

Chapter 1200 Appeal

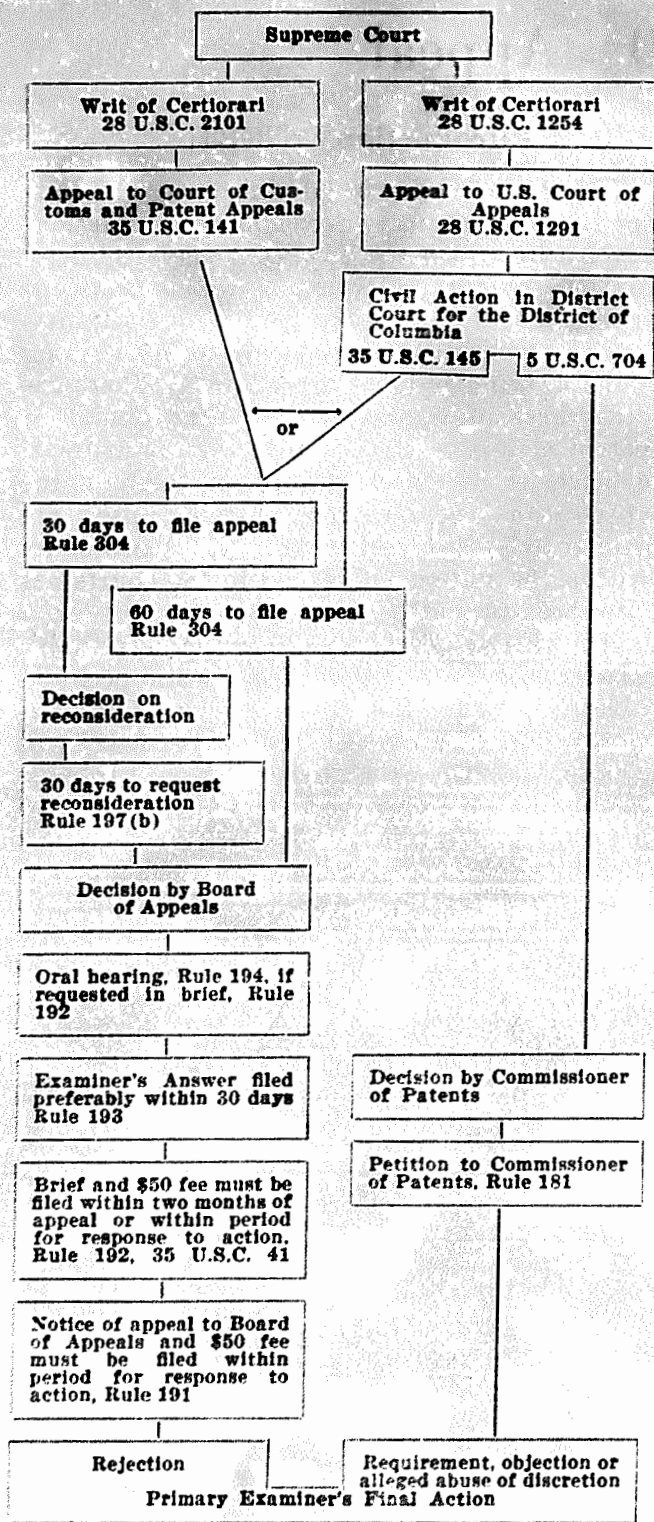
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1201 Introduction [R-23]

The Patent Office in administering the Patent Laws makes many decisions of a discretionary nature which the applicant may feel deny him the patent protection to which he is entitled. The differences of opinion on such matters can be justly resolved only by prescribing and following judicial procedures. Where the differences of opinion concern the denial of patent claims because of prior art or material deficiencies in the disclosure set forth in the application, the questions thereby raised are said to relate to merits, and appeal procedure within the Patent Office and to the courts has long been provided by statute.

The line of demarcation between appealable matters for the Board of Appeals and petitionable matters for the Commissioner of Patents should be carefully observed. The Board will not ordinarily hear a question which it believes should be decided by the Commissioner, and the Commissioner will not ordinarily entertain a petition where the question presented is an appealable matter. However, since rule 181(f) states that any petition not filed within two months from the action complained of may be dismissed as untimely and since rule 144 states that petitions from restriction requirements must be filed no later than appeal, petitionable matters will rarely be present in a case by the time it is before the Board for a decision.

1202 Channels of Ex Parte Review [R-23]



1203 Composition of Board [R-20]

35 U.S.C. 7, provides for a Board of Appeals as follows:

35 U.S.C. 7 Board of Appeals. The examiners-in-chief shall be persons of competent legal knowledge and scientific ability. The Commissioner, the assistant commissioners, and the examiners-in-chief shall constitute a Board of Appeals, which, on written appeal of the applicant, shall review adverse decisions of examiners upon applications for patents. Each appeal shall be heard by at least three members of the Board of Appeals, the members hearing such appeal to be designated by the Commissioner. The Board of Appeals has sole power to grant rehearings.

Whenever the Commissioner considers it necessary to maintain the work of the Board of Appeals current, he may designate any patent examiner of the primary examiner grade or higher, having the requisite ability, to serve as examiner-in-chief for periods not exceeding six months each. An examiner so designated shall be qualified to act as a member of the Board of Appeals. Not more than one such primary examiner shall be a member of the Board of Appeals hearing an appeal. The Secretary of Commerce is authorized to fix the per annum rate of basic compensation of each designated examiner-in-chief in the Patent Office at not in excess of the maximum scheduled rate provided for positions in grade 16 of the General Schedule of the Classification Act of 1949, as amended. The per annum rate of basic compensation of each designated examiner-in-chief shall be adjusted, at the close of the period for which he was designated to act as examiner-in-chief, to the per annum rate of basic compensation which he would have been receiving at the close of such period if such designation had not been made.

If subsequent to the hearing, but prior to the decision, a Board member who heard the case becomes unable to participate in the decision for some reason, the applicant will be given the choice of having a rehearing or of having a different Board member substituted for the one who is incapacitated.

Should a member die or otherwise become unavailable (for example, retirement) to reconsider a decision, it is the Board's practice to have the remaining two Board members reconsider the case. However, if there is disagreement concerning the position of the Board on reconsideration, a third member may be designated as a substitute for the absent member.

1204 Administrative Handling [R-28]

Ex parte appeals to the Board of Appeals, and all papers relating thereto, are forwarded to the examining group for docketing. All appeal papers, such as the notice of appeal, appeal brief and request for extension of time to file

the brief are processed by the appropriate examining group.

The application file and jurisdiction of the application are transferred from the examining groups to the Board of Appeals at one of the following times:

- 1) After 2 months from the examiner's answer, plus mail room time, if a "new ground of rejection" has been indicated in the examiner's Answer and no reply brief has been timely filed.
- 2) After 20 days from the examiner's answer, plus mail room time, where no new ground of rejection has been indicated in the examiner's Answer and no reply brief has been timely filed.
- 3) After a supplemental examiner's answer has been mailed in reply to a timely reply brief.
- 4) After the examiner has determined that he will not prepare a supplemental examiner's answer in response to a timely reply brief.

The clerk in charge of handling appeals in the examining group is solely responsible for completion of all phases of appeal clerical procedure. All communications from the Board and all signed Office communications relating to appeals from the primary examiners should be given to the group appeals clerk.

To insure that all records are current, memorandum form PO-262 is attached to the file wrapper when it is remanded by the Board of Appeals. It is important that this memorandum be promptly completed and forwarded by the group if the application is allowed, the prosecution is reopened, a streamlined continuation application is filed or if the appeal is discontinued for any other reason.

Complete clerical instructions appear in Chapter 700 of the Manual of Clerical Procedure.

If the brief is not filed within the time designated by Rule 192, the clerk will notify the applicant that the appeal stands dismissed.

"SPECIAL" CASE

Subject alone to diligent prosecution by the applicant, an application for patent that once has been made special and advanced out of turn by the Commissioner or an Assistant Commissioner for examination will continue to be special throughout its entire course of prosecution in the Patent Office, including appeal, if any, to the Board of Appeals.

A petition to make a case special after the appeal has been forwarded to the Board of Appeals may be addressed to the Board. However, no such petition will be granted unless the brief

has been filed and applicant has made the same type of showing required by the Commissioner under rule 102. Therefore, diligent prosecution is essential to a favorable decision on a petition to make special.

1205 Notice of Appeal [R-28]

35 U.S.C. 134. Appeal to the Board of Appeals. An applicant for a patent, any of whose claims has been twice rejected, may appeal from the decision of the primary examiner to the Board of Appeals, having once paid the fee for such appeal.

Extract from 35 U.S.C. 41, Patent fees. (a) The Commissioner shall charge the following fees: 6. On appeal for the first time from the examiner to the Board of Appeals, \$50; in addition, on filing a brief in support of the appeal, \$50.

