

as far as possible by the fullest opportunity being afforded inventors of becoming acquainted with what is known on any subject. A great deal of this information is contained in the printed specifications and drawings of inventions donated to this office by Great Britain, Australia, Canada, the United States, and other places, but, unfortunately, the public have only restricted access to them.

More adequate provision for enabling the specifications of this and other countries to be readily available for inspection and generally affording intending applicants and others throughout the country an opportunity of becoming acquainted with former inventions is a matter deserving of earnest consideration. There is no doubt that the path of the inventor is beset with difficulties and disappointments, and the number of applications for patents by residents of this country in New Zealand, and in Great Britain and other places, is a matter for surprise. After overcoming the difficulties already referred to and ascertaining that his invention is new and likely to be useful, the inventor finds that it is by no means an easy matter to get it taken up. If he succeeds in this he stands to reap a fair reward in the time that remains to him of his monopoly, unless he finds himself supplanted by other appliances.

An occasional invention proves highly remunerative, and some others furnish a moderate return, but these are the exceptions, and probably on the whole the amount made by our inventors does not equal what has been expended by them.

As our progress is largely dependent on the devising and adoption of improved processes and means in connection with our industries, it is obviously in the country's interest that its inventors should be encouraged. I submit that some portion of the amount, now approximating £100,000, paid to the office in excess of the expenditure, might well be devoted to affording them better facilities, and in lessening or removing as far as possible some of the difficulties with which they have to contend.

Applications, Specifications, and Revenue.

There were 1,299 applications for letters patent during the year, 275 short of the number received in 1914: 873 were left with provisional specifications and 426 with complete specifications: while 254 complete specifications were lodged in respect of applications with which provisional specifications were filed, making a total of 1,553 specifications, as compared with 1,860 for 1914, a difference of 309.

The number of applications received up to the 31st December was 37,060, and the patents then in force in New Zealand 3,283.

There is nothing calling for any special remark with regard to the revenue. The principal amounts are those received in respect of sealing and renewal fees, to which I have already referred. With the exception of these and the amount paid for registration of assignments of subsequent proprietors (chiefly on account of the transfer of a number of patents by one company to another) the fees show a falling-off on those received for last year.

Twenty-five applications were received from women inventors (7 less than in 1914), being in respect of domestic appliances and for articles of dress.

Applications for patents of addition numbered 9 (17), and there were 22 (23) complete specifications in respect of cognate provisionals, the figures in parentheses being those for 1914.

Examination of Specifications.

So far as it has been able to do so the Office has searched the prior New Zealand specifications in connection with the applications lodged, in order to ascertain whether the inventions had been previously patented.

To enable a thorough investigation of New Zealand specifications to be made additions to the staff with the requisite qualifications are necessary, and if the search is extended to the specifications in this office of Great Britain and other countries to enable the novelty of inventions sought to be patented to be ascertained a very much larger staff would be required for the purpose.

The applications for the twelve months stated below were dealt with as follows:—

Number of applications received from 1st June, 1914, to 31st May, 1915 (inclusive)	1,321
Applications in respect of which amendment under section 5, or compliance with other formalities, required before acceptance	485
Applications in respect of which amendment on account of want of novelty required before acceptance	105
Not accepted	59

Countries from which Applications received.

From residents of New Zealand 927 applications were received last year, and only 373 from persons living in other places. In 1914 the numbers were 1,045 and 529 respectively. The falling-off was chiefly in the applications from Great Britain, 98 being recorded last year, as compared with 150 in 1914 and 183 in 1913. The number from Australia does not show a very great difference, being 196, 25 less than in the previous year; but there was a considerable drop in those from the United States, 60 coming to hand in 1915, as compared with 106 in 1914.