comptroller has allowed an extension of the time within which a complete specification may be left or accepted, a further extension of four

months after the said fifteen months shall be allowed for the sealing of the patent:

- (b) Where the sealing is delayed by an appeal to the law officer, or by opposition to the grant of the patent, the patent may be sealed at such time as the law officer may direct:
- (c) Where the patent is granted to the legal representative of an applicant who has died before the expiration of the time which would otherwise be allowed for sealing the patent, the patent may be sealed at any time within twelve months after the date of his death :
- (d) Where in consequence of the neglect or failure of the applicant to pay any fee a patent cannot be sealed within the period allowed by this section, that period may, on payment of the prescribed fee and on compliance with the prescribed conditions, be extended to such an extent as may be prescribed, and this provision shall, in such cases as may be prescribed and subject to the prescribed conditions, apply where the period allowed for the sealing of the patent has expired before the commencement of this Act.

13 Date of patent

Except as otherwise expressly provided by this Act, a patent shall be dated and sealed as of the date of the application : Provided that no proceedings shall be taken in respect of an infringement committed before the publication of the complete specification.

14 Effect, extent, and form of patent

- (1) A patent sealed with the seal of the Patent Office shall have the same effect as if it were sealed with the Great Seal of the United Kingdom, and shall have effect throughout the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man.

Provided that a patentee may assign his patent for any place in or part of the United Kingdom, or Isle of Man, as effectually as if the patent were originally granted to extend to that place or part only.

- (2) Every patent may be in the prescribed form and shall be granted for one invention only, but the specification may contain more than one claim; and it shall not be competent for any person in an action or other proceeding to take any objection to a patent on the ground that it has been granted for more than one invention.

15 Fraudulent applications for patents

- (1) A patent granted to the true and first inventor shall not be invalidated by an application in fraud of him, or by provisional protection obtained thereon, or by any use or publication of the invention subsequent to that fraudulent application during the period of provisional protection.
- (2) Where a patent has been revoked on the ground of fraud, the comptroller may, on the application of the true inventor made in accordance with the provisions of this Act, grant to him a patent in lieu of and bearing the same date as the patent so revoked :

Provided that no action shall be brought for any infringement of the patent so granted committed before the actual date when such patent was granted.

16 Single patent for cognate inventions

- (1) Where the same applicant has put in two or more provisional specifications for inventions which are cognate or modifications one of the other, and has obtained thereby concurrent provisional protection for the same, and the comptroller is of opinion that the whole of such inventions are such as 'to constitute a single invention and may properly be included in one patent, he may accept one complete specification in respect of the whole of such applications and grant a single patent thereon.
- (2) Such patent shall bear the date of the earliest of such applications, but, in considering the validity of the same and for the purpose of the provisions of this Act with respect to oppositions to the grant of patents, the court or the comptroller, as the case may be, shall have regard to the respective dates of the provisional specifications relating to the several matters claimed therein.

Term of Patent

17 Term of patent

- (1) The term limited in every patent for the duration thereof shall, save as otherwise expressly provided by this Act, be fourteen years from its date.
- (2) A patent shall, notwithstanding anything therein or in this Act, cease if the patentee fails to pay the prescribed fees within the prescribed times; provided that the comptroller, upon the application of the patentee, shall, on receipt of such additional fee, not exceeding ten pounds, as may be prescribed, enlarge the time to such an extent as may be applied for but not exceeding three months.
- (3) If any proceeding is taken in respect of an infringement of the patent committed after a failure to pay any fee within the prescribed time, and before any enlargement thereof, the court before which the proceeding is proposed to be taken may, if it thinks fit, refuse to award any damages in respect of such infringement.

18 Extension of term of patent

- (1) A patentee may, after advertising in manner provided by rules of the Supreme Court his intention to do so, present a petition to the court praying that his patent may be extended for a further term, but such petition must be presented at least six months before the time limited for the expiration of the patent.
- (2) Any person may give notice to the court of objection to the extension.
- (3) On the hearing of any petition under this section the patentee and any person who has given such notice of objection shall be made parties to the proceeding, and the comptroller shall be entitled to appear and be heard, and shall appear if so directed by the court.
- (4) The court, in considering its decision, shall have regard to the nature and merits of the invention in relation to the public, to the profits made by the patentee as such, and to all the circumstances of the case.
- (5) If it appears to the court that the patentee has been inadequately remunerated by his patent, the court may by order extend the term of the patent for a further term not exceeding seven, or, in exceptional cases, fourteen years, or may order the grant

of a new patent for such term as may be specified in the order and containing any restriction, conditions and provisions the court may think fit.