Rule 191. Appeal to Board of Appeals. (a) Every applicant for a patent or for reissue of a patent, any of the claims of which have been twice rejected, or who has been given a final rejection (rule 113), may, upon the payment of the fee required by law, appeal from the decision of the primary examiner to the Board of Appeals within the time allowed for response.

(b) The appeal must identify the rejected claim or claims appealed, and must be signed by the applicant or his duly authorized attorney or agent. (See form 41)

(c) Except as otherwise provided by rule 206, appeal when taken must be taken from the rejection of all claims under rejection which applicant proposes to contest. Questions relating to matters not affecting the merits of the invention may be required to be settled before an appeal can be considered.

An applicant dissatisfied with the primary examiner's decision in the second or final rejection of his claims may appeal to the Board of Appeals for review of the examiner's rejection by filing a notice of appeal, signed by the applicant or his attorney, and the required fee of \$50.

The notice of appeal must be filed within the period for response set in the last Office action, which is normally three months. The timely filing of a first response to a final rejection having a shortened statutory period for response is construed as including a request to extend the period for response an additional month, even if an extension has been previously granted, as long as the period for response does not exceed six months from the date of the final rejection. The additional month may be used to place the application in condition for allowance, to appeal or to file a continuing application. See § 714.13. Failure to place an application in condition for allowance or to file an appeal after final rejection will result in the application becoming abandoned, even if one or more claims have been allowed except where claims suggested for interference have been copied.

The use of form 41 for filing a notice of appeal is strongly recommended. This form is reproduced below. Copies for duplication may be obtained from the receptionist in the lobby of Building 3 in the Patent Office.

Revised Form 41

NOTICE OF APPEAL FROM THE PRIMARY EXAMINER
TO THE BOARD OF APPEALS

In re application of:

Serial No.:

For:

Filed:

Group Art Unit:

To Commissioner of Patents

Sir:

Applicant hereby appeals to the Board of Appeals from the decision dated _____ of the Primary Examiner finally rejecting claims _____

The item(s) checked below are appropriate:

1. An extension of time to respond to the final rejection was granted on _____ for _____ months(s).
2. A timely response to the final rejection has been filed, as provided in 841 O.G. 1411.
3. Fee \$50.00:
 - Enclosed
 - Not required (Fee paid in prior appeal.)
- Charge to Deposit Account No. _____
(One additional copy of this Notice is enclosed herewith.)

Signature (Rule 191(b)).

Post Office Address (to which
correspondence is to be sent).

MATTERS HANDLED CONCURRENTLY WITH
APPEAL

Rule 206 permits partial appeal in cases where there are both finally rejected claims copied from a patent and other claims not ready for appeal. See §§ 1210 and 1101.02(f).

Ex parte prosecution of an appeal under rule 191 may proceed concurrently with an interference proceeding involving the same application provided the primary examiner who forwards the appeal certifies, in a memorandum to be placed in the file, that the subject matter of the interference does not conflict with the subject matter of the appealed claims. See rule 212, § 1103.

1206 Appeal Brief [R-28]

Rule 192. Appellant's brief. (a) The appellant shall, within two months from the date of the appeal, or

within the time allowed for response to the action appealed from, if such time is later, file a brief in triplicate, accompanied by the requisite fee, of the authorities and arguments on which he will rely to maintain his appeal, including a concise explanation of the invention which should refer to the drawing by reference characters, and a copy of the claims involved, at the same time indicating if he desires an oral hearing. Upon a showing of sufficient cause, the Commissioner may grant extensions of time for filing the brief. The Commissioner may delegate to appropriate Patent Office officials the approval of such extensions. All requests for extensions must be filed prior to the expiration of the period sought to be extended.

(b) On failure to file the brief, accompanied by the requisite fee, within the time allowed, the appeal shall stand dismissed.

Where the brief is not filed, but within the period allowed for filing the brief an amendment is presented which places the case in condition for allowance, the amendment may be entered since the application retains its pending status during said period. See §§ 1207, 1215.01 and 1215.02.

The copy of the claims required in the brief should be a clean copy and should not include any brackets or underlining as required by rule 121(b).

TIME FOR FILING APPEAL BRIEF

The usual period of time in which applicant must file his brief is two months from the date of the appeal. However, rule 192 alternatively permits the brief to be filed "within the time allowed for response to the action appealed from, if such time is later".

In the event that applicant finds that he is unable to file a brief within the time allotted by the rules, he may file a petition, without any fee, to the examining group, requesting additional time (usually one month), and giving his reasons for the request. The petition should be filed in duplicate and contain the address to which the response is to be sent. If sufficient cause is shown and the petition is filed prior to the expiration of the period sought to be extended (rule 192), the group appeals clerk is authorized to grant the extension not in excess of one month. The group directors have authority to grant subsequent extensions. Additional time, in excess of two months, will not be granted, unless extraordinary circumstance are involved. The time extended is added to the last calendar day of the original period, as opposed to being added to the day it would have been due when said last day is a Saturday, Sunday or holiday.

If after an appeal has been filed, but prior to the date for submitting a brief, an interference

is declared, applicant's brief need not be filed until two months after either the non-appealable decision of the Patent Interference Examiner or the expiration of the time for appealing from the Patent Interference Examiner's appealable decision, the decision of the Board of Patent Interferences or from any subsequent decision of a reviewing court. If a petition for reconsideration is filed, there is a 30 day appeal limit following the decision on petition. In the event that a seasonable petition to the Commissioner is filed with respect to the Patent Interference Examiner's decision, a 30 day period begins with the mailing of the decision on the petition. See §§ 1109.01 and 1109.02.

Likewise, when an application is revived after abandonment for failure on the part of the applicant to make appropriate action after final rejection, applicant has two months, from the mailing date of the Commissioner's affirmative decision on the petition, in which to file his brief.

With the exception of the institution of an interference or the suggestion and timely copying of claims for an interference, the appeal ordinarily will be dismissed if the brief is not filed within the period provided by rule 192(a) or within such additional time as may be properly granted.

Attention is directed to the fact that a brief must be filed to preserve applicant's right to the appealed claims, notwithstanding circumstances such as:

- (1) the possibility or imminence of an interference involving the subject application, but not resulting in withdrawal of the final rejection prior to the brief's due date;
- (2) the filing of a petition for supervisory action under rule 181;
- (3) the filing of an amendment, even if it is one which the examiner previously has indicated may place one or more claims in condition for allowance, unless the examiner, in acting on the amendment, disposes of all issues on appeal;
- (4) the receipt of a letter from the examiner stating that prosecution is suspended, without the examiner either withdrawing the final rejection from which appeal has been taken, instituting an interference with the subject application or suggesting claims for an interference.

Although failure to file the brief within the permissible time will result in dismissal of the appeal, if any claims stand allowed, the application does not become abandoned by the dismissal, but is returned to the examiner for his

action on the allowed claims. See § 1215.04. If there are no allowed claims, the case is abandoned as of the date the brief was due.

If the time for filing a brief has passed and the application has consequently become abandoned, the applicant may petition to revive the application, as in other cases of abandonment, and to reinstate the appeal; if the appeal is dismissed, but the application is not abandoned, the petition would be to reinstate the claims and the appeal, but a showing equivalent to that in a petition to revive under rule 137 is required. See § 1215.04. However, the \$15 fee for reviving an application is not required in the latter case. In either event, a proper brief must be filed before the petition will be considered on its merits.

Where the dismissal of the appeal is believed to be a mistake resulting from inadvertence, filing a petition, pointing out the error, may be sufficient.

APPEAL BRIEF

A \$50 fee is required when the brief is filed, 35 U.S.C. 41, rule 192 provides that the appellant shall file a brief of the authorities and arguments on which he will rely to maintain his appeal, including a concise explanation of the invention which should refer to the drawing by reference characters, and a copy of the claims involved, at the same time indicating if he desires an oral hearing. Rule 192(a) requires the submission of three copies of the appeal brief.

For sake of convenience, the copy of the claims involved should be double spaced.

The brief, as well as every other paper relating to an appeal, should indicate the number of the group to which the application is assigned and the serial number.

When the brief is received, it is forwarded to the group where it is entered in the file, and referred to the examiner. If the examiner considers the brief to be defective under rule 192, he may (1) point out the defect in his examiner's answer or (2) if a bona fide attempt has been made to file a proper brief, he may write a letter to the applicant notifying him that he has 1 month to correct the defect by filing a supplemental brief. If the applicant fails to correct the brief within the 1 month period, the examiner will write his answer and indicate the defect. All such letters must be approved by the group director.

