

1900.
NEW ZEALAND.

PATENTS, DESIGNS, AND TRADE MARKS :

ELEVENTH 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, 1889."

I HAVE the honour, as required by "The Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Act, 1889," to present my report for the year ended the 31st December, 1899. The tables printed in the Appendix give a general survey of the work of the office for the year.

Patents.

The total number of applications for patents amounted to 992, showing a decrease of twenty-nine on the figures for the preceding year. I do not anticipate any further fall. The expansion and subsequent decline in certain classes of inventions, referred to in previous reports, seem now to have come to an end, and the business of the office may be regarded as having returned to its normal condition.

It may be noticed, as illustrating the trend of invention, that there has been a considerable increase this year in inventions connected with electricity, dredging and other appliances for the recovery of gold, fire escapes and extinguishers, and crates for the conveyance of frozen rabbits. There were fourteen applications for horse-covers, articles in respect of which it might have been reasonably expected that human ingenuity would have been exhausted long ago.

As usual, the larger number of applications came from inventors resident in the colony; the next highest number came from the United States; and the United Kingdom was third on the list. Details are given in Table H.

Seven applications were received under section 103 of the Act.

The fees received during the year under the head of "Patents" amounted to £2,720 18s.

There were thirty-nine patent agents on the register at the end of the year.

Designs and Trade Marks.

Full particulars as to the applications for the registration of designs and trade marks are given in Tables H, I, L, and M. The total number of applications was—Designs, 13; trade marks, 329. The fees received under both heads amounted to £378 16s. 6d.

General.

The surplus of revenue over expenditure for the year amounted to £2,251. On the expenditure side an item of £202 appears for the first time, being the cost of printing the additional information in the *Gazette* referred to in my report of last year. Considering the office shows a handsome balance to credit every year, I should be glad if more generous provision could be made to give the public fuller information as to inventions. This could be done by publishing in a cheap form the specifications and drawings filed in the office. The cost has hitherto stood in the way, but I hope that ere long this desirable reform will be accomplished.

The new offices in the Government Printing Office were occupied in February last. They are commodious enough, though, from their position on the top floor of a four-story building, not very accessible. The library contains bound volumes of the English specifications from the year 1617 down to the year 1898, and fresh volumes come to hand regularly. These are available to the public within ordinary office hours, but I find that few people avail themselves of the opportunity to search or inspect them. This is to be regretted, if only on the ground that a study of the specifications of inventions already patented would prevent a number of people from wasting their time and money.

A large percentage of the applications filed do not proceed beyond the initial stages, principally, no doubt, because the applicants find that their inventions have either been anticipated or that they do not work in actual practice. There are four stages in the life of a patent—(1) the application, (2) the grant, (3) the payment of the fee for the second term, and (4) the payment of the fee for the final term.