

This development in national scientific and industrial production brings into prominence the fact that reconsideration of industrial design law is also now appropriate. The overlap between copyright and industrial design law, theoretically distinct and separate in the conception of the law, is no longer capable of being maintained in practice. As stated by Professor Robin Darwin in his contribution to the illustrated official survey of the London Exhibition :—

Design in every field is a mixture of function and aesthetics . . . but the ratio in which they are combined can vary a great deal . . . the designer of wallpaper, or of textiles, of pottery, glass, and many other things of that kind must be rather more artist than technician, whereas the designer of articles which are made by elaborate processes or which have complicated functions to perform must be at least as much technician as artist.

The matter has also a close bearing and relation to the question of the reform of the patent law. A large number of patents come in the category of what in other countries are known as "design patents" or as "utility models"—and are covered as such by what can be termed a petty patent. A simplification of the patent law and procedure to cover these cases would, it is thought, be an advantage both to industry and to Patent Office administration and would be an additional matter for consideration by the Committee to review the whole of the patent law and administration. Under the existing copyright law the industrial application of an artistic work may exclude it from the benefit of the Copyright Act, and the reconsideration of design law from the copyright aspect is also of considerable importance.

The general position of modern invention to our everyday life has been well stated by Professor W. N. Benson, President of the Sixth Science Congress recently held in Wellington :—

The achievements of the industrial chemist in the production of synthetic fibres, rubber, and plastics, the results of applied radio-physics, and the co-operative work of physicists, chemists, and engineers, are but some of the fruits of applied science during the past decade. . . . Never so much as in the last decade has mankind in general become aware of the impact of science in the practical affairs of life.

## PATENTS

Inventions under the heading of electronics (837) and chemicals (510) again formed the largest number of patent applications. In this connection the need for a modern system of classification and indexing of inventions is a pressing one not only because this highly technical subject-matter forms one of the most important sources of information relating to present-day technological progress vital to both science and industry, but also because it is necessary for the Patent Office to determine whether the apparently original contribution is in fact new and patentable.

New Zealand residents were responsible for 911 applications, with Great Britain next with 881, United States of America, 673; Australia, 395; and all other countries, 165.

## TECHNICAL LIBRARY

The preparation and utilization of technical reports has in recent years been shown to be not merely of assistance to the Patent Office and other State Departments; it has become a practical necessity, and the complexity and volume of technical literature makes it a condition precedent for the technical specialist to have as his nearby working equipment an adequate technical library. Steps are being taken to co-ordinate such library facilities on a scientific and national basis and, in this aspect also, improved Patent Office facilities are necessary for both technical staff and the public seeking to ascertain the field of technology free from patent domination.

## TRADE-MARKS

The number of applications for the registration of trade-marks constituted a record, the total for the year being 1,766. Class 5 (pharmaceutical, veterinary, and sanitary substances) was again the most popular with 243 applications, and then Class 3 (soaps,