

SESSION II.
1912.
NEW ZEALAND.

PATENTS, DESIGNS, AND TRADE-MARKS.

TWENTY-THIRD ANNUAL REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 120 of the Patents, Designs, and Trade-marks Act, 1908.

I HAVE the honour, in compliance with the requirements of the Patents, Designs, and Trade-marks Act, to submit my report on the proceedings thereunder during the past year.

The total number of applications in respect of patents, designs, and trade-marks was 2,622, as compared with 2,695 in 1910.

The revenue, £6,535 6s., exceeded the previous year's by £220 16s. 1d., and the expenditure amounted to £2,440 18s. 7d., £228 10s. 10d. less than in 1910, leaving a surplus for the year of £4,094 7s. 5d.

On reference to Table A it will be noticed that £840 16s. 7d., or one-third of the total expenditure, was in respect of work done by the Government Printing Office.

The balance of receipts over expenditure since the commencement of the Act on the 1st January, 1890, now stands at £55,383 4s. 6d. As compared with other countries from which the returns are available, the expenditure for New Zealand was 37 per cent. of the revenue, for the United States 87 per cent., and for the United Kingdom 64 per cent.

While deriving a profit from fees, everything is first done in the two latter countries to foster invention. In the United States nearly the whole of the revenue from patents is utilized for the purpose, and this has doubtless contributed in no small degree to the industrial development of that country.

Until specifications of inventions are printed, and everything possible done to encourage invention on proper lines and ensure the validity of patents granted, it is doubtful whether the profit derived from patent fees is not, to some extent, at the expense of the country's manufacturing progress.

The publication of the illustrated abridgments was an advance, and it is satisfactory to report that a further step will be shortly taken which I hope will eventually lead to all specifications and drawings being printed. There is no doubt that a very considerable amount of time and money is wasted in devising and maturing what has already been done; and it is, I submit, of the greatest importance that the full specifications and drawings of inventions, not only of this but of other countries, are freely accessible to our inventors or they must remain severely handicapped in not being able to readily ascertain the state of the art in which they are engaged.

EXAMINATION INTO NOVELTY.

The present Act, without providing for examination, enables the Registrar to refuse an application if he knows the invention to be not new, and the records are searched as far as possible with the staff available, and a certain number of applications refused, or the claims restricted; but as no provision is made for appeal from rejection—it is only exercised in cases of absolute identity.

The Act of last session, which comes into force next month, and is referred to on page 3, provides for the Registrar making such investigation as he thinks fit to ascertain if inventions sought to be patented are new and proper subject-matter, and authorizes him as the result of such investigation to refuse an application or require amendment of the specification, provision being made for appeal from his decision.