The mere filing of any paper whatever entitled as a brief cannot necessarily be considered a compliance with rule 192. The rule requires that the brief must set forth the authorities and arguments relied upon and to the extent that it fails to do so with respect to any ground of rejection, the appeal as to that ground must be dismissed. It is essential that the Board of Ap-

peals should be provided with a brief fully stating the position of the applicant with respect to each issue involved in the appeal so that no search of the record is required in order to determine that position. The fact that applicant may consider a ground to be clearly improper does not justify a failure to point out to the Board the reasons for that belief.

A distinction must be made between the lack of any argument and the presentation of arguments which carry no conviction. In the former case dismissal is in order, while in the latter case a decision on the merits is made, although it may well be merely an affirmance based on the grounds relied on by the examiner.

Applicant must traverse every ground of rejection set forth in the final rejection. Oral argument at the hearing will not remedy such a deficiency in the brief. Ignoring or acquiescing in any rejection, even one based upon formal matters which could be cured by subsequent amendment, will invite a dismissal of the appeal as to the claims affected. If this involves all of the claims, the proceedings in the case are considered terminated as of the date of the dismissal. Accordingly, any application filed thereafter will not be copending with the application on appeal. If in his brief, applicant relies on some reference, he is expected to provide the Board with at least one copy of it.

Once the brief has been filed, a petition to suspend proceedings may be considered on its merits, but will be granted only in exceptional cases, such as where the writing of the examiner's answer would be fruitless or would work a hardship on the applicant.

For reply brief see § 1208.01.

1207 Amendment Filed With or After Appeal [R-28]

To expedite the resolution of cases under final rejection, an amendment filed at any time after final rejection but before an appeal brief is filed, may be entered upon or after filing of an appeal provided the total effect of the amendment is to (1) remove issues from appeal, and/or (2) adopt examiner suggestions. Of course, if the amendment necessitates a new search, raises the issue of new matter, presents additional claims without cancelling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims, or otherwise introduces new issues, it will not be entered. Examiners must respond to all non-entered amendments after final rejection, and indicate the status of each claim of record or proposed, including the designation of claims that would be entered on the filing of an appeal if filed in a separate paper. It should be noted that an amendment placing a case in condition for allowance will

be enterable by the examiner at any stage prior to forwarding the answer on appeal. Except where an amendment merely cancels claims and/or adopts examiner suggestions, removes issues from appeal, or in some other way requires only a cursory review by the examiner, compliance with the requirement of a showing under rule 116(b) will be expected of all amendments after final rejection. If after appeal has been taken, a paper is presented which *on its face* clearly places the application in condition for allowance, such paper should be entered and a notice of allowability (POL-327) promptly sent to applicant.

In accordance with the above, the brief must be directed to the claims and to the record of the case as they appeared at the time of the appeal, but it may, of course, withdraw from consideration on appeal any claims or issues as desired by applicant.

A timely filed brief will be referred to the examiner for his consideration of its propriety as to the appeal issues and for preparation of an examiner's answer if the brief is proper and the application is not allowable. The examiner's answer will normally be of the shortened type referring to and relying on the final action; it may withdraw rejection of claims or any objection or requirement as desired by the examiner. Note § 1201. No new ground of rejection or objection should be incorporated in the examiner's answer *without express approval in each case by the group director*. See § 1004. See § 714.13 for procedure on handling amendments filed after final action and before appeal.

1208 Examiner's Answer [R-28]

Rule 193. Examiner's answer. (a) The primary examiner may, within such time as may be directed by the Commissioner, furnish a written statement in answer to the appellant's brief including such explanation of the invention claimed and of the references and grounds of rejection as may be necessary, supplying a copy to the appellant. If the primary examiner shall find that the appeal is not regular in form or does not relate to an appealable action, he shall so state and a petition from such decision may be taken to the Commissioner as provided in rule 181.

(b) The appellant may file a reply brief directed only to such new points of argument as may be raised in the examiner's answer, within twenty days from the date of such answer. However, if the examiner's answer states a new ground of rejection appellant may file a reply thereto within two months from the date of such answer; such reply may include any amendment or material appropriate to the new ground.

APPEAL CONFERENCE

Appealed cases in which the brief has been filed should be reviewed by conference in the

group, those participating being (1) a primary examiner, (2) the examiner charged with preparation of the examiner's answer and (3) another examiner, known as the conferee, having sufficient experience to be of assistance in the consideration of the merits of the issues on appeal.

Where the primary examiner has, himself, examined an application and made the final

rejection, a conference relative to such a case, if appealed, is discretionary with him.

If a conference is held, the primary examiner should weigh the arguments of the other examiners but it is his responsibility to make the final decision. During the conference, consideration should be given to the possibility of dropping cumulative art rejections and eliminating technical rejections of doubtful value.

On the examiner's answer, the third person (conferee) should place his initials below those of the examiner who prepared the answer, thus: ABC (conf.). This does not indicate, necessarily, concurrence with the position taken in the answer.

If the examiner charged with the responsibility of preparing the Answer reaches the conclusion that the appeal should not be forwarded and the primary examiner approves, no conference is held.

Before preparing the answer, the examiner should make certain that all amendments approved for entry have in fact been physically entered in the application. This is important to insure that the claims considered by the Board are the same as those forming the basis of the appeal. The clerk of the Board will return to the group any application in which approved amendments have not been entered.

ANSWER

The examiner should furnish the applicant with a written statement in answer to the applicant's brief within 2 months after the filing of the brief.

The answer should contain a response to the allegations or arguments in the brief and should call attention to any errors in applicant's copy of the claims. Grounds of rejection not argued in the examiner's answer are usually treated as having been dropped, but may be considered by the Board if it desires to do so. The examiner should treat affidavits, declarations or exhibits in accordance with rule 195, reporting his conclusions only on those admitted. Any affidavits or declarations in the application swearing behind a patent should be clearly identified by the examiner as being considered under either rule 131 or 204. The distinction is important since the Board of Appeals will usually consider holdings on rule 131 affidavits or declarations but not on rule 204 affidavits or declarations.

If the brief fails to respond to any or all grounds of rejection advanced by the examiner, the examiner should simply inform the Board of Appeals of this fact in his answer and specify the particular claims affected. Since such lack of response to any ground of rejection will result in dismissal of the appeal as to the claims affected, the claims involved need not be treated further by the examiner in his answer. A dismissal of the appeal will result if all the claims are involved and the Board concurs in the examiner's conclusion.

Because of the practice of the Patent Office in entering amendments after final action un-

der justifiable circumstances for purpose of appeal, many cases coming before the Board of Appeals for consideration contain claims which are not the claims treated in the examiner's final rejection. They are either entirely new claims or amended versions of the finally rejected claims, or both. The new claims or finally rejected claims as amended frequently contain limitations not in the claims treated in the final rejection and the arguments in the applicant's brief are directed to the new claims. Under such circumstances the mere reference in the examiner's answer to the final rejection for a statement of his position would leave the Board, insofar as the new claims are concerned, with an uncrystallized issue and without the benefit of the examiner's view, which complicates the task of rendering a decision.

It also frequently happens that an examiner will state his position in the answer in a manner that represents a shift from the position stated in the final rejection without indicating that the last stated position supersedes the former. Such a situation confuses the issue and likewise poses difficulties for the Board since it is not clear exactly what the examiner's ultimate position is.

In view of the complete and thorough development of the issues at the time of final rejection it is possible to save time in preparing the examiner's answer required by rule 193 by taking the following steps:

A. Examiners may incorporate in the answer their statement of the grounds of rejection merely by reference to the final rejection (or a single other action on which it is based, § 706.07). Only those statements of grounds of rejection as appear in *single* prior action may be incorporated by reference. An examiner's answer should not refer, either directly or indirectly, to more than one prior Office action. Statements of grounds of rejection appearing in actions other than the aforementioned single prior action should be *quoted* in the answer. The page and paragraph of the final action or other single prior action which it is desired to incorporate by reference should be explicitly identified. Of course, if the examiner feels that some further explanation of the rejection is necessary he should include it in the answer but ordinarily he may avoid another recital of the issues and another elaboration of the grounds of rejection. The answer should also include any necessary rebuttal of arguments presented in the applicant's brief if the final action does not adequately meet the arguments.

B. If the applicant (1) fails to describe the invention, as required by rule 192, or (2) fails to describe the reference, the examiner is no longer required to provide these omissions. The examiner should, however, include such description and explanation in the answer if he feels it necessary to present properly and effectively his case to the Board of Appeals.

The examiner should reevaluate his position in the light of the arguments presented in the brief, and should expressly withdraw any rejections not adhered to. This should be done even though any rejection not repeated and discussed in the answer may be taken by the Board as having been withdrawn.