19 Patents of addition

- (1) Where a patent for an invention has been applied for or granted, and the applicant or the patentee, as the case may be, applies for a further patent in respect of any improvement in or modification of the invention, he may, if he thinks fit, in his application for the further patent, request that the term limited in that patent for the duration thereof be the same as that of the original patent or so much of that term as is unexpired.
- (2) Where an application containing such a request is made, a patent (herein-after referred to as a patent of addition) may be granted for such term as aforesaid.
- (3) A patent of addition shall remain in force so long as the patent for the original invention remains in force, but no longer, and in respect of a patent of addition no fees shall be payable for renewal.
- (4) The grant of a patent of addition shall be conclusive evidence that the invention is a proper subject for a patent of addition, and the validity of the patent shall not be questioned on the ground that the invention ought to have been the subject of an independent patent.

Restoration of lapsed Patents

20 Restoration of lapsed patents

- (1) Where any patent has become void owing to the failure of the patentee to pay any prescribed fee within the prescribed time, the patentee, may apply to the comptroller in the prescribed manner for an order for the restoration of the patent.
- (2) Every such application shall contain a statement of the circumstances which have led to the omission of the payment of the prescribed fee.
- (3) If it appears from such statement that the omission was unintentional and that no undue delay has occurred in the making of the application, the comptroller shall advertise the application in the prescribed manner, and within such time as may be prescribed any person may give notice of opposition at the Patent Office.
- (4) Where such notice is given the comptroller shall notify the applicant thereof.
- (5) After the expiration of the prescribed period the comptroller shall hear the case and, subject to an appeal to the court, issue an order either restoring the patent or dismissing the application: Provided that, in every order under this section restoring a patent, such provisions as may be prescribed shall be inserted for the protection of persons who may have availed themselves of the subject-matter of the patent after the patent had been announced as void in the illustrated official journal.

Amendment of Specification

21 Amendment of specification by comptroller

- (1) An applicant or a patentee may at any time, by request in writing left at the Patent Office, seek leave to amend his specification, including drawings forming part thereof,

by way of disclaimer, correction, or explanation, stating the nature of, and the reasons for, the proposed amendment.

- (2) The request and the nature of the proposed amendment shall be advertised in the prescribed manner, and at any time within one month from its first advertisement any person may give notice at the Patent Office of opposition to the amendment.
- (3) Where such a notice is given the comptroller shall give notice of the opposition to the person making the request, and shall hear and decide the case.
- (4) Where no notice of opposition is given, or the person so giving notice of opposition does not appear, the comptroller shall determine whether and subject to what conditions, if any, the amendment ought to be allowed.
- (5) The decision of the comptroller in either case shall be subject to an appeal to the law officer, who shall, if required, hear the person making the request to amend, and, where notice of opposition has been given, the person giving that notice, if he is, in the opinion of the law officer, entitled to be heard in opposition to the request, and, where there is no opposition, the comptroller, and may make an order determining whether and subject to what conditions (if any) the amendment ought to be allowed.
- (6) No amendment shall be allowed that would make the specification, as amended, claim an invention substantially larger than or substantially different from the invention claimed by the specification as it stood before amendment.
- (7) Leave to amend shall be conclusive as to the right of the party to make the amendment allowed, except in case of fraud ; and the amendment shall be advertised in the prescribed manner, and shall in all courts and for all purposes be deemed to form part of the specification.
- (8) This section shall not apply when and so long as any action for infringement or proceeding before the court for the revocation of a patent is pending.

22 Amendment of specification by the court

In any action for infringement of a patent or proceedings before a court for the revocation of a patent the court may by order allow the patentee to amend his specification by way of disclaimer in such manner, and subject to such terms as to costs, advertisement or otherwise, as the court may think fit:

Provided that no amendment shall be so allowed that would make the specification, as amended, claim an invention substantially larger than, or substantially different from, the invention claimed by the specification as it stood before the amendment, and where an application for such an order is made to the court notice of the application shall be given to the comptroller, and the comptroller shall have the right to appear and be heard, and shall appear if so directed by the court.

