

relief funds following public disasters. The Public Trustee is also able in certain circumstances to receive moneys on behalf of minors to be held for their welfare and benefit, to assume control of the estates of missing persons, and to deal with unclaimed land and property. The years of experience in these and similar tasks are available as occasion arises, and prompt assistance can be given where required.

14. *Workers' Compensation.*—The development of local industries and the dangers inherent in particular occupations have tended to increase the number of claims for damages on the death or injury of workers. In many estates under the control of the Public Trustee consideration has to be given to the advisability of making such a claim for damages, and a most careful investigation of all the circumstances is made. In cases where the Public Trustee is statutory custodian of compensation-moneys, and frequently where damages are awarded, the Public Trustee is required to supply to the Court a full report on the proposed disposition of the damages. The fullest details of the dependants and their circumstances are supplied with a view to seeing that justice is done to those entitled.

15. *Inquiries Overseas.*—Many estates have assets abroad, and the amount of correspondence and detail which require attention under this heading has now assumed considerable proportions. In the United Kingdom this is particularly heavy, and I wish to place on record the very great service rendered to this Department by the High Commissioner for New Zealand in London and his staff in handling so expeditiously and efficiently the heavy volume of business transacted for the Public Trustee. During the war years an officer of the Department was attached to the Royal New Zealand Air Force staff in London to attend to the administration of deceased airmen's estates, whether under administration by the Public Trustee or not, and his services were of very great help in expediting the necessary attention to the assets in England of the deceased airmen.

Even during the war many requests were made to the Public Trustee in New Zealand to administer the New Zealand assets of persons dying in England and elsewhere, and this class of business is one that is increasing from year to year.

16. *Servicemen's Settlement and Land Sales Act, 1943.*—Realization of estate assets has proceeded steadily, and there has been a big demand for all types of freehold and leasehold properties. Beneficiaries in increasing numbers are accepting the prices fixed by the Land Sales Committee and Court, in preference to withdrawing the properties from sale, and few difficulties have been experienced in complying with the requirements of the Act.

ENEMY PROPERTY EMERGENCY REGULATIONS 1939

17. During the year the Public Trustee, as Custodian of Enemy Property, has carried out the duties cast upon him by the Enemy Property Emergency Regulations 1939. Funds representing enemy property collected or realized by the Public Trustee and now held amount to £231,227.

Enemy property, together with the income therefrom, controlled by the Custodian of Enemy Property is held in trust for all persons having any interest in such property. The money is invested in accordance with the directions of the Minister of Finance.

INVESTMENTS FROM THE COMMON FUND

18. *Lending Operations.*—The demand for investments by lending institutions referred to in my report for the previous year has been maintained, but not accentuated, during the period under review. There are still large sums available for investment on first mortgage, and, as the number of