

Women inventors lodged 37 applications, 2·4 per cent. of the total number.

The absence of any very marked advance of recent years in the number of applications received from residents of New Zealand is probably due to some extent to the increased facilities afforded them of ascertaining the novelty of their inventions before applying for letters patent. The low fees and simple procedure such as obtain here lead to applications being made without inquiry into the novelty and feasibility of the inventions unless ready access is afforded to prior specifications on the subject, and placing this information within more easy reach of the inventors in the principal towns has no doubt resulted in their making further investigation into novelty, and thus has lessened the number of applications for inventions destitute of that essential feature. Reference to such former specifications also enables an applicant, or his agent, to properly define the novelty of an invention, and draw the specification so that, on the one hand, it will not endanger the patent by claiming too much, and on the other so restrict its scope as to render it, while valid, of little if any value. Excessive claims are in some measure checked by the office, but examination into novelty is not required by the Act, and no special provision is made for it.

COUNTRIES FROM WHICH APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED.

A greater number of applications was received from residents of New Zealand in 1908 than in 1907, 1,013 as compared with 969. Of the remaining applications, 238 (321) came from Australia, 124 (133) from the United Kingdom, 40 (58) from other European countries, and 90 (113) from the United States.

The applications from Australia show a very marked falling-off from 368 in 1906, and 321 in 1907, to only 238 in 1908.

NATURE OF INVENTIONS.

The number of applications in each class, and page on which they will be found in the subject-list, are set out in Table I.

Referring briefly to the leading classes,—

Boots and Shoes form the subject of 60 applications—about the same as in the previous year—chiefly in respect of bootmaking machinery, more than half the applications being by one American company, who now have no less than 150 patents granted or pending in New Zealand.

Buildings and Building-material.—The total in this case is also about the same as in the preceding year, reinforced concrete and the like structures, spouting-brackets, building-blocks, cement-manufacture, and means for supporting and moving window-sashes engaging a fair amount of attention.

Dairying.—In dairying the number last year was slightly below that for 1907, the outstanding feature of inventions in this class being those relating to mechanical milking.

Engines (including accessories, gearing, and motors generally) also number about the same as in 1907, turbines, water-wheels, and the like forming the subject of about 20 per cent. of these applications.

Exterminating, and Traps.—So far as can be judged from the records of the office, more attention seems to be directed to destroying rabbits by means of fumes than to trapping and other methods of extermination, generating appliances forming the largest proportion of inventions in this class.

Fibre-dressing.—Few if any of the industries of this country are so dependent as this on the employment of the best and most economical methods of manufacture, and it is satisfactory to find inventors still actively engaged in devising means for improving the machinery for taking the place of manual labour in the several operations necessary.

Fire-alarms, &c.—These inventions are somewhat more numerous than usual, and chiefly refer to various means for giving an alarm by means of electricity.

Gas-manufacture.—Acetylene, so far as can be judged from the number of applications for generators, &c., appears to be coming into more general use.

Indicating, &c.—Though the interest in the subject is abating, devices for testing the temperature of baled goods continue to produce a certain number of applications. The appliances patented in connection with ships' compasses for recording the course and checking the steersman form an interesting feature of the remaining inventions in this class.

Locks, &c.—Devices for securing windows always receive a certain amount of attention from inventors, and protection was applied for in respect of a fair number of inventions on this subject during the year.

Medicines and Surgical Appliances.—Dental work, which has not hitherto occupied a prominent place in the field of invention in this country, forms the subject of a few applications, chiefly for casting inlays.

Minerals (gold-saving, &c.)—Filtering, concentrating, and similar appliances are the most numerous of the comparatively few inventions under this head.

Printing and Photography.—In this class inventions for type-casting and setting machines predominate, while inventions in respect of photography show a falling-off as compared with the number in former years.

Railways.—Fewer applications are recorded in this class than in previous years. Couplings, mail-delivery and signalling apparatus, and trolley poles and heads have all engaged a certain amount of attention.

Sheep and Cattle.—Cow-bails, sheds, and the like form a prominent feature of the inventions relating to this subject.

Velocipedes continue to fall in number.

As regards the general trend of invention, the inventions in respect of building, gas-manufacture, and a few other subjects show a slight tendency to increase; a general decline is apparent in those in connection with dredging, gold-saving, fencing, and cultivating; while there is little if any change in the number on other subjects.