

Commenting on the trend of inventions in his last report the Comptroller-General of Patents, London, states, "The outbreak of war naturally provided a stimulus to inventions connected with military and naval subjects, particularly aerial warfare and submarine mining. Bombs and their projection from aircraft have claimed considerable attention from inventors, as also have means for detecting submarines and torpedoes, and for protecting ships therefrom. Applications for darts, mechanical means for throwing bombs and other projectiles, and body-armour provide an interesting side-light on the revival of ancient methods of warfare. Amongst other inventions in connection with military matters may be mentioned bullet-proof shields, periscopes for enabling observations to be made while the observer remains under cover in a trench, sleeping-bags, and combination knives, forks, and spoons. The issue of Treasury notes of small denomination was the occasion of a considerable number of applications for purses for holding paper currency. Toys and games, particularly of a warlike nature, are responsible for a large number of applications. Dolls' heads and eyes, previously largely made abroad, and 'foot-cycles,' now so popular amongst the juvenile section of the community, may also be worthy of mention in this connection. The disaster to the submarine A7 directed attention to the problem of locating wrecked submarines and signalling to and rescuing their occupants. In the field of aeronautics, in which invention has been very active during the last few years, a marked falling-off is observed. The interest in visual signal-indicators for mines has been well maintained."

In New Zealand the inventions traceable to the source referred to are very few, though there are possibly more than would appear from the records of this Office, as inventions relating to munitions of war to ensure secrecy are frequently communicated direct to the War Office and not patented in this country.

International Convention.

In proportion to the total applications received, the number under the Convention was higher last year than the year before—137 as compared with 139. Of 150 applications received from Great Britain, 64 were under the Convention (183—58); of 106 from the United States, 25 (121—23); and of 221 from Australia, 41 (221—46), the figures in parentheses being the respective numbers for the previous year.

Restoration of Letters Patent and Sealing Letters Patent after Application advertised as lapsed.

In eight cases orders were issued as provided by section 22 of the Act for the restoration of letters patent after they had become void owing to the non-payment of renewal fees.

In like manner the Patents, Designs, and Trade-marks Amendment Act of 1913 authorizes the sealing of letters patent after the application had been advertised as lapsed in cases where the omission to apply for the sealing and to pay the fee was due to inadvertence. Applicants availed themselves of this provision in six cases, and were thus enabled to reap the benefit from their inventions they would otherwise have lost. Stringent provisions are inserted in orders for restoration of letters patent, and letters patent so sealed for the protection of any one who may have put the invention into use after the patent has been advertised as void or the application as lapsed.

DESIGNS.

Fifty-five applications were received and 46 designs registered during the year, as compared with 65 and 58 for 1913. Judging by the very small extent to which it is availed of, this form of protection is not gaining in favour. As pointed out in former reports, it is intended chiefly for manufacturing countries, and is not of much use in a country like this.

TRADE-MARKS.

The number of applications received during the year was 687, a decrease of 100 in that for the previous year. The fees amounted to £1,276 16s. 2d., about the same as the previous year, in which £1,284 13s. 6d. was paid. Fees on application (£341 10s.), registration (£663), and renewal (£147) constituted the principal amounts.

Countries from which Applications were received.

Applications by residents of New Zealand numbered 270, and by persons living in other places 417. Fewer applications were received from Great Britain, 199 (253), but slightly more from the United States, 75 (70), and Australia, 94 (86), than in 1913, the figures for which throughout this report are given in parentheses after the number for 1914.

Goods for which Trade-marks registered.

The applications in Class 42 (food substances) fell to 116 last year from 167 in 1913, an increase of 67 on the number received in the previous year. Fewer applications were made in Class 1 (chemical substances used in manufactures), 13 (32); in Class 13 (metal goods not included in other classes), 14 (35); in Class 38 (clothing), 40 (65); in Class 43 (fermented liquors and spirits), 13 (22); in Class 45 (tobacco), 32 (49). More were lodged in respect of Class 2 (chemical substances used for agriculture, &c.), 35 (22); in Class 44 (mineral and aerated waters), 28 (5), and a few other classes, while not much change is shown in the rest.

Special Applications to the Court.

In accordance with the Act of 1911, the Court may, on application, declare a mark which has been successfully used to be distinctive which would not otherwise be held to be so under the ordinary provisions of the Act. During 1914 four applications were made to the Court, and, as a result, three were proceeded with and one refused.