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Canadian Patent Office
Records, 1873-1973

**The Canadian Patent Office Record
1873-1973**

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THE
 CANADIAN
 PATENT OFFICE
 RECORD
 1873 - 1973

Information & Public Relations Branch

June 1973

Many centenaries are being celebrated
in Canada in 1973 ... Prince Edward
Island, the RCMP, the 300th anniversary
of Kingston, etc.

It is also the centennial of the Canadian
Patent Office Record and this is how
we suggest the event be marked.

The principal event of the celebration would be the presentation of the first issue of The Canadian Patent Office Record and Mechanics' Magazine to the Dominion Archivist, Dr. W.I. Smith by our minister, the Honourable Herb Gray.

The media would be invited to attend this ceremony.

At the same time, a press release would be issued to the media.

This proposed release (see Appendix A) together with photographs of the first issue of the CPOR, some of the illustrations it contained and the CPOR as it appears today would be sent to an extensive list of publications and television stations in Canada while radio stations in Canada would receive the same kit minus photos.

It is suggested that page 1 of the CPOR carry a brief history of the publication. The proposed text (see Appendix B) is a shorter version of the press release and would possibly feature a photo of the first issue.

It is felt that this new page 1 could remain until the last issue of December (Christmas) or the last one in March 1974 (the 26th) after which the CPOR would revert to its present format.

A scroll commemorating the centennial could be prepared and sent to Patent agents, Canadian Trade Commissioners, The Patent and Trademark Institute of Canada, other Countries' Patent Offices, etc.

This scroll should be suitable for framing and should therefore be quite attractive in its conception.

APPENDIX "A"

Press Release

The progress and development of ancient civilizations are often determined by examination of archeological discoveries-- tools and implements of the former day.

Should a future civilization wish to delve into Canada's first 100 years, it would probably include a search for evidence of what inventors of gadgets and new ways of doing things were up to, as we developed from a nation with an agricultural economy into maturity as an industrial and technological state.

Those future researchers will save a lot of pick and shovel work if they concentrate their early excavations at the ruins of an Information Canada bookstore -- in search of back copies of a little-known government publication which, this year is celebrating its 100th birthday.

The Patent Office Record, first published as a separate, government-subsidized section in a private magazine, has been chronicling the physical inventions and new ideas of Canadian and other inventors since March, 1873, when it reported issuance of a patent to William S. Mead of New York, for a sewing machine.

A patent is a government document, issued to an inventor, which protects that inventor's right to profit from the sale or use of the product of his ingenuity for a period of 17 years. Responsibility for assessing applications and issuing or denying patents rests with the Patent Office of the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, which employs a staff of about 200 engineers to examine claims in broad subject areas of mechanical, chemical, and electrical and physical sciences.

RECORDS GO BACK
NEARLY 200 YEARS

The recorded history of patents in Canada takes us back at least as far as 1791, when the Governor and Council of Quebec granted rights to Angus MacDonnel, a Scottish soldier, and to Vermonter Samuel Hopkins, for improved methods of making potash and soap from ashes.

The first patent act in what is now Canada was passed in 1824 by the Province of Lower Canada. Noah Cushing of Quebec received the first patent under that act, for a machine to cleanse and thicken cloth.

By 1867, when the provinces of Canada, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia united in Confederation, each had its own provincial patent act in force, as did the provinces of British Columbia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

In 1869 a new federal act replaced provincial legislation in the founding provinces. It limited issuance of patents to persons who had lived in Canada during the 12 months prior to their applications.

But it was becoming obvious that restriction of patents to resident inventors was hampering Canada's industrial development.

The Patent Act of 1872 provided a solution: Foreigners and residents alike could take out patents, on condition that ensuing manufacturing was done in Canada. If the invention was not "worked" here within two years, or if the patentee imported it after 12 months, the patent was void.

Today's law provides that if a patent has not been worked in Canada within three years of issuance, anyone may apply to the Commissioner of Patents for a licence to work it and the commissioner may set the fees payable to the non-resident inventor.

Almost a million Canadian patents have been issued since passage of the Patent Act of 1872 and the first appearance of the Patent Office Record in the pages of Montreal publisher George E. Desbarats' monthly Mechanics Magazine in March, 1873.

DESBARATS SALES PITCH
PAINTS ROSY FUTURE

Desbarats' glowing prospectus for his new magazine announced the impending birth of the Patent Office Record in these terms:

"This official record will be published monthly, and will be combined with letter-press and illustrations selected from the best English and foreign scientific papers, thus not only placing before the public of the Dominion the products of native genius and industry, but also keeping them posted on the progress of Science and Mechanics in other countries. Inventors will thus know in what direction to apply their ideas. Mechanics will note the advance in labor-saving appliances ... Manufacturers will be prevented from employing obsolete methods ... Builders and contractors will know where to apply for all the latest productions in their line ... Chemists and Druggists will be saved useless search for compounds already invented by others ... Farmers will see every agricultural implement illustrated and described. In a word, there is not a scientific, industrial, mechanical or commercial pursuit that will not be benefited by this publication. It is therefore expected that a very large circulation will take place among all classes, and the price is fixed correspondingly low."

