

are able, earnest and fair. They can compare very favorably with the best of all other countries. Their honesty of purpose and conduct has never been questioned by anybody except by people who instead of investigating the subject, merely limited themselves to sneering at them.

In late years one single case has transpired of a subordinate assistant examiner who seems to have tried to get appointed to the patent office staff with the very purpose of committing a dishonest act, hoodwinking the vigilance of the chief of his department. That such abuses have not occurred oftener is a real wonder when we take into consideration that the corps of examiners are an underpaid, ill-recognized, unrewarded set of fine men. Their devotion to their work with no hope of reward beyond a meagre salary is a fine example of good citizenship.

I know of many a time when views contrary to these were expressed by some impatient inventors who happened to believe that everybody in the world and especially patent examiners ought to be as thoroughly acquainted with their inventions as they themselves were. To such of my misguided friends, I must recall the fact that the patent examiner here in the United States or any other country is a man at whom are flung every day new ideas widely different in scope, in direction and in details. Many of these ideas are undigested or unclearly expressed. Other ones are the result of months and years of mature and deliberate specialization and it is hardly to be expected that a man, however open-minded he may be, should at the first glance be able to penetrate the subject as deeply as the intelligent, specialized inventor. The standpoint the examiner takes in a case where things are not very clear is that of a representative of the average uninitiated public whose interest he has to protect as well as that of the inventor. His attitude is best summed up in slang: "I am from Missouri," and it becomes the task of the inventor of "showing" and "showing why."

In several of my experiences with the patent examiners here and abroad, I have felt very thankful for the objections which were made to my texts and to my claims because I was shown either that I was not sufficiently explicit or concise, and by making the required amendments, I avoided much future trouble in the eventuality of an infringement. It may be a consolation to the United States patent examiners to know that their colleagues of other countries, for instance England, Germany and Austria, are criticized just as much by some dissatisfied and narrow-minded inventors, although their attitude is just as fair, unbiased and open-minded.

Summing up, I could hardly suggest an improvement in the United States Patent law without curtailing the privileges and interests of the poor inventor.

If I venture to make one suggestion, it would be to propose an act of reciprocity, which would consist in exacting compulsory working of all patents taken here by non-citizens of the United States and whose countries have patent laws with a clause for compulsory working which means great hardship for the American inventors who take out patents abroad.

On the other hand, it is very unfortunate that although the laws for filing and registering a patent in the United States are almost all that can be desired, I must lift my voice of protest when it comes to testing the rights of the in-

ventor before the courts. Here the poor inventor is entirely at the mercy of a legalized system of piracy as carried out by infringers helped by all the tricks of lawyers, and let me say to the shame of our own profession, helped very often by experts who will back the lawyer to confuse an issue before a judge who most of the time is already incompetent on account of lack of theoretical or practical knowledge in the art. This game is so successfully played, that I know of rich companies here in the United States whose main method of procedure is to frighten, bulldoze and ruin financially the unfortunate inventor who happens to have a patent which he is not willing to concede to them on their own terms; that is to say, for next to nothing.

I could cite you several examples of prosperous companies where the money paid in salaries for the technical or scientific staff and for royalties is a mere bagatelle if compared to the fortunes paid annually to their lawyers who happen to look after their patent litigations.

Thus has it come about that an otherwise liberal patent law intended for the protection of the poor inventor has become a drastic method for building up powerful privileges in the interest of big capitalistic combinations.

The sooner we have a special and adequate patent court to which all patent litigation can be referred and which can operate without the absurd delays and abominable expenses now involved in patent suits, the sooner will cease this arrogant frustration of the generous efforts of those who framed our patent laws.

NOTES.

PHOSPHORUS FOR THE HEMPEL PIPETTE.

The method of preparing sticks of phosphorus for use in the Hempel pipette for the determination of oxygen, as usually described, does not take advantage of a little device which suggested itself to me some years ago and which I find exceedingly satisfactory.

I proceed as usual until the liquid phosphorus is expected to solidify in the glass tube. Phosphorus is very prone to undercooling and it often requires considerable patience to await its solidification. When, however, the liquid phase is brought into contact with the solid phase equilibrium is promptly established and the column of liquid phosphorus solidifies the very instant the temperature of the normal point of solidification is reached. Contact can readily be insured because the liquid phosphorus usually protrudes slightly from the end of the glass tube and if a piece of solid phosphorus is suspended by a wire in the cooling bath one can easily bring solid and liquid together while the latter is cooling.

It will be found that this little device not only simplifies and expedites the whole operation but insures greater uniformity and far greater yield of perfect sticks.

H. AUGUST HUNICKE.

MITCHELL-WALKER MOISTURE TEST.

During the past year we made investigations in rapid moisture determinations in dairy products. We personally examined a number of the tests on the market and consulted the reports of other chemists on the other tests in vogue.