23 Restriction on recovery of damages

Where an amendment of a specification, by way of disclaimer, correction, or explanation, has been allowed under this Act, no damages shall be given in any action in respect of the use of the invention before the disclaimer, correction, or explanation, unless the patentee establishes to the satisfaction of the court that his original claim was framed in good faith and with reasonable skill and knowledge.

Compulsory Licences and Revocation

24 Compulsory licences and revocation

- (1) Any person interested may present a petition to the Board of Trade alleging that the reasonable requirements of the public with respect to a patented invention have not been satisfied, and praying for the grant of a compulsory licence, or, in the alternative, for the revocation of the patent.
- (2) The Board of Trade shall consider the petition, and if the parties do not come to an arrangement between themselves the Board of Trade, if satisfied that a prima facie case has been made out, shall refer the petition to the court, and, if the Board are not so satisfied, they may dismiss the petition.
- (3) Where any such petition is referred by the Board of Trade to the court, and it is proved to the satisfaction of the court that the reasonable requirements of the public with reference to the patented invention have not been satisfied, the patentee may be ordered by the court to grant licences on such terms as the court may think just, or, if the court is of opinion that the reasonable requirements of the public will not be satisfied by the grant of licences, the patent may be revoked by order of the court. Provided that an order of revocation shall not be made before the expiration of three years from the date of the patent, or if the patentee gives satisfactory reasons for his default.
- (4) On the hearing of any petition under this section the patentee and any person claiming an interest in the patent as exclusive licensee or otherwise shall be made parties to the proceeding, and the law officer or such other counsel as he may appoint shall be entitled to appear and be heard.
- (5) For the purposes of this section the reasonable requirements of the public shall not be deemed to have been satisfied—
 - (a) if by reason of the default of the patentee to manufacture to an adequate extent and supply on reasonable terms the patented article, or any parts thereof which are necessary for its efficient working, or to carry on the patented process to an adequate extent or to grant licences on reasonable terms, any existing trade or industry or the establishment of any new trade or industry in the United Kingdom is unfairly prejudiced, or the demand for the patented article or the article produced by the patented process is not reasonably met; or
 - (b) if any trade or industry in the United Kingdom is unfairly prejudiced by the conditions attached by the patentee before or after the passing of this Act to the purchase, hire, or use of the patented article or to the using or working of the patented process.
- (6) An order of the court directing the grant of any licence under this section shall, without prejudice to any other method of enforcement, operate as if it were embodied in a deed granting a licence and made between the parties to the proceeding.

25 Revocation of patent

- (1) Revocation of a patent may be obtained on petition to the court.
- (2) Every ground on which—
 - (a) a patent might, immediately before the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-four, have been repealed by scire facias; or

(b) a patent may be revoked under this Act either by the comptroller or as an alternative to the grant of a compulsory licence ;
shall be available by way of defence to an action of infringement and shall also be a ground of revocation under this section.

- (3) A petition for revocation of a patent may be presented—
- (a) by the Attorney-General or any person authorised by him ; or
 - (b) by any person alleging—
 - (i) that the patent was obtained in fraud of his rights, or of the rights of any person under or through whom he claims ; or
 - (ii) that he, or any person under or through whom he claims, was the true inventor of any invention included in the claim of the patentee ; or
 - (iii) that he, or any person under or through whom he claims an interest in any trade, business, or manufacture, had publicly manufactured, used, or sold, within this realm, before the date of the patent, anything claimed by the patentee as his invention.

26 Power of comptroller to revoke patents on certain grounds

- (1) Any person who would have been entitled to oppose the grant of a patent, or is the successor in interest of a person who was so entitled, may, within two years from the date of the patent, in the prescribed manner apply to the comptroller for an order revoking the patent on any one or more of the grounds on which the grant of the patent might have been opposed.

Provided that, when an action for infringement or proceedings for the revocation of the patent are pending in any court, an application under this section shall not be made except with the leave of the court.

- (2) The comptroller shall give notice of the application to the patentee, and after hearing the parties, if desirous of being heard, may make an order revoking the patent or requiring the specification relating thereto to be amended by disclaimer, correction, or explanation, or dismissing the application ; but the comptroller shall not make an order revoking the patent unless the circumstances are such as would have justified him in refusing to grant the patent, had the proceedings been proceedings in an opposition to the grant of a patent.
- (3) A patentee may at any time by giving notice in the prescribed manner to the comptroller offer to surrender his patent, and the comptroller may, -if after giving notice of the offer and hearing all parties who desire to be heard he thinks fit, accept the offer, and thereupon make an order for the revocation of the patent.
- (4) Any decision of the comptroller under this section shall be subject to appeal to the court.