Canadians were well represented in the first edition of the Record. Cyrus W. Saladee of St. Catherines was credited with no less than six inventions --- four involving torsional springs, another a gate and the sixth a door and gate spring. Patents published covered a wide range of general industrial and agricultural devices, washing and sewing machines.

MODERN CONVENIENCES
OWE DEBT TO PAST

Many of the modern conveniences we take for granted today owe their development and refinement to original ideas patented a century ago and made known in those early pages of the Patent Office Record.

(Others, like a carriage propellor to substitute for old-fashioned horse power, never got off the ground!)

The Patent Office Record came home to Ottawa in 1892, when the government decided to give the printing job to the Queen's Printer.

In 1919, it became a weekly publication and has been ever since.

During the past century the pages of the Record have reflected Canadian progress in many fields and reported such well-known Canadian inventions as kerosene, the telephone, the variable pitch propellor and the cobalt bomb.

The original Record and Mechanics' Magazine sold for \$1.50 for 12 issues or 15 cents per single copy. Patent illustrations and claims ran to about 40 pages.

Today's version is close to 100 pages, published every Tuesday, and costs \$26 for a year's subscription, single copy price \$1.

CATALOGUE FOR A
"GOOD IDEA SHOP"

With hundreds of thousands of good ideas on file, Canada's patent office has been described as a "good idea shop," offering manufacturers and others all sorts of time and money-saving ideas that can be purchased from the owners of patents.

If the Patent Office is the "shop", the Patent Office Record is the "catalogue."

It's mailed to other patent offices around the world, patent agents and attorneys, academic, corporate and industrial libraries and a few people who are simply interested in the world around them and in gadgets, machines, processes or methods that can lead to a better life for millions of people and provide the foundations for even more useful and exciting discoveries.

APPENDIX "B"

CPOR Page One

The Patent Office Record is marking its 100th anniversary this year.

It began life in March, 1873, as a government-subsidized, illustrated section in a private publication -- Montreal publisher George E. Desbarats' monthly Mechanics' Magazine.

Desbarats' glowing prospectus for his new magazine announced the impending birth of the Patent Office Record in these terms:

"This official record will be published monthly, and will be combined with letter-press and illustrations selected from the best English and foreign scientific papers, thus not only placing before the public of the Dominion the products of native genius and industry, but also keeping them posted on the progress of Science and Mechanics in other countries. Inventors will thus know in what direction to apply their ideas. Mechanics will note the advance in labor-saving appliances ... manufacturers will be prevented from employing obsolete methods ... Builders and contractors will know where to apply for all the latest productions in their line ... Chemists and Druggists will be saved useless search for compounds already invented by others ... Farmers will see every agricultural implement illustrated and described. In a word, there is not a scientific, industrial,

mechanical or commercial pursuit that will not be benefited by this publication. It is therefore expected that a very large circulation will take place among all classes, and the price is fixed correspondingly low."

The first patent reported in the new magazine was number 1645 in the series (still in use today) that began with passage of the Patent Act of 1872. It was granted to William S. Mead of New York, for a sewing machine. But Canadians were also well represented. Cyrus W. Saladee of St. Catherines came up with no less than six inventions -- four involving torsional springs, another a gate and the sixth, a door and gate spring.

Patents covered a wide range of general industrial and agricultural devices, washing and sewing machines. In fact, many modern implements taken for granted today owe their development to original ideas and improvements patented a century ago.

Some, like a carriage propellor to substitute for horse power, never got off the ground!

Six years after its debut, Desbarats' magazine was expanded and renamed The Scientific Canadian Mechanics' Magazine and Patent Office Record, with the aim of appealing to a wider readership.

In 1888 trade marks were included and continued to be published with patents until the birth of the Trade Marks Journal in 1954.

In 1892 the marriage of private and public interests that had given birth to the Patent Office Record came to an end and the Record became an exclusively government publication in the hands of the Queen's Printer.

In 1919 it became a weekly.

The evolution and growth of the Record into what it is today has paralleled and reflected the very progress of Canada herself in the industrial and technological eras.

Along the way there have been many changes. The cover was redesigned frequently, to keep pace with contemporary trends. Bilingual notices were added and patents began to be printed in the language of the claim -- English or French.

The original Patent Office Record and Mechanics' Magazine cost 15 cents per copy, or \$1.50 for 12 issues. Patent illustrations and claims ran to about 40 pages. Today's subscription price of \$26 for 52 issues stacks up pretty well when you consider we average around 96 pages every week. And the volume of patent applications and published information is up several thousand per cent since 1873.

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