The Board has authority to remand a case to the examiner for a fuller description of the claimed invention and, in the case of a machine, a statement of its mode of operation. In certain cases where the pertinence of the references is not clear, the Board may call upon the examiner for a further explanation. In the case of multiple rejections of a cumulative nature, the Board may also remand for selection of the preferred or best ground. The Board may also remand a case to the examiner for further search where it feels that the most pertinent art has not been cited.

All correspondence with the Board of Appeals, whether by the examiner or the applicant must be on the record. No unpublished decisions which are unavailable to the general public by reason of 35 U.S.C. 122 can be cited by the examiner or the applicant except that either the examiner or the applicant has the right to cite an unpublished decision in an application having common ownership with the application on appeal.

When files are forwarded, soft copies and prints of references fastened therein should not be disturbed.

If an examiner's answer is believed to contain a new interpretation or application of the existing patent law, the examiner's answer, application file and an explanatory memorandum should be forwarded to the group director for consideration. If approved by the group director, the examiner's answer should be forwarded to the Office of the Assistant Commissioner for Patent Examining for final approval.

A form suitable for the examiner's answer is as follows:

POL-84

IN RE APPLICATION OF

Ser. No. -----	Before the Board of Appeals
Filed -----	
For -----	

EXAMINER'S ANSWER

"This is an appeal from the final rejection of claims ----- Claims ----- are allowable."

"A correct copy of the appealed claims appears on page — of the applicant's brief." (If any claims are incorrect, they should be correctly reproduced in the answer in clean copy without any underlining or brackets as required by rule 121(b)).

Statement as to any ground of rejection not argued or responded to by applicant and the particular claims affected by such lack of response.

"The references of record relied on are:

1.736.481 Smith-----6-20

1.894.324 Jones-----7-23

"New References" See § 1208.01.

(The examiner's answer must cite all references relied on in the appeal and cannot refer to other papers for this information. In citing non-patent references, the current location of the reference should be specified by class and subclass or, if not classified, the particular location in the Office where a copy can be found. In addition, the citation should specify the precise page or pages of the reference relied on. Omit listing of references not involved in the appeal.)

"Statement of the grounds of rejection."

Reference to final rejection or single prior action for a clear exposition of the rejection. If necessary, description and explanation of the alleged invention and references to present the examiner's case properly. If pertinent, include a statement that this is a new ground of rejection.

Response to the allegations and arguments in the brief not already met by the final rejection.

If a new ground of rejection is raised, see § 1208.01.

For case having patentability report see § 705.01(a).

Request by the examiner to present arguments at the oral hearing.

1208.01 New Reference, New Objection or New Ground of Rejection in Examiner's Answer [R-28]

At the time of preparing his answer to an appeal brief, the examiner may decide that he should cite a new reference, raise a new objection, or apply a new ground of rejection (new reference, double patenting, statutory bar or other reason for rejection) against some or all of the appealed claims. The group director's

approval must be obtained prior to writing the answer for any new reference or new ground of rejection or objection incorporated in the examiner's answer.

After prior approval of the group director is obtained, all answers citing new references or

containing new grounds of rejection or objection must be routed over the supervisory primary examiner's desk. These should then be brought to the attention of the director for his review and approval. The director will stamp "approved" on the file copy of the answer only

if it meets with his approval. If approval is given to the citation of new references, the answer will be mailed by the group and will include copies of the new references. Reference Order Section will not be involved in these actions. Also, a PO-892 must be completed for the file for use by the printer in case of issuance as a patent. The Board will return to the group director's office any answer containing (1) any newly cited reference (for any purpose) or (2) a new ground of rejection, where such answer does not bear an approved stamp.

In order to introduce a new ground of rejection it is necessary either to reopen the *ex parte* prosecution before the examiner or to include the new rejection in the examiner's answer, depending on existing circumstances. The choice of action to be followed will depend on such factors as the history of the prosecution, the number of claims affected, the importance of the new ground of rejection, the significance of the new reference and the nature of the response to be expected. For example, if the reference is basic and materially better in meeting all of the claims, reopening of the prosecution and making the action final would ordinarily be approved. Should applicant desire to have the Board review the examiner's action, he must file a new appeal (without fee) and a new brief (without fee). On the other hand, if the new reference anticipates some but not all of the claims or supplies a minor lack in art already relied on, inclusion of the new ground in the examiner's answer would normally be the approved procedure. Of course, if the new ground of rejection applies to any claim standing allowed the prosecution should be reopened.

It is important that the new ground with regard to which the group director has been consulted be clearly indicated as such so that the Board of Appeals can readily identify those applications where the applicant is entitled to a period of two months for reply. Any new reference should be cited under the caption "New Reference(s)."

Likewise when a ground of rejection not involving a new reference is raised for the first time in the answer after consultation with the group director the fact that it is a new ground should be clearly indicated, thus: **THIS IS A NEW GROUND OF REJECTION**, or some equivalent statement.

The examiner's answer which includes a new ground of rejection should conclude with the following paragraph:

"In view of the new ground of rejection applicant has two months within which he may file a reply to this answer. Such reply may include any amendment or material appropriate to the new ground and may request remand to the examiner to consider such

amendment or material. Prosecution otherwise remains closed. Failure to respond to the new ground of rejection will result in dismissal of the appeal of the claims so rejected if said failure to respond is construed as an acquiescence in this rejection."

REPLY BRIEF

Where a new ground of rejection is raised in the examiner's answer, the applicant, under Rule 193(b) has two months within which he may file a reply brief. The applicant's reply, insofar as the new ground of rejection is concerned, may include any amendment or material appropriate to the new ground. Consideration will be limited to amendments and facts pertinent to the new ground of rejection.

An amendment limited to the new ground of rejection is entitled to entry. *Ex parte Abseck et al.*, 133 USPQ 411.

Where new points of argument have been raised in the examiner's answer, applicant may file a reply brief within twenty days from the date of such answer. Applicants should clearly and specifically indicate in their reply briefs the new points of argument "raised in the examiner's answer" to which said reply briefs are directed. Rule 193(b) does not permit general rebuttal of each statement made in the examiner's answer; consequently a reply brief which is not restricted to answering "new points" may be refused consideration in toto.

If the examiner desires to respond to a reply brief, he should furnish his supplemental examiner's answer within one month after the filing thereof.

1208.02 Withdrawal of Final Rejection [R-28]

The examiner may withdraw the final rejection at any time prior to the mailing of the examiner's answer. It is possible that after reading the brief, the Examiner may be convinced that some or all of the finally rejected claims are allowable. Where he is of the opinion that some of the claims are allowable he should so specify in the examiner's answer and confine his arguments to the remaining rejected claims. If he finds, upon reconsideration, that all the rejected claims are allowable, or where the applicant in his brief withdraws the appeal as to some of the rejected claims and the examiner finds the remaining claims to be allowable, he should pass the case to issue. **The Board should be notified whenever a remanded application is withdrawn from appeal under any circumstance.** See §§ 706.07(c) to 706.07(e).

In applications where an interference has resulted from the applicant copying claims from the patent which provided the basis for final re-

jection, the rejection based on that patent should be withdrawn and the appeal dismissed as to the involved claims.

1209 Oral Hearing [R-28]

Rule 194. Hearing. If no request for oral hearing has been made by the appellant, the appeal will be assigned for consideration and decision. If the appellant has requested an oral hearing, a day of hearing will be set, and due notice thereof given to the appellant. Hearing will be held as stated in the notice, and oral argument will be limited to one-half hour unless otherwise ordered before the hearing begins.

If applicant desires to argue his case before the Board, he must file a brief and at the same time indicate if he desires an oral hearing. Rule 192. If no request has been made by applicant, the appeal will be assigned for consideration and decision. Rule 194. That is, the decision will be rendered on the brief.

Preferably, the request for oral hearing should appear in the first paragraph of the brief and should be set out prominently.

A notice of hearing, stating the date, the time and the docket, is forwarded to the applicant in due course. If applicant fails to confirm within the stated time (14 days), the appeal is removed from the hearing docket and assigned on brief in due course. Similarly, after confirmation, if no appearance is made at the scheduled hearing, the appeal is decided on brief. Since failure to notify the Board of waiver of hearing in advance of the assigned date results in a waste of the Board's resources, applicant should inform the Board of a change in plans at the earliest possible opportunity.

If the time set in the notice conflicts with prior commitments or if subsequent events make appearance impossible, the hearing may be rescheduled on written request. However, postponements are discouraged and will not be granted in the absence of convincing reasons in support of the requested change.

If applicant has any special request, such as for a particular date or day of the week, this will be taken into consideration in setting the cases, if made known to the Board in advance, as long as such request does not unduly delay a decision in the case.

The arguments at the hearing may be presented by applicant's attorney or agent if he is duly authorized of record prior to the hearing, in accordance with rule 34. If a firm has a written power to act in the case, compliance with rule 346 is required.