27 Revocation of patents worked outside the United Kingdom

- (1) At any time not less than four years after the date of a patent, and not less than one year after the passing of this Act, any person may apply to the comptroller for the revocation of the patent on the ground that the patented article or process is manufactured or carried on exclusively or mainly outside the United Kingdom.

(2) The comptroller shall consider the application, and, if after enquiry he is satisfied that the allegations contained therein are correct, then, subject to the provisions of this section, and unless the patentee proves that the patented article or process is manufactured or carried on to an adequate extent in the United Kingdom, or gives satisfactory reasons why the article or process is not so manufactured or carried on, the comptroller may make an order revoking the patent either—

- (a) forthwith ; or
- (b) after such reasonable interval as may be specified in the order, unless in the meantime it is shown to his satisfaction that the patented article or process is manufactured or carried on within the United Kingdom to an adequate extent :

Provided that no such order shall be made which is at variance with any treaty, convention, arrangement, or engagement with any foreign country or British possession.

- (3) If within the time limited in the order the patented article or process is not manufactured or carried on within the United Kingdom to an adequate extent, but the patentee gives satisfactory reasons why it is not so manufactured or carried on, the comptroller may extend the period mentioned in the previous order for such period not exceeding twelve months as may be specified in the subsequent order.
- (4) Any decision of the comptroller under this section shall be subject to appeal to the court, and on any such appeal the law officer or such other counsel as he may appoint shall be entitled to appear and be heard.

Register of Patents

28 Register of patents

- (1) There shall be kept at the Patent Office a book called the register of patents, wherein shall be entered the names and addresses of grantees of patents, notifications of assignments and of transmissions of patents, of licences under patents, and of amendments, extensions, and revocations of patents, and such other matters affecting the validity or proprietorship of patents as may be prescribed.
- (2) The register of patents existing at the commencement of this Act shall be incorporated with and form part of the register of patents under this Act.
- (3) The register of patents shall be prima facie evidence of any matters by this Act directed or authorised to be inserted therein.
- (4) Copies of deeds, licences, and any other documents affecting the proprietorship in any letters patent or in any licence thereunder, must be supplied to the comptroller in the prescribed manner for filing in the Patent Office.

Crown

29 Patent to bind Crown

A patent shall have to all intents the like effect as against His Majesty the King as it has against a subject:

Provided that any Government department may, by themselves, their agents, contractors, or others, at any time after the application, use the invention for the services of the Crown on such terms as may, either before or after the use thereof, be agreed on, with the approval of the Treasury, between the department and the patentee, or, in default of agreement, as may be settled by the Treasury after hearing all parties interested.

30 Assignment to Secretary for War or the Admiralty of certain inventions

- (1) The inventor of any improvement in instruments or munitions of war may (either for or without valuable consideration) assign to the Secretary of State for War or the Admiralty on behalf of His Majesty all the benefit of the invention and of any patent obtained or to be obtained for the invention ; and the Secretary of State or the Admiralty may be a party to the assignment.
- (2) The assignment shall effectually vest the benefit of the Invention and patent in the Secretary of State or the Admiralty on behalf of His Majesty, and all covenants and agreements therein contained for keeping the invention secret and otherwise shall be valid and effectual (notwithstanding any want of valuable consideration), and may be enforced accordingly .by the Secretary of State or the Admiralty.
- (3) Where any such assignment has been made, the Secretary -of State or the Admiralty may at any time before the publication -of the complete specification certify to the comptroller that, in the interest of the public service, the particulars of the invention and of the manner in which it is to be performed should be kept secret.
- (4) If the Secretary of State or the Admiralty so certify, the application and specifications, with the drawings (if any), and any amendment of the complete specification, and any copies of such documents and drawings, shall, instead of being left in the ordinary manner at the Patent Office, be delivered to the comptroller in a packet sealed by authority of the Secretary of State or the Admiralty.
- (5) The packet shall, until the expiration of the term during which a patent for the invention may be in force, be kept sealed by the comptroller, and shall not be opened save under the authority of an order of the Secretary of State or the Admiralty or of the law officer.
- (6) The sealed packet shall be delivered at any time during the continuance of the patent to any person authorised by the Secretary of State or the Admiralty to receive it, and shall if returned to the comptroller be again kept sealed by him.
- (7) On the expiration of the term of the patent, the sealed packet shall be delivered to the Secretary of State or the Admiralty.
- (8) Where the Secretary of State or the Admiralty certify as aforesaid, after an application for a patent has been left at the Patent Office, but before the publication of the complete specification, the application and specifications, with the drawings (if any), shall be forthwith placed in a packet sealed by authority of the comptroller, and the packet shall be subject to the foregoing provisions respecting a packet sealed by authority of the Secretary of State or the Admiralty.
- (9) No proceeding by petition or otherwise shall lie for revocation of a patent granted for an invention in relation to which a certificate has been given by the Secretary of State or the Admiralty as aforesaid.

