

ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES AND KINDRED MATTERS

8. *Wills Estates*.—The number of wills estates accepted during the year was 2,214, of a total value of £4,175,397. It has been found that increasing numbers of persons who are themselves beneficiaries in estates already under administration by the Public Trustee have in turn chosen him to act for them as agent, executor, or trustee. It is evident that these persons appreciate the safe and efficient service which the Department is able to provide.

9. *Intestate Estates*.—The number accepted for administration during the year was 661, valued at £468,845. As the years go by more and more persons are executing wills, and consequently the number of intestate estates is gradually decreasing. The years of experience which the Office has had in this kind of work and its widespread organization greatly facilitate the prosecution by the Public Trustee of the lengthy and complicated inquiries which the establishment of next-of-kin so often involves.

10. *Administration of Deceased Estates under £400 in Value*.—The Public Trustee is called upon to administer large numbers of small estates. The provision in the Public Trust Office Act, 1908, and the Amendments whereby the filing of an election to administer obviates application for a grant of probate or administration, greatly facilitates the administration of these estates. This simple procedure eliminates a good deal of time and effects an appreciable reduction of costs, which, in conjunction with the moderate Office charges, saves persons in poor circumstances a considerable amount of expense.

11. *Estates of Persons under Disability*.—In terms of the Mental Defectives Act, 1911, 675 estates, valued at £880,358, were placed under the Public Trustee's control during the year. The provisions of the Act enable the Public Trustee to provide for the maintenance of the dependants and the control of the assets, from the time when the person under the disability can no longer manage his own affairs. In the control of such estates the objectives are to retain the assets of the individual as far as possible in their original form consistent with prudent business management such as the person concerned would use if he were able, to assist his dependants and to help the person under disability in every way so that he may be rehabilitated when on recovery he resumes control of his own affairs.

Legislation enables the Supreme Court to appoint a manager under the Aged and Infirm Persons Protection Act, 1912, in the estates of persons who do not need restraint but who for various reasons are incompetent to manage their own affairs. The effect of the appointment of a manager is to render the protected person incapable of making any transfer, sale, or disposition of any part of his estate without the leave of the Court.

In both types of estates there are occasions when the affairs of the persons concerned are for particular reasons placed by the Court in the hands of a private committee or manager, and in these cases there is an obligation placed on the Public Trustee by statute to examine and report on the statement of administration filed in the Court by such private committee or manager.

12. *Agencies*.—An increasing number of people appoint the Public Trustee to act as attorney on their behalf because of ill health, advancing years, location in different parts of the country from their assets, or absence from the Dominion. A number of servicemen going overseas took advantage of this service, and the Public Trustee was very pleased to be able to assist in this manner those who served their country. Special reduced charges were arranged, and the services rendered were appreciated by the servicemen concerned.

13. *Other Estates*.—There are incidental provisions in various statutes placing on the Public Trustee responsibility for the protection of individuals and funds where no other satisfactory guardian or custodian exists. Instances of such provisions are the control by the Public Trustee of certain benefit and