

Where Are the Inventors?

American ingenuity and inventiveness our generations have been subjects of discussion and sources of pride with our people; but something has happened to them. Also, in this connection, the popular supposition that war stimulates invention and research, is exploded, for the statistics give it the lie.

In the first six months of this year 14,000 patents were issued by the United States patent office. This in contrast with 21,000 issued in the same period in 1939, a reduction of more than 30 per cent. There was a heavy sag during World War I also. Prior to the 1930 depression inventors invented, and their ideas, in the form of patent applications, set an all-time record. Then the sag started. Maybe they were too busy during the depression hunting some means of making a living, but

ever since, the patent curve has been heading downward.

No doubt many inventions have been perfected for war purposes, but we do not hear of them through the patent office, for the government has the first right by law on things that can be used in war. But nothing to speak of appears to be in the making for civilian use.

Can it be that our inventors are too busy drawing down huge pay in war plants to bother with the development of ideas? That could be the case.

The situation is taken so seriously by the National Association of Manufacturers that that organization is trying to stimulate the folk who turn ideas into workable shape; and is issuing information as to procedure and an inventor's rights, which is entertaining reading at least.