- (10) No copy of any specification or other document or drawing, by this section required to be placed in a sealed packet, shall in any manner whatever be published or open to the inspection of the public, but, save as in this section otherwise directed, the provisions of this Act shall apply in respect of any such invention and patent as aforesaid.
- (11) The Secretary of State or the Admiralty may at any time waive the benefit of this section with respect to any particular invention, and the specifications, documents, and drawings shall be thenceforth kept and dealt with in the ordinary way.
- (12) The communication of any invention for any improvement in instruments or munitions of war to the Secretary of State or the Admiralty, or to any person or persons authorised by the Secretary of State or the Admiralty to investigate the same or the merits thereof, shall not, nor shall anything done for the purposes of the investigation, be deemed use or publication of such invention so as to prejudice the grant or validity of any patent for the same.
- (13) Rules may be made under this Act, after consultation with the Secretary of State and the Admiralty, for the purpose of ensuring secrecy with respect to patents to which this section applies, and those rules may modify any of the provisions of this Act in their application to such patents as aforesaid so far as may appear necessary for the purpose aforesaid.

Legal Proceedings

31 Hearing with assessor

- (1) In an action or proceeding for infringement or revocation of a patent, the court may, if it think fit, and shall on the request of either of the parties to the proceeding, call in the aid of an assessor specially qualified, and try the case wholly or partially with his assistance ; the action shall be tried without a jury unless the court otherwise directs.
- (2) The Court of Appeal may, if they think fit, in any proceeding before them call in the aid of an assessor as aforesaid.
- (3) The remuneration, if any, to be paid to an assessor under this section shall be determined by the court or the Court of Appeal, as the case may be, and be paid as part of the expenses of the execution of this Act.

32 Power to counterclaim for revocation in an action for infringement

A defendant in an action for infringement of a patent, if entitled to present a petition to the court for the revocation of the patent, may, without presenting such a petition, apply in accordance with the rules of the Supreme Court by way of counterclaim in the action for the revocation of the patent.

33 Exemption of innocent infringer from liability for damages

A patentee shall not be entitled to recover any damages in respect of any infringement of a patent granted after the commencement of this Act from any defendant who proves that at the date of the infringement he was not aware, nor had reasonable means of making himself aware, of the existence of the patent, and the marking of an article with the word "patent," "patented," or any word or words expressing or implying that a patent has been obtained for the article, stamped, engraved, impressed 'on, or otherwise

applied to the article, shall not be deemed to constitute notice of the existence of the patent unless the word or words are accompanied by the year and number of the patent:

Provided that nothing in this section shall affect any proceedings for an injunction.

34 Order for inspection, &c, in action

In an action for infringement of a patent, the court may on the application of either party make such order for an injunction inspection or account, and impose such terms and give such directions respecting the same and the proceedings thereon as the court may see fit.

35 Certificate of validity questioned and costs thereon

In an action for infringement of a patent, the court may certify that the validity of the patent came in question ; and, if the court so certifies, then in any subsequent action for infringement the plaintiff in that action on obtaining a final order or judgment in his favour shall, unless the court trying the action otherwise directs, have his full costs, charges, and expenses as between solicitor and client.

36 Remedy in case of groundless threats of legal proceedings

Where any person claiming to be the patentee of an invention, by circulars, advertisements, or otherwise, threatens any other person with any legal proceedings or liability in respect of any alleged infringement of the patent, any person aggrieved thereby may bring an action against him, and may obtain an injunction against the continuance of such threats, and may recover such damage (if any) as he has sustained thereby, if the alleged infringement to which the threats related was not in fact an infringement of any legal rights of the person making such threats:

Provided that this section shall not apply if the person making such threats with due diligence commences and prosecutes an action for infringement of his patent.