Usually a half hour is allowed for applicant to explain his position. Rule 194. If applicant believes that additional time will be necessary, a request for such time should be made well in

advance and will be taken into consideration in assigning the hearing date. The final decision on whether additional time is to be granted rests within the discretion of the senior member of the panel hearing the case.

Primary examiners are permitted to present oral arguments before the Board of Appeals in appeals where the applicant has been granted an oral hearing. After the applicant has made his presentation, the examiner will be allowed fifteen minutes to reply as well as to present a statement which clearly sets forth his position with respect to the issues and rejections of record. Applicant may utilize any allotted time not used in the initial presentation for rebuttal.

Currently, up to two examiners are permitted to attend any one hearing as observers, where the case is related to the examiners' field of technology. The time of a hearing may be obtained by the examiners by telephoning the Board of Appeals about one month after the appeal is forwarded. The time should be checked a few days prior to the hearing to see if any change has been made. The examiner's request for an oral hearing should appear in the last paragraph of his examiner's answer.

1210 Actions Subsequent to Examiner's Answer but Before Board's Decision [R-28]

JURISDICTION OF BOARD

The application file and jurisdiction of the application are transferred from the examining groups to the Board of Appeals at one of the following times:

- 1) After 2 months from the examiner's answer, plus mail room time, if a "new ground of rejection" has been indicated in the examiner's answer and no reply brief has been timely filed.
- 2) After 20 days from the examiner's answer, plus mail room time, where no new ground of rejection has been indicated in the examiner's answer and no reply brief has been timely filed.
- 3) After a supplemental examiner's answer has been mailed in reply to a timely reply brief.
- 4) After the examiner has determined that he will not prepare a supplemental examiner's answer in response to a timely reply brief.

Any amendment, affidavit, or other paper relating to the appeal, filed thereafter but prior to the decision of the Board, may be considered by the examiner only in the event the case is remanded to him by the Board for that purpose.

DIVIDED JURISDICTION

Where appeal is taken from the final rejection of one or more copied claims only, jurisdiction of the rest of the case remains with the examiner, and prosecution of the remaining claims may proceed as though the entire case was under his jurisdiction. Also, where the examiner certifies in writing that there is no conflict of subject matter, an appeal to the Board of Appeal may proceed concurrently with an interference.

ABANDONMENT OF APPEAL

To avoid the rendering of decisions by the Board of Appeals in applications which have already been refiled as streamlined continuations, applicants should promptly inform the clerk of the Board in writing as soon as they have positively decided to refile or to abandon an application containing an appeal awaiting a decision. Failure to exercise appropriate diligence in this matter may result in the Board's refusing an otherwise proper request to vacate its decision.

1211 Remand by the Board To Consider Amendment [R-25]

There is no obligation resting on the Board to consider new or amended claims submitted while it has jurisdiction of the appeal. In re Sweet, 1943 C.D. 535; 58 USPQ 327; 30 CCPA 1124. A proposed amendment, affidavit, declaration, or other paper may be remanded for such consideration as the examiner may see fit to give. Such an amendment, unless filed under rule 193(b), will be treated in the same way as an amendment after final rejection.

If the proposed amendment is in effect an abandonment of the appeal, as, by canceling the appealed claims, other claims being present which are patentable in the opinion of the examiner, the amendment should be entered and the clerk of the Board notified in order that the case may be removed from the Board's docket.

1212 Remand To Consider Affidavits or Declarations [R-28]

Rule 195. Affidavits or declarations after appeal. Affidavits, declarations, or exhibits submitted after the case has been appealed will not be admitted without a showing of good and sufficient reasons why they were not earlier presented.

Affidavits or declarations filed with or after appeal but before the mailing of the examiner's answer will be considered for entry only if the applicant makes the necessary showing under rule 195 as to why they were not earlier presented. Authority from the Board is not necessary to consider such affidavits or declarations. Affidavits or declarations filed after a final rejection and prior to a notice of appeal are handled as provided in §§ 715.09 and 716.

In the case of affidavits or declarations filed after the application has been forwarded to the Board of Appeals, the examiner is without authority to consider the same in the absence of a remand by the Board. When a case is remanded to the examiner for the consideration of such affidavits or declarations, the examiner, after having given such consideration as the facts in the case require, will return the case to the Board of Appeals with his answer on remand, a copy of which should be forwarded to the applicant. If such an affidavit or declaration is not accompanied by the showing required under rule 195, the examiner will not consider its merits. If the delay in filing such affidavit or declaration is satisfactorily explained, the examiner will admit the same and consider its merits. If this affidavit or declaration is accepted as overcoming the reference, or references, used in the final rejection, and a new reference having a filing date prior to the

date of invention established in the record, or having a publication date more than one year prior to the applicant's filing date, is found, it may be substituted for the one overcome without thereby reopening the case to further prosecution before the examiner. Ex parte Bowyer, 1939 C.D. 5; 42 USPQ 526.

It is not the custom of the Board to remand affidavits or declarations offered in connection with a request for reconsideration of its decision. Affidavits or declarations submitted for this purpose, not remanded to the examiner, are considered only as arguments. In re Martin, 1946 C.D. 180; 69 USPQ 75; 33 CCPA 842.

1213 Decision by Board [R-20]

Extract of Rule 196. Decision by the Board of Appeals. (a) The Board of Appeals, in its decision, may affirm or reverse the decision of the primary examiner in whole or in part on the grounds and on the claims specified by the examiner. The affirmance of the rejection of a claim on any of the grounds specified constitutes a general affirmance of the decision of the primary examiner on that claim, except as to any ground specifically reversed.

After consideration of the record including applicant's brief and the examiner's answer, the Board writes its decision, affirming the examiner in whole or in part, or reversing his decision, sometimes also setting forth a new ground of rejection.

On occasion the Board of Appeals has refused to consider an appeal until after the conclusion of a pending civil action or appeal to the C.C.P.A. involving issues identical with and/or similar to those presented in the later appeal. Such suspension of action, postponing consideration of the appeal until the Board has the benefit of a court decision which may be determinative of the issues involved, has been recognized as sound practice. An applicant is not entitled, after obtaining a final decision by the Patent Office on an issue in a case, to utilize the prolonged pendency of a court proceeding as a means for avoiding res judicata while relitigating the same, or substantially the same issue in another application.

An applicant may request that the decision be withheld to permit the refiling of the application at any time prior to the mailing of the decision. Up to 30 days may be granted, although the time is usually limited as much as possible. The Board will be more prone to entertain the applicant's request where the request is filed early, obviating the necessity for an oral hearing or even for the setting of the oral hearing date. If the case has already been set for oral hearing, the petition should include a request to vacate the hearing date, *not* to postpone it.

In a situation where a withdrawal of the ap-

peal is filed on the same day that the decision is mailed, a petition to vacate the decision will be denied.

Since review of the decisions of the Board is committed by statute to the courts, its decisions are properly reviewable on petition only to the extent of determining whether they involve obvious error or abuse of discretion. Reasonable rulings made by the Board on matters resting in its discretion will not be disturbed upon petition. Thus, for example, the Board's opinion as to whether it has employed a new ground of rejection will not be set aside on petition unless said opinion is found to be clearly unwarranted.

1213.01 Recommendations of Board [R-20]

Extract of Rule 196. Decision by the Board of Appeals. . . . (c) Should the decision of the Board of Appeals include an explicit statement that a claim may be allowed in amended form, applicant shall have the right to amend in conformity with such statement, which shall be binding on the primary examiner in the absence of new references or grounds of rejection.

If the examiner knows of references or reasons which were not before the Board, such a favorable recommendation is not binding upon him. Likewise, any change in a favorably recommended claim other than the amendments recommended would tend to destroy the force of such recommendation. *Ex parte Young*, 15 Gour. 24:31.

In the absence of an express recommendation, a remark by the Board that a certain feature does not appear in a claim is not to be taken as a recommendation that the claim be allowed if the feature is supplied by amendment. *Ex parte Norlund*, 1913 C.D. 161; 192 O.G. 989.

Applicant's right to amend in conformity with the recommendation may only be exercised within the period allowed for seeking court review, ordinarily sixty days from the date of the Board's decision.

1214 Actions Following Decision by Board [R-28]

Board of Appeals decisions may be published, if requested by the Board or group. In the event that the application has become abandoned, applicant's permission is sought prior to publication.

