

Agencies.—During the year an increasing number of persons desiring to be relieved of business affairs or going abroad for an extended visit appointed the Public Trustee to act as their agent. By reason of the Dominion-wide organization the Public Trust Office offers special advantages in agency work. Competent representation in 102 cities and towns in New Zealand and a London representative enables clients to keep in close touch with a responsible representative of the Department. An agency can be created to deal with a specific asset or for the complete control of a person's affairs, including the filing of social security and income-tax returns. That the service rendered is appreciated by clients is shown by the fact that those for whom the Public Trustee has acted as agent generally appoint him executor of their wills. A pleasing feature of this agency work is the number of beneficiaries who appoint the Public Trustee as attorney to manage property descending to them from estates which have been administered by the Office.

Workers' Compensation.—Claims under the Workers' Compensation Act, 1922, constitute an important part of the Office work. Unless the Court of Arbitration otherwise orders, the Public Trustee is statutory custodian of compensation made in respect of the death of a worker. Frequently the Public Trustee is called upon to investigate the sufficiency of the amount tendered by way of compensation or the question of taking action to obtain compensation. Such work calls for specialized knowledge on the part of the Department's officers. When the compensation has been settled the Public Trustee is required either to apply to the Court of Arbitration for an order apportioning the money or to report to the Court on an application by an outside solicitor.

The Public Trustee has a duty in all cases when an application for apportionment is made to the Court to submit a report as to the most equitable method of apportionment having regard to the circumstances of the dependants. This necessitates a great deal of inquiry and investigation in order that reliable information may be placed before the Court. The fee charged by the Public Trustee in such cases is 1 per cent. on the amount received. This fee is the only remuneration for the services rendered, comprising usually protracted negotiations, applications to the Court for an order for apportionment, the payment of maintenance allowances very often over lengthy periods, and in some cases the disbursement of portion of the capital of the compensation-moneys in the purchase of a home for the dependants. The fee of 1 per cent. does not provide adequate remuneration for the work done, and an increase will have to be considered.

Other Estates. In addition to the classes of estates already mentioned there are many other cases arising under various statutes where the Public Trustee is called upon to act in a fiduciary capacity. Thus he may be called upon to deal with unclaimed lands or property, to receive moneys from private trustees to be administered for the benefit of minors, to act as Sinking Fund Commissioner in respect of loans raised by local bodies, to discharge a mortgage on maturity when there is no person in New Zealand authorized to give a discharge, to administer the affairs of convicts or persons undergoing reformatory detention, to administer funds for maintenance under an order of the Destitute Persons Act, 1910. The above examples are not exhaustive, but they give some idea of the many services which the Public Trustee undertakes for the people of New Zealand.

ENEMY PROPERTY EMERGENCY REGULATIONS 1939

During the year the Public Trustee, as Custodian of Enemy Property, has carried out the duties under the Enemy Property Emergency Regulations 1939. Funds amounting to £98,577 are now held, representing enemy property controlled, collected, or realized by the Public Trustee, in addition to the sum of £90,845 previously applied towards German reparations in the terms of the Paris Agreement. Except in the case