

Washing and fulling machine earned first patent

Q. What can you tell me about the first patent filed in Canada? How is patent protection obtained?

A. Canada's first patent was filed by inventor Noah Cushing for a "washing and fulling" machine in 1824. The first Canadian patent granted to a female inventor was to Ruth Adams for a "reverse cooking stove," in 1855.

Patents are granted by the government to give inventors exclusive rights to produce their inventions for a 20-year period.

Each year, about 100 technically qualified employees at the patent office determine which of about 35,000 applications should be issued patents.

More recent patents granted through the Canadian Patent Office in Hull, Quebec, include: a toilet seat structure capable of automatically feeding seat-covering paper onto a toilet seat; a light weight anchor; a vandal-proof pay telephone handset and a child-proof measuring cup.

Some of Canada's well-known



Trivia

Mark Kearney
Randy Ray

inventions include the telephone; the hydrofoil boat; five-pin bowling; instant potato flakes; the jolly jumper; the gas mask and the tucked-in handle

for the beer carton.

According to Statistics Canada the average Canadian inventor spends close to two years working on an invention before applying for patent protection, and another 2.4 years obtaining a patent.

Based on a study of inventors between 1978 and 1983, StatsCan also reports that 99 per cent of inventors are male; 46 is the median age for Canadian inventors and an inven-

tor's average education is 13.5 years.

If you have invented something you feel is worth protecting with a patent, further information is available by contact-

ing the Commissioner of Patents, Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada, 50 Victoria Street, Place du Portage, Phase I, Hull, Quebec, K1A 0C9.



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