

BLO/021/86

PATENTS ACT 1977

IN THE MATTER OF Patent Application
No. 8309086 by John Wilkinson

DECISION

In reports issued under Section 18, the examiner expressed the view that the invention could not function in the manner described and therefore was open to the objection that it was not capable of industrial application as required by Section 1(1)(c) of the Act. The objection was contested by the applicant, and, the examiner not being satisfied that the applicant's responses were adequate to refute the objection, an official letter dated 26 November 1985 was issued in which the applicant was offered a hearing to put his case against refusal of the application. The applicant's attention was drawn to an enclosed official pamphlet "How to prepare a UK patent application" for an explanation of the nature and purpose of a hearing. In response, the applicant, in a letter dated 3 December 1985, indicated that he would not oppose refusal but, as he still believed in the theories of his machine, he would not withdraw his application. Accordingly, the matter now comes before me for decision on the basis of the documents at present on file.

The applicant's specification is entitled "A method of propelling a space vehicle and a space vehicle electromagnetic propeller" and describes and illustrates a space vehicle employing a propulsion arrangement. The opening part of claim 1 reads as follows:-

"A method of propelling a space vehicle comprising the steps of: injecting a magnetically responsive liquid, hereinafter called propellant, into the top of an upright cylinder which is extended at the top by a frusto-conically converged inlet and extended at the bottom by a frusto-conically flared outlet, vanes inside the said cylinder are fitted running

top to bottom; enclosing the cylinder within the core of an electromagnetic solenoid and attaching it to it; supporting the cylinder and the said solenoid by inserting their total into a strong outer casing for cushioning against centrifugal force; rotating the said outer casing round their common upright axis with an electric motor situated above the outer casing; connecting the solenoid windings to an intermittent direct current electric power supply at an intermittency frequency which allows the solenoid to attain a full charge of electromagnetic energy; discharging the said propellant, by switching on, and then switching off continually, as quickly as a full charge of electromagnetic energy will allow, the aforesaid being the propulsion frequency; collecting the outward spiralling discharged propellant in a non-rotary ring-shaped reservoir made from steel which is magnetized to retain propellant for re-use; pumping the propellant from the reservoir back to the rotating upright cylinder by means of pipes and pumps to a receiving chamber where the pipes converge, the said receiving chamber outletting the propellant to a nozzle at the top of the said upright cylinder's said frusto-conically converged inlet, and thereby injecting propellant in a continual sustained supply;

Referring to the published specification, the description on page 2, lines 109 to 114, states that "... in the continual pumping of supplies of electromagnetically responsive liquid propellant to the rotating upright cylinder 8, the outer structure, and all it contains, will lift by the power of the discharges in reaction to the propellant's downward impellation."

As I understand it, the applicant proposes a method of propulsion in which a propellant is ejected from a cylinder into a collecting reservoir and then recycled back to the cylinder to be ejected again, the cylinder and reservoir both being carried by the vehicle to be propelled. From the passage of description quoted above, the upward propulsion of the vehicle is evidently

intended to be achieved by reaction to the downward movement of the propellant from the cylinder.

In my view, the propulsion method proposed in the specification is contrary to Newton's Third Law of Motion which may be expressed in the form "To every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." Applying this principle to the propulsion method of the invention, the upward thrust imparted to the cylinder by the downwardly ejected propellant is balanced by the downward thrust imparted to the reservoir by the collected propellant and there will be no resultant propulsion force to lift the vehicle. Therefore, I am satisfied that the invention cannot function in the manner described under established physical laws and consequently is not capable of industrial application.

In the result, I find that the application fails to comply with Section 1(1)(c) of the Act and, since I can see no possibility of any amendment to meet my finding, I refuse the application under Section 18(3) of the Act.

Dated this 24th day of January 1986.

K C THOMAS

Principal Examiner, acting for the Comptroller.

THE PATENT OFFICE