

1924.
NEW ZEALAND.

PATENTS, DESIGNS, AND TRADE-MARKS.

THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE REGISTRAR.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly pursuant to Section 128 of the Patents, Designs, and Trade-marks Act, 1921-22.

I HAVE the honour, as required by section 128, to submit my report on the proceedings under the Act during the past year.

The total number of applications in respect of patents, designs, and trade-marks was 3,421, as compared with 3,500, 3,250, and 3,693 for the three preceding years, the last being the highest number received in any one year.

The amount paid in fees was £11,667 18s. 5d.—£1,245 16s. 10d. less than that in 1922. That year showed an increase of £3,056 13s. 5d. (31 per cent. over the previous highest year), owing chiefly to the revision of fees and to the sealing and renewal fees being paid in a large number of cases held over on account of the war. While the revised scale applies equally to the fees paid last year, the conditions are otherwise normal, and the revenue is higher than that of any former year with the exception of 1922.

The sum expended in the year is shown at £4,809 8s. 11d. This is £929 8s. 3d. in excess of the expenditure for the previous year, which is returned as less than that in 1921. The amount for salaries and temporary assistance is given as £3,223 3s. 1d., as against £2,518 15s. 2d. for the previous year. This difference is to a considerable extent due to the payment in 1923 of part of the salary for 1922 of an officer who was abroad during part of that year. Scale increases in salary and small temporary additions to staff to afford slightly better provision for examination. &c., also help to account for the difference. An increase of £235 9s. 5d. is shown in "printing and stationery," which to some extent is also a matter of book-keeping, but otherwise there is little variation in the expenditure between this and the two preceding years.

The surplus for the year was £6,858 9s. 6d., bringing the amount received over that expended since the 1st January, 1890, to £113,120.

Two questions of outstanding importance—examination and publicity—received special attention during the year.

With regard to the first, while, as already stated, some slight temporary assistance was afforded for the work, no sufficient staff has yet been provided to enable it to be at all adequately carried out, it apparently being considered that, as no official examination can ensure the validity of the grant, it is better to leave it almost entirely to the applicant to satisfy himself that he has sufficient grounds for letters patent than to go to much expense in official investigation of the matter. It is, however, respectfully submitted that the more effectual the check to the issue of invalid patents, the better not only for inventors but for the country generally, and that a substantial part of the surplus revenue might well be expended in affording better facilities for this Office in connection with the examination and investigation of novelty.

The importance of the publicity of inventions has been recognized to some extent by providing for the sale of cheap typed copies and sun-prints at the cost of printed copies in other countries. Though the value of this step is not yet appreciated, the issue of copies at low price is essential to make inventions known and enable fuller benefit to be derived from the Patent laws. If sufficient demand is shown for copies, printing the specifications will doubtless be considered, but a very marked increase in the requirements in this direction will be necessary before the course referred to can be adopted.

Amongst other matters requiring attention at the first suitable opportunity is revision of the classification of specifications and the binding of a large number of specifications and drawings. A considerable quantity of printed copies of specifications and drawings received at the library from other countries also require to be bound.