

1925.
NEW ZEALAND.

PATENTS, DESIGNS, AND TRADE-MARKS.

THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 128 of the Patents, Designs, and Trade-marks Act, 1921-22.

I HAVE the honour, in accordance with section 128, to submit my report on the proceedings under the Act during the past year.

A total of 3,608 applications was received for the grant of patents and the registration of designs and trade-marks in 1924, as compared with 3,421 in the preceding year. The numbers for the past four years do not show much variation, being 3,250, 3,500, 3,421, and 3,608 respectively.

The revenue was £12,470 19s. 6d. This amount exceeded that of the previous year by £803 1s. 1d., and was only £442 15s. 9d. short of the total received in 1922, in which year there was an exceptionally high revenue, owing to the special reasons mentioned in my last report.

The expenditure amounted to £5,182 15s. 4d. This is £373 6s. 5d. above that in 1923, the excess being more than accounted for by the binding last year of all printed copies of English specifications, &c., received during the past ten years. The amount paid in salaries, &c., was £3,369 7s. 1d.—only £146 (inclusive of scale increases, &c.) more than in 1923. A slightly higher amount was paid in respect of printing and stationery—£1,494 10s. 7d., as compared with £1,282 9s. 11d. for the previous year.

The surplus for the year was £7,288 4s. 2d., as compared with £6,858 9s. 6d. for the previous year, bringing the amount received over that expended since the 1st January, 1890, to £120,408 4s. 2d.

SOME CONDITIONS ESSENTIAL TO SUCCESS OF PATENTS.

While the patent system is not free from objection, it appears to be effective in the promotion of invention, and the countries most productive in this respect are, as a rule, the foremost in manufacture. Its success, however, depends on the law being adapted to existing conditions and to its being effectively carried out. By closely following recent British amendments this country is not only adopting the most advanced legislation on the subject, but is doing its part in securing uniformity of law throughout the Empire. In this respect it is well equipped for assisting in the growth of the secondary industries, which show signs of considerable development in the near future; but in the means afforded for carrying out the Act and rules it is not so favourably placed.

The provision for examination in particular is insufficient to enable the novelty of inventions to be investigated to any great extent. In some cases the inventor inquires into this himself; in others he depends on official search, while in a certain number he relies not so much on the validity of the grant as on the public generally being averse to contesting a patent and becoming involved in legal proceedings.

It is again respectfully urged that, without going to undue expenditure, a better check should be provided in the interests of both the meritorious inventor and the public. As the most profitable inventions are frequently those differing but little from existing appliances, the tendency is to approach somewhat closely to the dividing-line, and it is desirable to see as far as possible that this is not overstepped and the public domain encroached upon. It should, however, be borne in mind that no examination can assure the validity of a patent, and that, as the responsibility rests with the inventor, he should endeavour to satisfy himself that his invention is new and otherwise proper subject-matter.

OTHER MATTERS REQUIRING ATTENTION.

In addition to the ordinary current work, there are certain other matters which should be put in hand as soon as a suitable opportunity occurs. Among the more important of these may be mentioned—(1) The revision and bringing up to date of the classification of specifications; (2) the making, printing, publishing, and selling of indexes to abridgments of specifications and other documents in the Patent Office as provided by the Act. Some attempt has been made from time to time at this work with the ordinary staff, but, though very diligent and efficient, it is so small as to be barely able to cope with the current work of the Office.