

1913.
NEW ZEALAND.

PATENTS, DESIGNS, AND TRADE-MARKS.

TWENTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 113 of the Patents, Designs, and Trade-marks Act, 1911.

I HAVE the honour to submit my report in compliance with the requirements of the Patents, Designs, and Trade-marks Act.

The year witnessed the commencement of the Patents, Designs, and Trade-marks Act, 1911, which repealed the Act of 1908 consolidating the Act of 1889 and its Amendment of 1897. Patent laws were in operation in New Zealand for thirty years prior to 1890, but, as shown by Table M in the appendix, during that period only 4,160 applications were recorded, or an average of 138 per annum. From that time to the commencement of the present Act—*i.e.*, twenty-three years and a half—27,419 applications were received, or a yearly average of 1,167. The totals for each year are given in Table E.

The amount paid in fees in excess of that expended was, prior to 1890, about £16,000* ; and since that year, £59,100 ; or a total for the period the office has been in existence of approximately £75,100.

It is not, however, by the number of applications received or the revenue derived from the office that the working of our patent laws must be judged. Their object is the promotion of our manufactures, and it is to the extent to which they accomplish that result that they are of value to the country. As the number of applications in proportion to the population is very high (17·2 per 10,000, as compared with 9·8 in Canada, 8·4 in Great Britain, 7·8 in Australia, 6·9 in the United States, 6·9 in Germany, and 3·9 in France†), there must necessarily be a large number of inventions patented of little if any use ; but, at the same time, there are many of value, and New Zealand owes a good deal not merely to inventors of other countries, but to its own inventors. They have contributed in no small measure to the present advanced condition of some of its more important industries, and will no doubt take an ever-increasing part in promoting the progress of the country. Invention has, however, to be fostered and encouraged to produce the most effective results, and if a greater part of the surplus of the office could be utilized in this direction, it would no doubt show a very satisfactory return. The industrial progress of the United Kingdom, and more especially the United States and Germany, is the result to a great extent of the assistance those countries have afforded their inventors ; and the increased activity shown in manufacture in Australia can be partly ascribed to the improvement in its patent practice. Besides printing all specifications in full and affording inventors other advantages, that country provides a staff which enables a more adequate inquiry to be made into the novelty of inventions than is possible with the staff at the disposal of this office—*i.e.*, one for every 100 applications as compared with one for 250 in New Zealand.

During the year the Act has been in operation it has worked smoothly, and appears to constitute a satisfactory advance in the law on the subject of patents, designs, and trade-marks. Referring to the new features which were set out in my last report,—

As regards patents,—

- (a.) The provision for enabling the contents of two or more provisional specifications for inventions which are cognate or modifications one of another to be embodied in one complete specification ; and, in a lesser degree,
 - (b.) The provision of a somewhat allied nature for the grant for improvements of patents of addition dating from the time of the original grant, and not being subject to renewal fees,
- seem to meet a want and to be likely in time to be availed of to a considerable extent.

* Prior to 1890 the expenses of the office were not kept separately, and the amount for that period is an estimate only.

† These figures are for the years 1910 and 1911, and are taken from a table compiled by the Commonwealth Patent Office.