

In certain of the patent-classification classes the number of proceedings commenced in 1937 are less than in the previous year. These classes include amusements, music, exercises, games, &c., 29 (36); boots and shoes, 10 (19); boxes, cans, and casks, 36 (47); building construction, 71 (83); chemicals, 9 (22); fibre-dressing (including rope-making), 9 (22); heating and fuel manufacture, 43 (53); wearing-apparel, 34 (57).

The continuation of the campaign for road safety both in this country and elsewhere, to which reference was made in my last report, is still reflected in the further increase in the number of inventions relating to this class of subject-matter, including improvements in railway-crossing barriers and railway-warning devices.

It is of interest to note that there has been increased activity in the realm of inventions relating to agriculture and the like, with the result that comparatively large increases have occurred in the number of proceedings in the patent-classification classes relating to cultivating-tools, harvesting-appliances, sheep-shearing machines, and manure and/or seed-sowers.

Much attention has been given during the year under review to the subject of illuminating, particularly gas-filled lamps. Activity in more domestic matters is indicated by a number of applications for brooms and brushes, and some ingenious arrangements of rotary driers for clothes have also made their appearance among the records of the Office. The use of reinforced concrete is still being investigated for the construction of fencing-posts and the like, and improvements in the centrifugal lining of pipes are still being studied.

In regard to medical and surgical appliances, the greater number of applications relate to surgical syringes and artificial limbs.

The phenomenal increase in the number of proceedings in the class relating to radio has been commented on in my report for last year. During that year there was an increase of nearly 100 per cent. on the average number of cases for the years 1930-34 inclusive. This extraordinary ratio of increase could scarcely be expected to continue. It is, nevertheless, a significant indication of the intense activity which is still being maintained in respect of radio inventions that the record figures for 1936 were again exceeded last year. This constitutes a fresh record not only in the radio class, but also in all of the classes into which inventions are grouped for the purpose of patent classification in the country.

DESIGNS.

Compared with the figures for last year, a substantial increase was shown in the number of design-registration proceedings. The figures for the year were 193, which is the highest number in any one year since 1926, and brings the total number of cases as at 31st December, 1937, up to 4,095. Design registrations in force at that date numbered 966, of which 142 cases were registered during the year. One hundred and twenty-four registrations became void by reason of the non-payment of renewal fees. Renewal of the term of copyright for the second term of five years was effected in 41 cases, while 12 were renewed for the third term of five years.

The number of applications received from persons resident in New Zealand was 109 (84)*; the next greatest number of applications came from the undermentioned countries in the order set out—namely, the Commonwealth of Australia, Great Britain, and the United States of America. There were 90 (50) cases lodged in respect of Class 1, while 47 (29) were lodged in Class 3, 30 (16) in Class 4, and 14 (11) in Class 12. The remaining proceedings were spread over four classes. There were seven classes in which no applications were filed.

TRADE-MARKS.

During the year under review there was, as in Great Britain, a falling-off in the number of proceedings for the registration of trade-marks as compared with the number for the previous year, when the number was the highest received in any year since 1930. The figures were 1,096 for 1936 and 889 for 1937. The number of proceedings in regard to the registration of trade-marks commenced by persons resident in New Zealand was less than in 1936, the figures being 373, as compared with 424. There were also fewer applications from persons resident in the Commonwealth of Australia, 123 (132). The number of cases from the United Kingdom also showed a falling-off on the previous year, 219 (397), although the number exceeded the average for the five years 1931-35, inclusive, which was 206·8. From the United States of America there were 87, as against 72 in 1936; and from Canada 43, 24 more than in the previous year. There was very little variation in the number of cases from Germany, 18, as compared with 22 in 1936. The amount received in respect of trade-mark fees was £3,490 15s. 6d., as against £3,482 10s. 11d. in 1936.

As is generally the case, although the year 1936 was an exception, the greatest number of proceedings was in Class 42 (substances used as food or as ingredients in food), there being 128, as against 125 in the previous year. Class 3 (chemical substances prepared for use in medicine and pharmacy), which headed the list in 1936 with 152, had the second highest number of cases in 1937, the number being 101. Class 38 (articles of clothing) with 3 less than last year, 85 (88), occupies third place in this list. Then follows Class 48 (perfumery, including toilet articles, preparations for the teeth and hair, and perfumed soap), 71 (104); Class 47 (candles, common soap, detergents; illuminating, heating, or lubricating oils; matches, and starch, blue, and other preparations for laundry purposes), 63 (38); and Class 50 (miscellaneous), 54 (72).

*The figures in parentheses are for 1936.