1214.01 New Ground of Rejection [R-25]

Extract from Rule 196. Decisions by the Board of Appeals. . . . (b) Should the Board of Appeals have knowledge of any grounds not involved in the appeal

for rejecting any appealed claim, it may include in its decision a statement to that effect with its reasons for so holding, which statement shall constitute a rejection of the claims. The appellant may submit an appropriate amendment of the claims so rejected or a showing of facts, or both, and have the matter considered by the primary examiner. The statement shall be binding upon the primary examiner unless an amendment or showing of facts not previously of record be made which, in the opinion of the primary examiner, avoids the additional ground for rejection stated in the decision. The applicant may waive such reconsideration before the primary examiner and have the case reconsidered by the Board of Appeals upon the same record before them. Where request for such reconsideration is made the Board of Appeals shall, if necessary, render a new decision which shall include all grounds upon which a patent is refused. The applicant may waive reconsideration by the Board of Appeals and treat the decision, including the added grounds for rejection given by the Board of Appeals, as a final decision in the case.

A. A request for reconsideration by the Board must be filed within thirty days from the date of the decision, the period set by rule 197(b). By proceeding in this manner the applicant waives his right to further prosecution before the examiner. *In re Greenfield*, 1930 C.D. 531; 5 USPQ 474.

B. Where the Board's decision completely removes the examiner's rejection as to one or more claims and substitutes a new one under rule 196(b), the applicant, if he elects to proceed before the examiner, must take such action within the period for response set in the Board's decision, which may not exceed six months from the Board's decision. See *In re application filed July 13, 1950 at 693 O.G. 136; 1955 C.D. 3*. A shortened period for response of thirty days ordinarily is set in the Board's decision.

The applicant may amend the claims involved, or substitute new claims to avoid the art or reasons adduced by the Board. *Ex parte Burrowes*, 1904 C.D. 155; 110 O.G. 599. Such amended or new claims must be directed to the same subject matter as the appealed claims, *Ex parte Comstock*, 1923 C.D. 82; 317 O.G. 4.

Argument without amendment of the claims so rejected can result only in a final rejection of the claims, since the examiner is without authority to allow the claims unless amended or unless the rejection is overcome by a showing of facts not before the Board. The new ground of rejection raised by the Board does not reopen the prosecution except as to that subject matter to which the new rejection was applied.

C. As a third option, applicant may treat such decision of the Board as final and file either a direct appeal therefrom to the C.C.P.A., or a civil action under 35 U.S.C. 145. In re Crowell, 1930 C.D. 360; 397 O.G. 3. Where the applicant avails himself of the third option, he waives his right to reconsideration by the Board, or by the examiner, discussed above. In re Heinz, 1910 C.D. 292; 151 O.G. 1014.

1214.02 Procedure After Decision [R-20]

Extract from Rule 197. Action following decision.

(a) After decision by the Board of Appeals, the case shall be returned to the primary examiner, subject to the applicant's right of appeal or other review, for such further action by the applicant or by the primary examiner, as the condition of the case may require, to carry into effect the decision.

After an appeal to the Board of Appeals has been decided, a copy of the decision is mailed to the applicant and the original placed in the file. The clerk of the Board notes the decision on the file wrapper and in the record of appeals, and then forwards the file to the primary examiner through the office of the group director immediately if the examiner is reversed, and after 30 days if the examiner is affirmed.

1214.03 Rehearing and Reconsideration [R-20]

Under rule 197, any request or petition for rehearing or reconsideration, or modification of the decision, must be filed within thirty days from the date of the original decision, unless that decision is so modified as to become, in effect, a new decision, and the Board of Appeals so states.

"No petition for rehearing or reconsideration filed outside the time specified shall operate to extend the period of sixty days" for appeal to the U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals or for commencing a civil action, rule 304. The Commissioner may suspend or waive the sixty day limit of rule 304. *Eckey v. Watson*, 122 USPQ 5; 1959 C.D. 119. In such a petition an adequate showing under rule 183 is demanded.

Any soft copies in the file wrapper should not be removed until the period of reconsideration expires.

1214.04 Examiner Reversed [R-28]

A complete reversal of the examiner's rejection brings the case up for immediate action by the examiner.

The examiner should never regard such a reversal as a challenge to make a new search to

uncover other and better references. This is particularly so where the application has meanwhile been transferred or assigned to an examiner other than the one who finally rejected the claims. The second examiner should give full faith and credit to his predecessor's search. Of course, if the examiner has specific knowledge of the existence of a particular reference which obviously meets the terms of any of the appealed claims as to which the examiner was reversed, he should submit the matter to the group director for authorization to reopen prosecution under rule 198 for the purpose of entering the new rejection.

All requests by the examiner to the Board of Appeals for reconsideration of a decision, must be approved by the group director and must be forwarded to the office of the Assistant Commissioner for Patent Examining.

1214.05 Cancellation of Withdrawn Claims [R-20]

Where an applicant withdraws some of the appealed claims, and the Board reverses the examiner on the remaining appealed claims, the withdrawal is treated as an authorization to cancel the withdrawn claims. It is not necessary to notify the applicant of the cancellation of the withdrawn claims.

1214.06 Examiner Sustained in Whole or in Part [R-25]

Extract from Rule 197. Action following decision

... (c) When an appeal is or stands dismissed, or when the time for appeal to the court or review by civil action (rule 304) has expired and no such appeal or civil action has been filed, proceedings in the application are considered terminated as of the dismissal or expiration date except in those applications in which claims stand allowed or in which the nature of the decision requires further action by the examiner. If an appeal to the court or a civil action has been filed, proceedings in the application are similarly considered terminated when the appeal or civil action is terminated.

If the examiner was sustained either in whole or in part, it is improper to notify applicant of the status of the case unless asked to do so. See *Ex parte Buchenberg* 1924 C.D. 55; 327 O.G. 216.

The time for seeking review of a decision of the Board of Appeals by the C.C.P.A. or the District Court is the same for both tribunals, that is, sixty days, or sixty days with the extension provided by rule 304 in the event a petition for reconsideration or rehearing is seasonably filed before the Board, or as extended

by the Commissioner. See § 1214.03. When the time for seeking court review (plus two weeks to allow for information as to the filing of an appeal or civil action, if any, to reach the examiner) has passed without such review, being sought, the examiner must take up the case for consideration. The situations which can arise will involve one or more of the following six circumstances:

A. No claims stand allowed. The proceedings in the application are terminated as of the date of the expiration of the time for filing court action. The application is no longer considered as pending. It is to be stamped abandoned and sent to abandoned files without notifying applicant.

B. Claims stand allowed. The applicant is not required to file a response. The examiner takes the case up and passes it to issue on the claims which stand allowed. A red ink line should be drawn through the refused claims and the notation "Board Decision" written in the margin in red ink.

If uncorrected matters of form which cannot be handled without written correspondence remain in the case, the examiner should take appropriate action but prosecution is otherwise closed. A letter such as the following is suggested:

"In view of the fact that the period for seeking court review of the decision by the Board of Appeals rendered (*date of decision*) has expired and no further action has been taken by applicant, the proceedings as to the rejected claims are considered terminated; see rule 197(c)."

"The application will be passed to issue on claims (*identify*) which stand allowed provided the following formal matter(s) is (are) promptly corrected. Prosecution is otherwise closed."

(Set out formal matter(s) requiring correction.)

(Set a thirty day Shortened Statutory Period for response.)

C. Claims require action. If the decision of the Board is an affirmance in part and includes a reversal of a rejection that brings certain claims up for action on the merits, such as a decision allowing generic claims in a case containing claims to nonelected species not previously acted upon, the examiner will take the case up for appropriate action on the matters thus brought up, but the case is not considered open to further prosecution except as to such matters.

D. Rule 196(b) rejection. Where the Board makes a new rejection under rule 196(b) and no action is taken with reference thereto by the applicant within six months, or such shortened

period as may be set in the Board's decision, the examiner should proceed in the manner indicated for situations A, B, or C, depending on which is appropriate to the case. See § 1214.01.

If the Board sustains the examiner's rejection, but also enters a new ground of rejection under rule 196(b), the filing of a request for reconsideration on the affirmed rejection will defer the end of the period for appeal to the courts until 30 days after the decision on reconsideration, to allow time for the examiner to consider any amendments and/or evidence offered to traverse the new ground of rejection.

E. Rule 196(c) recommendation. Where the Board makes a recommendation under rule 196(c) and no action is taken with reference thereto by the applicant within the time permitted for court review, ordinarily sixty days from the date of the decision, the examiner should proceed in the manner indicated for situations A, B, or C, depending on which is appropriate to the case. See § 1213.01.

F. Appeal dismissed. The appeal has been dismissed for failure to argue a ground of rejection involving all the appealed claims. See § 1215.04.

The practice under situations A, B, and C is similar to the practice after a decision of the court outlined in § 1216.01.

In view of the above practice, examiners must be very careful that applications which come back from the Board of Appeals are not overlooked because every case, except those in which all claims stand rejected after the Board's decision, is up for action by the examiner in the event no court review has been sought. Consequently, when a file is received after decision by the Board of Appeals, it must be examined and appropriate precautions taken to indicate the presence of allowed claims, if any. This may be done by writing the notation "Allowed Claims" on "Contents" of file wrapper immediately below endorsement "Decision by Board".