Miscellaneous

37 Grant of patents to two or more persons

Where, after the commencement of this Act, a patent is granted to two or more persons jointly, they shall, unless otherwise specified in the patent, be treated for the purpose of the devolution of the legal interest therein as joint tenants, but, subject to any contract to the contrary, each of such persons shall be entitled to use the invention for his own profit without accounting to the others, but shall not be entitled to grant a licence without their consent, and, if any such person dies, his beneficial interest in the patent shall devolve on his personal representatives as part of his personal estate.

38 Avoidance of certain conditions attached to the sale, &c, of patented articles

(1) It shall not be lawful in any contract made after the passing of this Act in relation to the sale or lease of, or licence to use or work, any article or process protected by a patent to insert a condition the effect of which will be—

- (a) to prohibit or restrict the purchaser, lessee, or licensee from using any article or class of articles, whether patented or not, or any patented process, supplied or

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).

owned by any person other than the seller, lessor, or licensor or his nominees ;
or

- (b) to require the purchaser, lessee, or licensee to acquire from the seller, lessor, or licensor, or his nominees, any article or class of articles not protected by the patent ;

and any such condition shall be null and void, as being in restraint of trade and contrary to public policy.

Provided that this subsection shall not apply if—

- (i) the seller, lessor, or licensor proves that at the time the contract was entered into the purchaser, lessee, or licensee had the option of purchasing the article or obtaining a lease or licence on reasonable terms, without such conditions as aforesaid ; and
- (ii) the contract entitles the purchaser, lessee, or licensee to relieve himself of his liability to observe any such condition on giving the other party three months' notice in writing and on payment in compensation for such relief in the case of a purchase of such sum, or in the case of a lease or licence of such rent or royalty for the residue of the term of the contract, as may be fixed by an arbitrator appointed by the Board of Trade.

- (2) Any contract relating to the lease of or licence to use or work any patented article or patented process, whether made before or after the passing of this Act, may at any time after the patent or all the patents by which the article or process was protected at the time of the making of the contract has or have ceased to be in force, and notwithstanding anything in the same or in any other contract to the contrary, be determined by either party on giving three months notice in writing to the other party ; but where any such notice is given determining any contract made before the passing of this Act, the party giving the notice shall be liable to pay such compensation as, failing agreement, may be awarded by an arbitrator appointed by the Board of Trade.
- (3) Any contract made before the passing of this Act relating to the lease of or licence to use or work any patented article or process and containing any condition which, had the contract been made after the passing of this Act, would by virtue of this section have been null and void may, at any time before the contract is determinable under the last preceding subsection, and notwithstanding anything in the same or any other contract to the contrary, be determined by either party on giving three months notice in writing to the other party, but where any such notice is given the party giving the notice shall be liable to pay such compensation as, failing agreement, may be awarded by an arbitrator appointed, by the Board of Trade.
- (4) The insertion by the patentee in a contract, made after the passing of this Act, of any condition which by virtue of this section is null and void shall be available as a defence to an action for infringement of the patent, to which the contract relates, brought while that contract is in force.
- (5) Nothing in this section shall—
- (a) affect any condition in a contract whereby a person is prohibited from selling any goods other than those of a particular person ; or
- (b) be construed as validating any contract which would, apart from this section, be invalid ; or
- (c) affect any right of determining a contract or condition in a contract exerciseable independently of this section ; or

- (d) affect any condition in a contract for the lease of or licence to use a patented article, whereby the lessor or licensor reserves to himself or his nominees the right to supply such new parts of the patented article as may be required to put or keep it in repair.

39 Costs and security for costs

- (1) The comptroller shall, in proceedings relating to an opposition to the grant of a patent or to an application for the amendment of a specification or the revocation of a patent, have power by order to award to any party such costs as he may consider reasonable, and to direct how and by what parties they are to be paid, and any such order may be made a rule of the court.
- (2) If a party giving notice of opposition to the grant of a patent or to the amendment of a specification, or applying to the comptroller for the revocation of a patent, or giving notice of appeal from any decision of the comptroller, neither resides nor carries on business in the United Kingdom or the Isle of Man, the comptroller, or, in case of appeal to the law officer, the law officer, may require such party to give security for costs of the proceedings or appeal, and in default of such security being given may treat the proceedings or appeal as abandoned.

