

PUBLICATIONS.

A nominal index from 1861 to 1907 has been completed, but the printing of the list has been delayed owing to the pressure of other business at the Government Printing Office.

The subject index for each class has been completed to the end of 1890, and will be proceeded with as opportunity occurs. A very large amount requires to be done to bring this index up to date, and assistance will be necessary if the index is to be ready for printing within a reasonable period.

GENERAL.

LOCAL PATENT OFFICES.

As already mentioned, specifications are now sent for inspection to the Local Patent Offices at Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin, and full sets of the publications of the office have been forwarded to these offices for public use. They will also shortly be furnished with as complete sets as possible of the patent laws of other countries, and with classified abridgments from the beginning of the current year of inventions in respect of which the complete specifications have been accepted. Other additions will from time to time be made to the contents of these offices with a view to affording greater information and facilities to inventors and the public generally in these towns.

At present there are Local Patent Offices at Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Thames, Gisborne, New Plymouth, Napier, Wanganui, Nelson, Blenheim, Westport, Greymouth, Hokitika, Ashburton, Timaru, Oamaru, Queenstown, and Invercargill. The establishment of offices at other towns throughout the country is now under consideration.

OPPOSITION.

Notice of opposition was lodged in 23 cases. Two appeals were heard by the Court, the decision being upheld in one instance, and in the other reversed—on evidence, however, which was not before the office when it determined the matter.

PREMISES.

The growth of this office, and of the library attached to it, will shortly necessitate the provision of further accommodation. As it was considered inadvisable to increase the weight on the floor of the room used as a library, the necessary additional shelving has been provided in the other rooms, and will possibly suffice for the next year or two. A slight rearrangement of the office has provided sufficient additional room to meet the requirements of the staff for possibly the same period; but it is found that the room for the public and profession, and in which cases are also heard, is not large enough for the purpose, and better provision is required. The most urgent want is safe-accommodation, which is at present very restricted, and many of the valuable records of the office have to be kept in the basement, where they are somewhat insecure and very inaccessible.

PATENT AGENTS.

Five Patent Agents were registered during the year, 2 after examination and 3 solicitors, who are eligible for registration without examination; 72 names are now on the register, 52 being those of solicitors.

A copy of the papers set in the two cases in which examinations were held is inserted in the Appendix.

The proportion of applications received through Patent Agents (75 per cent.) shows that their services are freely availed of by inventors, who evidently realise the value of expert assistance in the preparation of their specifications and other work which this office cannot undertake.

LIBRARY.

The set of English specifications has been rendered complete by the receipt of a hundred volumes of back numbers from the English Patent Office, which very generously supplies this office with all its printed specifications, abridgements, journals, and indexes, as well as furnishing the Public Libraries at Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin with the abridgements.

It is, I consider, desirable that not only the abridgements, but also the full specifications and drawings of the many thousands of inventions patented in the United Kingdom and the United States every year, and which, with the exception of the small percentage patented here, the people of this country are at full liberty to use, be freely open to inspection in the leading towns.

Ready access to these specifications would also be of great benefit to inventors in enabling them to ascertain if and to what extent their inventions have been anticipated, and thus avoid much useless expenditure of time and money.

The library attached to this office is at present only open during office hours, and, to be made full use of, should be available at night to inventors, students, and others. As this Office is not the sole occupant of the building there are certain objections to opening it at night, which, however, it is hoped, may be overcome.

The office at present contributes to the Library Edition of the United States Specifications, but, unless these volumes can be received earlier than at present is the case, I think it will be better to obtain the ordinary specifications. The cost of these will be greater and they will occupy more space, but they will be sent to this office as soon as the specifications are printed, instead of being delayed for three or four years.