

PATENTS.

A substantial increase is shown in the number of applications received, the total being 1,601, 118, or 7·9 per cent., more than the previous year. Thirty applications (1·8 per cent.) were made by women.

The receipts from patent fees were £4,109 19s. 6d., £358 0s. 6d., or 9·5 per cent., more than in 1904. The increase is chiefly due to the additional number of applications and fees for the issue and renewal of letters patent.

The proportion of applications lodged with provisional specifications to those filed with complete specifications remains about the same, the figures for last year being 1,032 and 569 respectively.

Only four of the twelve cases in which notice of opposition was lodged came to a hearing, as compared with seven for the previous year as a result of eight notices.

COUNTRIES FROM WHICH APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED.

The number of applications for patents from persons in the colony was 1,042, 88 more than in 1903, but 22 less than in the previous year. The applications from the United Kingdom dropped from 129 in 1903, and 110 in 1904, to 102 in 1905, which is 7 less than those received from the United States of America in that year. The Commonwealth of Australia sent 281 applications, an increase of 7; New South Wales, 88, compared with 65 for each of the two previous years, and Victoria, 143, as against 150 in 1903 and 160 in 1904. Though the number of applications from France and Germany is small, it will be seen from the table (H. in appendix) that they are considerably in excess of last year's figures.

NATURE OF INVENTIONS.

The increase in the number of applications appears to be due to slight increases in several classes of inventions, and not to any special activity in any one branch of industry.

Referring briefly to the various classes: Under "amusements," 47 applications were received, an increase of 6, chiefly in respect of new games, inventions relating to music, such as holders, teaching-appliances, &c. "Attaching and securing" show an increase of 11, the largest proportion of the 25 applications received being in respect of fastenings for dress and jewellery. "Bottles," for which only 15 applications were lodged in 1904, formed the subject-matter of 28 applications in 1905, the number being made up chiefly of sealing devices and so-called non-refillable bottles. "Buildings—windows and doors" increased from 19 to 29, that total being principally due to means for suspending sashes. Thirty applications came to hand in connection with "cultivating and tilling," 9 more than in 1904, but considerably less than in the two previous years. The number of applications for turnip-thinners and cultivators is somewhat in excess of that for any other agricultural instruments. The greatest increase in any class is that in "tools," from 37 to 53. In this case, as in the others, the increase appears to be general, and not due to the development of any particular invention, though some little activity was shown with regard to mitre-cutters. Nine more applications were received in connection with "engines, steam," 16 to 25, due chiefly to turbines, and 7 more in "engines, air, gas, or oil," 18 in 1905 and 11 in 1904. An unusual number of inventions was patented for "food" in 1905—i.e., 18, as compared with 3 in 1904 and 7 in 1903. The increase appears to be chiefly due to the application of the means for drying milk to other food substances. "Indicating, calculating, &c.," increased from 28 to 39, some half dozen of the latter number being for vote-recording appliances, and "kitchen utensils," from 39 to 46, toasting-devices contributing the greatest number for last year. "Locks, latches, &c.," which fell from 35 in 1903 to 17 in 1904 rose to 26 in 1905, 13 sash-fasteners and 8 seal locks for mail-bags being included in that total. "Printing and photography" show a slight, and "railways and tramways" a substantial increase. Inventions under this latter heading numbered 52 in 1903, 30 in 1904, and 54 in 1905. A considerable proportion of last year's inventions relates to trolley-heads, poles, and the like, a result no doubt of the electrical tramway installations in the chief towns of the colony. "Valves and cocks" rose from 12 to 20; "vehicles (road, &c.)," from 38 to 47 (wheels and axles 12), and "velocipedes" from 39 to 44, of which 6 related to tire-protectors. In "building," "cleaning and polishing," "dredging," "exterminating" (traps, &c), "furniture," "harness," "illuminating," "lifting," there is little change from last year, and nothing calling for special mention.

Inventions relating to "dairying" are about the same in number (51) as in the last two years, and include 12 inventions for separators, all by foreign inventors, and 9 for improvements in milking-machines, emanating chiefly from a resident in the colony.

"Fibre-dressing" seems to have engaged the attention of a fair number of inventors, and during the past three years there has been a steady increase in the applications received for the treatment of flax, the figures being respectively 19, 28, 32. The chief aim seems to be to avoid the long exposure at present necessary by utilising chemicals for bleaching, and lessening the handling of the flax during the washing and drying. These operations account for 5, 6, and 11 inventions respectively, and, in addition, some 10 relate to stripping.

A falling-off is shown in "boots and shoes," 54 to 42, 15 of which are for boot-machinery by an American firm; "boxes," 52 to 35; "heating," 27 to 21; "illuminating," 36 to 28; "medicines, &c.," 23 to 17.

In reviewing the various classes of inventions in his latest report, the Comptroller-General of Patents, London, calls attention to the remarkable development in turbines and motor vehicles, and refers to the very satisfactory position occupied by British inventors in connection with the latter industry. The inventors of this colony are taking some small part in the turbine, but are not participating to any extent in the motor industry, the little attention they appear to be paying to it being chiefly devoted to means for protecting the tires.