

From these figures it will be seen that though the total number of proceedings commenced in 1939 and 1940 was lower than in any two consecutive years since 1917 and 1918, the total number of cases brought to finality by being placed on the Register was higher in 1940 than in any of the preceding five years, the next highest figure being in the previous year, 1939.

In addition to the above factors, when the volume of work in any particular year is under consideration account must also be taken of the inevitable snowball effect which occurs in Patent Offices, due to the periodic renewal of grants and registrations and to the fact that so many cases remain relevant to subsequent cases, each new case thus potentially increasing the time that may be involved in disposing of subsequent cases.

The total fees which were received by the Patent Office in respect of proceedings relating to patents, designs, and trade-marks amounted to £12,240 16s. The corresponding figure for 1939 was £14,134 6s. 6d., but this sum constituted the third largest amount of revenue received in any one year since the inception of the New Zealand Patent Office.

It is satisfactory to note that though the number of proceedings instituted in 1940 showed a reduction of 24·2 per cent. as compared with those in 1939, the amount of fees received did not suffer to the same extent, having been only 13 per cent. less than the total received in 1939 and only 10·5 per cent. less than the average receipts for the last five years.

When it is taken into consideration that the five-year period selected includes the record year (1938) since the establishment of the Patent Office and also the third highest year (1939), it will be seen that the drop in 1940 of only 10·5 per cent. on the average receipts for the prior five years is a matter for satisfaction.

In regard to expenditure, which totalled £6,075 12s. for the year 1940, it will be noted that as a result of economies and a decrease in salary-outgoings owing to continued staff losses mainly due to enlistments in the armed forces, the payments are down by 11 per cent. on the previous year 1939. The balance between receipts and payments has accordingly remained at substantially the same ratio as in the previous year.

Seeing that economy had already been strictly practiced before the war period commenced, the reduction in expenditure for 1940 is satisfactory from a financial point of view, though the further loss of officers in 1940 in addition to those lost in 1939 has necessarily been a great handicap and imposed a heavy strain on the depleted staff.

Among the economies put into operation during the year was a reduction in the size and illustration of the *New Zealand Patent Office Journal*, which is published fortnightly, and is the official organ of the Patent Office for the publication of information relating to patents, designs, and trade-marks.

It is regretted that as a result of this reduction the *Journal* has inevitably become of considerably less use than heretofore to subscribers, libraries, and the public in New Zealand, and in the numerous overseas countries to which the *Journal* is despatched. A return to a normal publication as soon as the financial and general situation will allow is accordingly very desirable. In the meantime the cost has been reduced from £1,046 5s. 10d. in 1939, to £591 13s. 3d. in 1940.

The receipts for the period under review exceeded the expenditure by the sum of £6,165 4s., thus increasing the surplus of the Patent Office since 1st January, 1890, to the grand total of £242,392 14s. 11d.

#### PATENTS.

The influence of war conditions on Patent Office activity has been more markedly felt in the Patents Division than in the Trade-marks Division, the figures in the two divisions having been 1,277 proceedings for the grant of letters patent in 1940, as against 1,821 in 1939, and 626 proceedings for the registration of trade-marks in 1940, as against 694 in 1939.

There was also a decline during 1940 in the number of cases in connection with which a complete specification was filed in the first instance at the commencement of the proceedings. The number of applications in respect of which the complete specification was so lodged was 636 in 1940, as against 1,131 in the previous year.

In regard, however, to the complete specifications that have been lodged in proceedings for which a provisional specification only had been filed when the proceedings were commenced, the number of such complete specifications has kept up to a remarkable extent. In 1940 these specifications totalled 182, as against 191 in the preceding year, the decline having been only 9 for the period under review.

The total number of proceedings for the grant of letters patent instituted up to 31st December, 1940, was 84,131, and the number of patents in force at that date was 8,768, made up as follows: Patents sealed and third-year fees paid from 31st December, 1937, to 31st December, 1940, 2,387 and 2,516 respectively; sixth-year fees paid from 31st December, 1930, to 31st December, 1940, 3,863, and two patents in respect of which an extension of term has been granted by order of the Supreme Court under the special procedure laid down in that behalf.

#### TREND OF INVENTION.

So far as New Zealand is concerned, the truth of the old saying that necessity is the mother of invention was well illustrated last year by the stimulating effect that was produced in one of the many branches of inventive activity as a result of the rationing of fuel for motor-vehicles. In view of this rationing, a number of inventors have turned their attention to the problems of vehicle-propulsion by means of internal-combustion engines utilizing fuel other than petrol.