40 Procedure on appeal to law officer

The law officer may examine witnesses on oath and administer oaths for that purpose, and may make rules regulating references and appeals to the law officer and the practice and procedure before him under this Part of this Act; and in any proceeding before the law officer under this Part of this Act, the law officer may order costs to be paid by either party, and any such order may be made a rule of the court.

41 Provision as to anticipation

- (1) An invention, covered by any patent applied for on or after the first day of January one thousand nine hundred and five, shall not be deemed to have been anticipated by reason only of its publication in a specification left pursuant to an application made in the United Kingdom not less than fifty years before the date of the application for the patent, or of its publication in a provisional specification of any date not followed by a complete specification.
- (2) A patent shall not be held to be invalid by reason only of the invention in respect of which the patent was granted, or any part thereof, having been published prior to the date of the patent, if the patentee proves to the satisfaction of the court that the publication was made without his knowledge and consent, and that the matter published was derived or obtained from him, and, if he learnt of the publication before the date of his application for the patent, that he applied for and obtained protection for his invention with all reasonable diligence after learning of the publication.

42 Disconformity

A patent shall not be held to be invalid on the ground that the complete specification claims a further or different invention to that contained in the provisional, if the invention therein claimed, so far as it is not contained in the provisional, was novel at the date when the complete specification was put in, and the applicant was the first and true inventor thereof.

43 Patent on application of representative of deceased inventor

- (1) If a person claiming to be inventor of an invention dies without making an application for a patent for the invention, application may be made by, and a patent for the invention granted to, his legal representative.
- (2) Every such application must contain a declaration by the legal representative that he believes him to be the true and first inventor of the invention.

44 Loss or destruction of patent

If a patent is lost or destroyed, or its non-production is accounted for to the satisfaction of the comptroller, the comptroller may at any time seal a duplicate thereof.

45 Provisions as to exhibitions

- (1) The exhibition of an invention at an industrial or international exhibition, certified as such by the Board of Trade, or the publication of any description of the invention during the period of the holding of the exhibition, or the use of the invention for the purpose of the exhibition in the place where the exhibition is held, or the use of the invention during the period of the holding of the exhibition by any person elsewhere, without the privity or consent of the inventor, shall not prejudice the right of the inventor to apply for and obtain a patent in respect of the invention or the validity of any patent granted on the application, provided that—
 - (a) the exhibitor, before exhibiting the invention, gives the comptroller the prescribed notice of his intention to do so ; and
 - (b) the application for a patent is made before or within six months from the date of the opening of the exhibition.
- (2) His Majesty may by Order in Council apply this section to any exhibition mentioned in the Order in like manner as if it were an industrial or international exhibition certified as such by the Board of Trade, and any such Order may provide that the exhibitor shall be relieved from the condition of giving notice to the comptroller of his intention to exhibit, and shall be so relieved either absolutely or upon such terms and conditions as may be stated in the Order.

46 Publication of illustrated journal, indexes, &c

- (1) The comptroller shall issue periodically an illustrated journal of patented inventions, as well as reports of patent cases decided by courts of law, and any other information that he may deem generally useful or important.
- (2) Provision shall be made by the comptroller for keeping on sale copies of such journal, and also of all complete specifications of patents in force, with any accompanying drawings.
- (3) The comptroller shall continue, in such form as he deems expedient, the indexes and abridgments of specifications hitherto published, and shall prepare and publish such other indexes, abridgments of specifications, catalogues, and other works relating to inventions, as he thinks fit.

47 Patent Museum

- (1) The control and management of the Patent Museum and its contents shall remain vested in the Board of Education, subject to such directions as His Majesty in Council may think fit to give.
- (2) The Board of Education may at any time require a patentee to furnish them with a model of his invention on payment to the patentee of the cost of the manufacture of the model, the amount to be settled, in case of dispute, by the Board of Trade.

48 Foreign vessels in British waters

- (1) A patent shall not prevent the use of an invention for the purposes of the navigation of a foreign vessel within the jurisdiction of any of His Majesty's Courts in the United Kingdom, or Isle of Man, or the use of an invention in a foreign vessel within that jurisdiction, provided it is not used therein for or in connection with the manufacture or preparation of anything intended to be sold in or exported from the United Kingdom or Isle of Man.
- (2) This section shall not extend to vessels of any foreign state of which the laws do not confer corresponding rights with respect to the use of inventions in British vessels while in the ports of that state, or in the waters within the jurisdiction of its courts.