See §§ 1216.01 and 1216.02 for procedure where court review is sought.

1214.07 Reopening of Prosecution [R-25]

Rule 198. Reopening after decision. Cases which have been decided by the Board of Appeals will not be reopened or reconsidered by the primary examiner, except under the provisions of rule 196, without the written authority of the Commissioner, and then only for the consideration of matters not already adjudicated, sufficient cause being shown.

Sometimes an amendment is filed after the Board's decision which does not carry into effect any recommendation made by the Board

and which presents a new or amended claim or claims. In view of the fact that the prosecution of the case is definitely closed, the applicant clearly is not entitled to have such amendment entered as a matter of right. However, if the amendment obviously places the case in condition for allowance, the primary examiner should endorse on the amendatory paper a recommendation that the amendment be admitted, and with the concurrence of the group director, the amendment will be entered.

Where the amendment cannot be entered, the examiner should write to the applicant notifying him that the amendment cannot be entered and stating the reason why. The refusal should never be made to appear arbitrary or capricious. A letter such as the following might be used:

"The amendment filed ----- after the Board's decision is refused entry because the prosecution is closed and the new claims (or claims as amended) raise new issues which require further consideration or search."

In the event that claims stand allowed in the case under the conditions set forth in § 1214.06 (paragraph B), the case should be passed to issue.

Since October 16, 1969, the Commissioner has entertained petitions under rule 198 to reopen certain cases in which an applicant has sought review under 35 U.S.C. 141 or 145. This procedure is restricted to cases which have been decided by the Board of Appeals and which are amenable to settlement without the need for going forward with the court proceeding. Such petitions will ordinarily be granted only in the following categories of cases:

1. When the decision of the Board of Appeals asserts that the rejection of the claims is proper because the claims do not include a disclosed limitation or because they suffer from some other curable defect, and the decision reasonably is suggestive that claims including the limitation or devoid of the defect will be allowable:

2. When the decision of the Board of Appeals asserts that the rejection of the claims is proper because the record does not include evidence of a specified character, and is reasonably suggestive that if such evidence were presented, the appealed claims would be allowable, and it is demonstrated that such evidence presently exists and can be offered; or

3. When the decision of the Board of Appeals is based on a practice, rule, law, or judicial precedent which, since the Board's decision, has been rescinded, repealed, or overruled.

Any such petition must be accompanied by the proposed amendment, evidence, or argument said to justify allowance of the claims.

The petition further must point out how the case falls within one of the preceding categories. Failure to do so or failure of the case to qualify as coming within one of the categories will usually constitute basis for denying the petition. In any event, no case will be reopened unless it is for the consideration of matters not already adjudicated, and sufficient cause has been shown.

Such petitions will not be ordinarily entertained after the filing of the Commissioner's brief in cases in which review has been sought under 35 U.S.C. 141, or after trial in a 35 U.S.C. 145 case.

In the case of an appeal under 35 U.S.C. 141, if the petition is granted, steps will be taken to request the court to remand the case to the Patent Office and if so remanded the proposed amendments, evidence, and arguments will be entered of record in the application file for consideration, and further action will be taken by the Board of Appeals in the first instance or by the examiner as may be appropriate. In the case of civil action under 35 U.S.C. 145, steps will be taken for obtaining dismissal of the action without prejudice to consideration of the proposals.

1215 Withdrawal or Dismissal of Appeal

1215.01 Withdrawal of Appeal [R-25]

Where, after appeal has been filed and before decision by the Board of Appeals, an applicant withdraws his appeal after the period for response to the final rejection has expired, the application is to be considered abandoned as of the date on which the appeal was withdrawn unless there are allowed claims in the case.

Where a letter abandoning the application is filed in accordance with rule 138, the effective date of abandonment is the date of filing of such letter.

If a brief has been filed within the time permitted by rule 192 (or any extension thereof) and an answer mailed and applicant withdraws the appeal, the case is returned to the examiner. If there are no allowed claims in the case, the examiner writes a letter of abandonment.

To avoid the rendering of decisions by the Board of Appeals in applications which have already been refiled as streamlined continuations, applicants should promptly inform the clerk of the Board in writing as soon as they have positively decided to refile or to abandon an application containing an appeal awaiting

a decision. Failure to exercise appropriate diligence in this matter may result in the Board's refusing an otherwise proper request to vacate its decision.

1215.02 Claims Standing Allowed [R-20]

If the application contains allowed claims, as well as claims on appeal, the withdrawal of the appeal does not operate as an abandonment of the application, but is considered a withdrawal of the appeal as to those claims and authority to the examiner to cancel the same. An amendment canceling the appealed claims is equivalent to a withdrawal of the appeal.

1215.03 Partial Withdrawal [R-20]

A withdrawal of the appeal as to some of the claims on appeal operates as a cancellation of those claims from the case and the appeal continues as to the remaining claims. The withdrawn claims will be canceled by direction of the examiner when necessary without further action by the applicant.

1215.04 Dismissal of Appeal [R-28]

If no brief is filed within the time prescribed by rule 192, the appeal stands dismissed by operation of the rule. The letter (form POL-333) notifying the applicant that the appeal stands dismissed is not an action in the case and does not start any period for reply. If no claims stand allowed the application is considered as abandoned on the date the brief was due. No notification to the applicant that the application is abandoned is necessary. If claims stand allowed in the application, the failure to file a brief and consequent dismissal of the appeal is to be treated as a withdrawal of the appeal and of any claim not standing allowed. The application should be passed to issue forthwith.

However, if formal matters remain to be attended to, the examiner should take appropriate action on such matters, setting a shortened period for reply, but the application is to be considered closed to further prosecution except as to such matters. Note § 1201.

A letter such as the following is suggested:

"In view of applicant's failure to file a brief within the time prescribed by rule 192, the appeal stands dismissed and the proceedings as to the rejected claims are considered terminated: see rule 197, third paragraph.

"This application will be passed to issue on claims (*identify*) which stand allowed pro-

vided the following formal matter(s) is (are) corrected. Prosecution is otherwise closed."

(Set out formal matter(s) requiring correction.)

(Set a thirty day shortened statutory period for response.)

1215.05 Case Before the Court [R-20]

When the case is before the court either on appeal, 35 U.S.C. 141, or in a civil action under 35 U.S.C. 145, the status of the application in the event of a dismissal must be determined according to the circumstances leading to the dismissal. In no event will the application be considered abandoned as of a date prior to the date of the dismissal by reason of the dismissal alone.

1216 Appeals to Courts [R-20]

Rule 304. Time for appeal or civil action. The time for filing the notice and reasons of appeal to the U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals (rule 302) or for commencing a civil action (rule 303) is sixty days from the date of the decision of the Board of Appeals or the Board of Patent Interferences. If a petition for rehearing or reconsideration is filed within thirty days after the date of the decision of the Board of Appeals or Board of Patent Interferences, the time is extended to thirty days after action on the petition. No petition for rehearing or reconsideration filed outside the time specified herein after such decision, nor any proceedings on such petition shall operate to extend the period of sixty days hereinabove provided. The times specified herein are calendar days. If the last day of the time specified for appeal or commencing a civil action falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday, the time is extended to the next day which is neither a Saturday, Sunday nor a holiday. If a defeated party to an interference has taken an appeal to the U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals and an adverse party has filed notice under 35 U.S.C. 141 that he elects to have all further proceedings conducted under 35 U.S.C. 146 (rule 303(c)), the time for filing a civil action thereafter is specified in 35 U.S.C. 141.

Files of cases carried to the courts, either by appeal to the Court of Customs and Patent Appeals or by civil action in the District Court for the District of Columbia, are not opened by the Patent Office to the public.

During the pendency of a suit the application is not under the jurisdiction of the Examiner; and any amendment, as one copying claims from a patent for interference purposes, can be admitted only under the provisions of rule 198.

1216.01 To Court of Customs and Patent Appeals [R-28]

Rule 301. Appeal to U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals. Any applicant dissatisfied with the decision of the Board of Appeals, and any party to an interference dissatisfied with the decision of the Board of Patent Interferences, may appeal to the U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals. The appellant must take the following steps in such an appeal: (a) In the Patent Office give notice to the Commissioner and file the reasons of appeal (see rules 302 and 304); (b) in the court, file a petition of appeal and a certified transcript of the record within a specified time after filing the reasons of appeal, and pay the fee for appeal, as provided by the rules of the court. The transcript will be transmitted to the Court by the Patent Office on order of and at the expense of the appellant.

