WARLEY PARROTT

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Have you observed something in your own department or field that you think could be improved?

In a speech to the Engineers Club of Western North Carolina, Mr. Parrott gave some additional information about patents. We regret that space will not permit the printing of the entire speech, but the following excerpts are most interesting.

"The theory of the United States Patent Law or system is that a patent is a contract between the Government representing the people and the inventor in accordance with which the inventor discloses his invention to the public through the medium of the issued patent so that the public may have full benefit of it after the patent has expired. This contract results in mutual benefit because the inventor might otherwise keep his invention secret and in so doing deprive the public of the benefit of the product of his thinking. To compensate the inventor for his disclosure the Government gives him the right to exclude all others from using his invention without his consent for a period of 17 years and at the end of that time his invention becomes public property and is free for use without payment of royalty or any other tribute. Incidentally, patents are not renewable, contrary to popular belief, except by Act of Congress and this happens only once in a long time.

"Under the common law if the inventor had made a disclosure of his invention to the public it would immediately have become public property so you can see the necessity which originally existed for protecting the inventor and at the same time giving him an incentive to promote the progress of science and the useful arts as provided for in our Constitution.

"The subject matter which may be protected by patents is another fundamental principle of our patent law. All developments and inventions are not patentable. For an invention or discovery to be patentable it must fall within one of the four classes of subject matter enumerated in the patent statues, namely an art, a machine, a manufacture, or a composition matter. The word "art" here means a process or method, and has been defined by the Supreme Court as a "mode of treatment of certain materials to produce a given result." A manufacture is an article of manufacture and a composition of matter is, for example, a new chemical product or the like. In addition to the requirement of the invention or discovery coming within one of these four classifications, the statute provides that it must also be new and useful. By "new" is meant that the invention or discovery has not been previously disclosed in any printed publication in this or any foreign country before its invention by the applicant for the patent or for a period of more than a year prior to his application for a patent.

"Two features of this statutory requirement are significant: One, that there was no publication of the invention here or abroad before the date on which the present inventor and applicant for a patent actually made his invention. If so, no valid patent can be obtained. Two, that the prior publication must not have been in existence more than a year before the date of the filing of the present inventor's patent application. In other words, it is obligatory for

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