Printing Specifications.

As the Office is not required to investigate the question of novelty, and can only do so to a limited extent, it should, I submit, afford applicants every facility to ascertain for themselves whether their inventions are new and patentable by supplying copies of former specifications at the lowest possible cost, and publishing classified abridgments of inventions. In England, the United States, Canada, Australia, and other countries printed copies of the specifications and drawings are obtainable at prices ranging from a few pence to 1s. If copies of our specifications and drawings were available at equally low cost, inventors would be enabled to readily ascertain the steps already taken in this country in the direction they are proceeding and to abandon their inventions if old, and thus save themselves useless expenditure of time and money, or to so frame their claims as to avoid conflict with the subject of former patents.

With our present population the returns from sales would possibly be hardly sufficient to warrant the printing of all specifications, but I strongly urge that those in respect of inventions in which this country is most interested, such as those relating to dairying, fibre-dressing, and our other industries, should be printed. The sale of specifications on those subjects would go far to defray the cost, and any loss that might be incurred would be insignificant compared with the benefits derived.

Necessity for Facilities for Reference to Specifications of other Countries.

It is important that not only should the specifications of our own inventions be readily accessible to intending inventors and others, but that they be afforded every opportunity to make themselves acquainted with the inventions patented in other countries. At present the specifications of the United Kingdom and Australia, generously presented by those countries, as well as the specifications of the United States, and abridgments, &c., of other Patent Offices, may be inspected in the library attached to this office, and abridgments of English, Canadian, and other inventions in the public libraries at Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin. The facilities for referring to these publications might with advantage be extended by throwing the library at Wellington open to the public at night, and securing full copies of English specifications for those libraries at the other leading towns prepared to bind and accommodate them. It would also be desirable to obtain copies for sale of the specifications of other places relating to subjects of special importance to the people of this country, and an extra set of English abridgments might be procured for lending, under proper restrictions, to inventors living in out-of-the-way places who could not readily attend and refer to them at any library where such publications are kept. The adoption of some such measures as those referred to would involve but little expense, and would not only be of material benefit to those engaged in manufacture generally, in enabling them to ascertain the most recent advances in the various fields of industry, but of particular advantage to inventors, who could thus readily learn the state of the art to which their idea relates, and determine whether it is sufficiently out of the track of others to be worth proceeding with.

Countries from which Applications received.

Residents of New Zealand lodged 1,125 applications, 112 more than in 1908 and the highest number deposited in any year, and those of other countries 580. An increase is shown in the applications from the United Kingdom, 151 (124); United States, 126 (90)—the figures in parentheses being the number received in the preceding year—Canada, and South Africa. The number from the European continental countries remains about the same, while the applications from Australia show a slight further falling-off.

Nature of Inventions.

The interest recently aroused in aeronautics led to several applications on the subject, which has hitherto received but little attention from inventors in this country, the number up to the end of 1908 being only 12. Last year, however, 27 applications were lodged, nearly all in respect of aeroplanes or machines of the heavier-than-air type.

In "Boots and Shoes," 48 out of 79 applications are made by one company, which now has 244 patents and applications pending in New Zealand.

Ferro-concrete construction still occupies a prominent place in inventions relating to "Building," and under this heading door-checks and draught-preventers, and sashes and sash-hanging appliances, are conspicuous features. Several attempts have been made to improve flushing-appliances, chiefly in the direction of lessening noise and reducing waste.

The usually large number of applications relating to "Dairying" has been fairly well maintained, the development of milking-machines being the outstanding feature, accounting for 33 out of the total of 67 in the class.

Under "Engines and Motors," a fair number of applications for rotary engines, turbines, gas-engines, and tide and wave motors are recorded. Targets, chiefly for miniature ranges, form the subject of the majority of the applications in the class relating to "Explosives and Firearms."

The "Extermination of vermin," and "Fencing," which some years ago were two very prolific subjects for patents, appear to now receive very little attention, and, though there is yet room for improvement in the appliances, &c., in use, they are no doubt considered to meet requirements in a fairly satisfactory manner.

The maintenance of the fibre industry is in a very great measure due to the inventors who have devised means for reducing manual operations and thus lessened the cost of production. Their efforts in this direction continue to increase, as shown by the number of applications, 59 being received in 1909, as compared with 44 in the preceding year.

Under the heading "Gas-manufacture" the growing use of acetylene is reflected in the number of applications for generators, which, with carburetters, are prominent in this class. Animal-covers and