

ASSIGNMENTS OF PATENTS, DESIGNS, AND TRADE-MARKS.

A marked increase has recently occurred in the number of assignments presented for registration. It is highly desirable that the registers should show the state of the title, and the Patents, &c., Act, 1921-22, made registration of subsequent interests compulsory. It is therefore gratifying that, following on the provision as to compulsory registration, the number of titles affected from 1923 to 1926 inclusive shows an increase of approximately 130 per cent. over the years 1918 to 1921 inclusive. It is certain, however, that some assignments are not promptly registered, and unless assignees improve in this respect it will be advisable to safeguard the purity of the register further by introducing monetary penalties such as those in operation in Great Britain.

The additional work and responsibility thrown on the Office as a result of the increase of assignment-registrations are, of course, considerable. It has been advisable that the examination of the documents of title should be performed by an officer having full legal qualifications, and the time involved has necessarily thrown an extra burden on the senior staff, who were already fully occupied.

CLASSIFICATION OF INVENTIONS.

The importance to the public of a suitable classification of inventions was referred to in last year's report, and it was indicated that improvements were in contemplation. Arrangements have now been made for the classification to be placed in charge of a member of the staff whose previous duties have resulted in his acquiring suitable knowledge of the work, and desirable improvements have already been effected in the present system.

This is the best that could be done in the meantime, but the classification now in operation was inaugurated years ago, when New Zealand industry was in its infancy. The present classification does not adequately comply with modern requirements, and should be replaced by a classification based on modern scientific principles, and adapted to expand with the rapid growth of research and manufacture.

PATENTS.

Applications for letters patent received in 1926 numbered 2,137, as against 2,046 in the preceding year. The number of applications lodged with provisional specifications was 1,153 (1,105),* and with complete specifications 984 (941). The number of complete specifications left during the year in respect of applications for which provisional specifications had previously been filed was 322 (282). The total number of applications up to the 31st December, 1926, was 57,754, and the number of patents in force on that date was 7,080.

The amount of £9,137 16s. 10d. was received during the year in respect of patents, being £84 13s. 5d. more than in 1925, which was the highest amount previously received.

Restoration of lapsed patents was effected in 8 (4) cases, and 1 patent was sealed after the prescribed time, as compared with 3 in the preceding year. The fees from these sources amounted to £201 10s., as against £127 10s. for the year 1925.

The amendment of the principal Act to enable complete specifications to be accepted after the prescribed time was taken advantage of in 1 (2) case, and 13 (2) letters patent were endorsed "Licenses of Right" under the provisions of the same amending Act. The fees paid under these two heads amounted to £32 10s.

Patents in force at end of 1926 totalled 7,080, made up as follows: Patents sealed and third-year fees paid from the 31st December, 1923, to the 31st December, 1926, 2,766 and 1,847 respectively; sixth-year fees paid from the 31st December, 1916, to the 31st December, 1926, 2,233; seventh-year fees paid from the 31st December, 1917, to the 31st December, 1926, 234.

DESIGNS.

The number of applications for registration of designs lodged during the year was 204, being an increase of 1 over the preceding year, bringing the total number of applications as at the 31st December, 1926, to 2,386. Since the year 1923, when the number of applications fell short of the previous year by 31, there has been a slight increase each year.

The fees received during the year amounted to £124 16s.

The registrations in force as at the 31st December, 1926, totalled 917. Of this number 93 had been extended for the second term, and 19 had been extended for the third term.

In 104 (123) cases the applicants were resident in New Zealand. Applicants resident in Great Britain numbered 66 (45); Australia, 24 (16); United States of America, 9 (10); and Canada, 1 (0).

TRADE-MARKS.

The trade depression that has been experienced in most parts of the world is reflected to some extent in a decrease in trade-mark activity, the number of applications (1,143) and the revenue (£3,088 1s. 9d.) being the smallest since 1922, and less than in 1925 by 189 applications and £1,005 17s. in fees. It is, however, anticipated that the current year will show a return to the steady increase that has taken place over a course of years in the number of traders who secure the benefits of registration.

An analysis of the countries from which applications were received is set out in Table M. From this table it will be noted that New Zealand applicants numbered 451 (510); 259 (332) applications were received from Great Britain; 223 (200) from the United States of America; 75 (70) from New South Wales; 59 (37) from Victoria; 4 (6) from Queensland; 27 (33) from Canada; and 24 (47) from Germany.

*The figures in parentheses are for 1925.