35 U.S.C. 141. Appeal to Court of Customs and Patent Appeals. An applicant dissatisfied with the decision of the Board of Appeals may appeal to the United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, thereby waiving his right to proceed under section 145 of this title. A party to an interference dissatisfied with the decision of the board of patent interferences on the question of priority may appeal to the United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, but such appeal shall be dismissed if any adverse party to such interference, within twenty days after the appellant has filed notice of appeal according to section 142 of this title, files notice with the Commissioner that he elects to have all further proceedings conducted as provided in section 146 of this title. Thereupon the appellant shall have thirty days thereafter within which to file a civil action under section 146, in default of which the decision appealed from shall govern the further proceedings in the case.

35 U.S.C. 142. Notice of appeal. When an appeal is taken to the United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, the appellant shall give notice thereof to the Commissioner, and shall file in the Patent Office his reasons of appeal, specifically set forth in writing within such time after the date of the decision appealed from, not less than sixty days, as the Commissioner appoints.

35 U.S.C. 143. Proceedings on appeal. The United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals shall, before hearing such appeal, give notice of the time and place of the hearing to the Commissioner and the parties thereto. The Commissioner shall transmit to the court certified copies of all the necessary original papers and evidence in the case specified by the appellant and any additional papers and evidence specified by the appellee and in an ex parte case the Commissioner shall furnish the court with the grounds of the decision of the Patent Office, in writing, touching all the points involved by the reasons of appeal.

35 U.S.C. 144. Decision on appeal. The United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, on petition, shall hear and determine such appeal on the evidence pro-

duced before the Patent Office, and the decision shall be confined to the points set forth in the reasons of appeal. Upon its determination the court shall return to the Commissioner a certificate of its proceedings and decision, which shall be entered of record in the Patent Office and govern the further proceedings in the case.

Rule 302. Notice and reasons of appeal. (a) When an appeal is taken to the U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, the appellant shall give notice thereof to the Commissioner, and file in the Patent Office, within the time specified in rule 304, his reasons of appeal specifically set forth in writing.

(b) In interferences and other contested cases, the notice and reasons must be served as provided in rule 248.

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Board of Appeals and desires to have said decision reviewed on the record, he must file a "Notice of Appeal" in the Patent Office, within 60 days after the date of the Board's decision or 30 days from a decision on reconsideration, in order to have the Court of Customs and Patent Appeals consider his appeal.

When the Office of the Solicitor receives the notice of appeal, it acknowledges receipt of the notice and requests that an order (called praecipe) be filed within 20 days. The order or praecipe states the exact papers to be certified which forms the transcript of record that is transmitted to the court.

The transcript of record, petition and \$15.00 fee must be filed in the court within 40 days (exclusive of Sundays and legal holidays) from the date upon which said "Notice of Appeal" was filed; provided the Commissioner does not extend such time.

The appeal is docketed in the Court if the petition, transcript and fee are timely filed. If not timely filed, there is no specific order of dismissal by the Court but the rules of the Court restore jurisdiction to the Patent Office. If no claims stand allowed proceedings are considered terminated on the last day the petition, transcript and fee were due (since up to this day the case was alive and applicant could take some action) Ex parte Vossen, 1967 C.D. 29; 155 USPQ 109.

After restoration of jurisdiction to the Patent Office the action taken by the examiner will be the same as set forth in the paragraphs under "Action Following Decision by Court" below.

After the court has heard and decided the appeal, a copy of the decision is sent to the Patent Office and one to the applicant. Where the applicant files a petition for rehearing, the Court's ruling thereon is communicated to the Office and to the applicant by the Clerk of the Court.

Finally, the Clerk of the Court forwards to the Office a certified copy of the Court's deci-

sion on the appealed claims. This copy is a duplicate of the uncertified copy first forwarded, unless modified as a result of the petition for rehearing or, possibly, altered to correct some minor error. The receipt of this copy by the Patent Office marks the conclusion of the appeal. The decision of the Court is published; but unless the application becomes a patent, the public is not given access to the application file itself. Since a transcript of the application becomes a part of the court record, it may of course be inspected there by anyone, *In re Mosher*, 45 CCPA 701; 115 USPQ 140.

The Solicitor enters the certified copy of the Court's decision in the application file and returns it to the primary examiner. The Solicitor uses the uncertified copy as a basis for publication of the decision.

ACTION FOLLOWING DECISION BY COURT

1. All claims rejected. If all claims in the case stand rejected, proceedings on the application are considered terminated on the date of receipt of the Court's certificate and the application is not open to subsequent amendment and prosecution by the applicant. The application is no longer considered pending.

2. Some claims allowed. If some claims in the case stand allowed, either by reversal of the Office decision by the Court or by having been allowed by the examiner or the Board of Appeals, proceedings are considered terminated as to the rejected claims. Action by the applicant canceling the rejected claims is not considered necessary. The examiner will pass the case for issue forthwith on the allowed claims, the applicant being advised of such action. The rejected claims may be canceled by the examiner with an appropriate notation on the margin, to avoid confusion of the printer. However, if formal matters remain to be attended to, the examiner should take appropriate action on such matters, setting a 30 day shortened period for reply, but the application is considered closed to further prosecution except as to such matters. If all claims in the case stand allowed after the Court's decision formal matters if any should be taken care of and the case passed for issue.

3. Remand. If the decision of the Court is such that it brings certain claims up for action on the merits, such as a decision allowing generic claims in a case containing claims to non-elected species not previously acted upon, the examiner will take the case up for appropriate action on the matters thus brought up, but the case is not considered open to further prosecution except as to such matters. A remand by the Court is a remand to the Board

of Appeals and not to the examiner. The examiner may only act on the application if it is remanded to him by the Board.

DISMISSAL OF APPEAL

After the appeal is docketed in the Court, failure to prosecute the appeal, as by failure to print the record or failure to file the brief, will result in dismissal of the appeal by the Court; or there may be a dismissal by the Court at the request of the appellant. The proceedings are considered terminated and the application abandoned if applicable as of the date of dismissal, see § 1215.05.

After dismissal, if no claims stand allowed the action taken by the examiner will be the same as set forth in paragraph 1 above; if claims stand allowed the action is accordance with paragraph 2.

1216.02 Civil Suits [R-25]

Rule 303. Civil action under 35 U.S.C. 145, 146. (a) Any applicant dissatisfied with the decision of the Board of Appeals, and any party dissatisfied with the decision of the Board of Patent Interferences, may, instead of appealing to the U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals (rule 301), have remedy by civil action under 35 U.S.C. 145 and 146 respectively. Such civil action must be commenced within the time specified in rule 304.

(b) If an applicant in an ex parte case has taken an appeal to the U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, he thereby waives his right to proceed under 35 U.S.C. 145.

(c) If a defeated party to an interference proceeding has taken an appeal to the U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, and any adverse party to the interference shall, within twenty days after the appellant shall have filed notice of the appeal to the court (rule 302), file notice with the Commissioner that he elects to have all further proceedings conducted as provided in 35 U.S.C. 146, certified copies of such notices will be transmitted to the U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals for such action as may be necessary. The notice of election must be served as provided in rule 248.

35 U.S.C. 145. Civil action to obtain patent. An applicant dissatisfied with the decision of the Board of Appeals may unless appeal has been taken to the United States Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, have remedy by civil action against the Commissioner in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia if commenced within such time after such decision, not less than sixty days, as the Commissioner appoints. The court may adjudge that such applicant is entitled to receive a patent for his invention, as specified in any of his claims involved in the decision of the Board of Appeals, as the facts in the case may appear and such adjudication shall authorize the Commissioner to issue such patent on compliance with the requirements of

law. All the expenses of the proceedings shall be paid by the applicant.

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the decision of the Board of Appeals and desires to have said decision reviewed, within 60 days after the date of the Board's decision or 30 days after the date of a Board's decision on reconsideration, he must file a complaint in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia and have the marshal serve a summons on the Commissioner of Patents.

When a suit under 35 U.S.C. 145 is filed a notice thereof signed by the Solicitor of the Patent Office is placed in the application file. The file is kept in the Solicitor's office pending termination of the suit. When the suit is terminated, a statement indicating the final disposition of it by the Court is placed on the original notice by the Solicitor and the application is returned to the examiner, whose subsequent procedure is the same as his action

following appeal, described in § 1216.01. If the exact date when proceedings were terminated is material, it may be ascertained by inquiring at the Solicitor's office.

The applicant ordinarily furnishes to the court a certified copy of the file wrapper and contents at the time of the trial (28 U.S.C. 1744). If the suit is dismissed before coming to trial, no disclosure of the application to the public necessarily results. Unlike an appeal to the U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals, the filing of a civil action does not require the immediate filing of a transcript of the application. The complaint, however, is open to the public.

Files subpoenaed by the Court may be sent to the Court in care of a Patent Office employee along with a certified copy, under stipulation that the copy be retained by the court and the original brought back to the Office by said employee.