

SESSION II.  
1923.  
NEW ZEALAND:

---

# BRITISH EMPIRE PATENT CONFERENCE, 1922

(REPORT ON), BY REGISTRAR OF PATENTS.

---

*Laid on the Table of both Houses of Parliament by Leave.*

---

The Hon. Sir Francis Bell, K.C.M.G., Minister of Justice.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit my report on the recent British Empire Patent Conference.

## PATENT CONFERENCE.

### Origin of Conference.

The Conference was held as the result of a resolution of a special Committee of the Imperial Conference of 1921 :—

“The Committee recommends that a Conference of representatives of the Patent Offices of His Majesty’s Dominions shall be held in London at an early date to consider the practicability of instituting a system of granting patents which should be valid throughout the British Empire.”

This resolution was concurred in by the main Conference, and a meeting of representatives of all the Patent Offices of His Majesty’s dominions (except Newfoundland) took place at London accordingly from the 12th to the 23rd June last.

### Steps already taken towards desired object.

The question to be gone into was by no means a new one, and although something had been accomplished in the desired direction by bringing the laws of the various parts of the Empire into line with one another to a considerable extent, and according a certain limited priority for an applicant in one country to apply in others, nothing had been effected for making a grant in one country extend to others.

### Proposals submitted prior to Conference.

In a memorandum of the Comptroller forwarded under cover of the despatch calling the Conference in accordance with the resolution referred to, two methods are submitted for attaining the desired end :—

- (1.) The abolition of all local offices and the establishment of one Imperial Office :
- (2.) Retention of present offices for receipt of applications, &c., and for local grants, but establishment of one central Patent Office for examining purposes for the whole Kingdom.

In his memorandum the Comptroller recognized that the first proposal was not likely to be entertained, and both proposals were brought up at the Conference merely as a basis of discussion.

### Objections to such proposals.

It was soon evident that the proposals, so far as they involved restricting the autonomy of the self-governing dominions, did not commend themselves to the Conference, the representatives of certain countries in particular taking exception to any limitation of their rights in the matter. These countries, with their larger population and greater industries, have been enabled to place their Patent Offices on a better footing than New Zealand has, and to provide to a fair extent for examination into novelty. In New Zealand, South Africa, and other parts of the Empire adequate provision for examination has not yet been made ; and, while concurring that the proposals did not seem feasible, as outlined in the memorandum, I considered it possible that, rather than incur the heavy expense of establishing and maintaining a large examining staff, the Government of this country would prefer to limit its expenditure as far as practicable in this direction by depending to the fullest extent it reasonably could on the examination effected by the English and other offices.

One of such proposals adopted in modified form with New Zealand requirements.

Although the Comptroller’s proposals were formally abandoned, the provisional scheme adopted by the Conference embodies to a certain extent the second proposal with practically all the amend-