

## COUNTRIES FROM WHICH APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED.

The number of applications received from residents in the colony during 1903 was 1,064, 134 more than in the previous year. Applications from the United Kingdom increased by 12, totalling 129, 17 more than the number received from the United States, which last year showed a falling off of 17. From the Commonwealth of Australia 252 applications were received, an increase of 37; Victoria contributing 150, more than twice the number received from that State in 1901.

It is interesting to notice the large number of inventions patented by residents in this colony in other countries. British colonies and possessions sending the largest number of applications for patents to the United Kingdom last year and obtaining patents in the United States for 1902 were as follow :—

					United Kingdom.	United States.
Canada	...	...	...	...	156	392
New Zealand	...	...	...	...	130	48
Victoria	...	...	...	...	109	36
New South Wales	...	...	...	...	60	21
India	...	...	...	...	54	5

## NATURE OF INVENTIONS.

The number of applications in respect of the chief classes of inventions for each of the last three years is set out in Table I. in the Appendix. It will be noticed that "Buildings" show a substantial increase of 37, due chiefly to the large number of applications for "Sash-hangers" (15) and "Artificial stone, bricks, &c." (15). There was a renewed activity in inventions for "Fencing," principally in respect of means for straining and fastening wire; and inventions in connection with "Fibre-dressing," which some time ago were very numerous, are again, with the revival of the industry, showing a decided increase. Under "Harness," "Lifting, hauling, and loading," "Locks and latches," and "Pipes," considerably more inventions were patented than in either of the two former years. The growth of the "Dairy industry" is reflected in the number of applications under this head. Out of the 53 inventions 10 are for "Separators," while 10 have been added during the year to the long list of "Milking appliances." "Railways and tramways" show an increase chiefly in respect of electric traction, and this is also the case with ordinary road vehicles.

There is a noticeable falling-off in the number of applications received under the headings of "Amusements," "Attaching," "Boilers," "Boxes," "Spark-arresters," "Bottles," "Closets," "Gas and oil engines," "Fire alarms and escapes," "Furniture," "Minerals" ("Gold-mining, &c."), while the other classes of inventions show no appreciable change.

## "INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION."

The term of priority allowed under the Convention is now twelve months, and during the year Germany and Mexico acceded to it. Three applications were made by residents of other countries in accordance with the terms of the Convention for the grant of New Zealand Letters Patent—2 from the United Kingdom and 1 from the United States of America; and 1 from Victoria was antedated in accordance with sections 106 and 107 of the Act. Sixteen applications were sent under the Convention from this colony to the United Kingdom.

## OPPOSED CASES.

Objections were lodged to 8 applications, 5 hearings took place, and notice of appeal to the Supreme Court was lodged in 1 case.

## CLASSIFICATION OF SPECIFICATIONS.

The specifications and drawings for the twenty years from 1880 to 1899 have been classified, and as soon as they are reindexed will be bound. This will render the work of searching much easier for the public, and will also enable this office to inquire more closely than it is at present able to do into the novelty of inventions sought to be patented.

## DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION AND FORMS.

During the year leaflets containing information with reference to the patenting of inventions, with forms of application and specification, have, by the courtesy of the Post and Telegraph Department, been distributed amongst the different money-order offices, where they can be obtained by any one requiring them. To that Department, also, as well as to the Railway Department, this office is indebted for permission to post notices at their various buildings, calling attention to the provisions for patenting inventions, &c.

## LEGISLATION IN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE AUSTRALIAN COMMONWEALTH.

A change of some importance is being instituted in the practice in the United Kingdom, where no inquiry has been made hitherto into the novelty of inventions sought to be patented. A recent Act requires the office, before granting the patent, to ascertain whether the invention has not wholly or in part been patented by any one else during the past fifty years. If any such prior patent is discovered, it is the duty of the Comptroller, subject to appeal, to require a reference to the former invention to be inserted in the application, but he is not apparently entitled to reject such application (unless it is opposed), even though the invention may be quite destitute of novelty.

The New Zealand Act having been modelled on the Imperial law, it is no doubt desirable that we should conform as far as practicable to any alterations made in it; but this recent change is not, in my opinion, suitable for adoption by the colony.