to administer estates not exceeding £400 in value without incurring the cost of obtaining probate or administration in the ordinary way.

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The total number of "elections" filed in the Supreme Court during the year

was 1,269.

There has been a marked relief in the conveyancing-work of the Division during the year. This improvement is largely attributable to the following causes:—

- (a.) The appointment of District Solicitors at Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin.
- (b.) The action taken to discontinue the preparation of transfers of properties purchased from estates under administration by the Office.
- (c.) The adoption of the system of having estate leases prepared by the lessees' solicitors instead of by the Office.

Special attention is being paid to the training of junior officers in the work of the Division. It is proposed to attach additional cadets to the Division for instruction in search work and minor conveyancing-work, in order to strengthen the staff at the Head Office, and in District Offices where District Solicitors have been appointed and legal work is performed.

Wills deposited.—During the year the number of wills held in safe custody on behalf of living testators increased by 3,187, the total number held on the 31st March, 1919, being 24,237. The following table furnishes details of the increase:—

<del></del> .	Sold	liers.	Civilians.		Total.
On hand on 31st March, 1918		8,027		13,023	21,050
New wills deposited from 1st April, 1918, to 31st March, 1919	2,100		2,173		
Deduct— Wills withdrawn from 1st April, 1918, to 31st March, 1919, through death of testator or otherwise	763		323		
Net increase in number of wills on deposit		1,337		1,850	3,187
Number of wills on deposit at 31st March, 1919		9,364		14,873	24,237

Figures for the past five years are—

Number of wills on deposit	on 31st Ma	arch, 1914	 6,427
Net increase for year ended	31st Marc	h, 1915	 1,417
,,	,,	1916	 3,541
>>	,,	1917	 4,884
,,	,,	1918	 4,781
,,	,,	1919	 3,187

Number on deposit on 31st March, 1919 .. .. 24,237

The remarkable advance in the number of wills deposited from 6,427 on the 31st March, 1914, to 24,237 on the 31st March, 1919, is partly the result of the war. Wills executed by members of the Expeditionary Forces and deposited during the period named numbered 9,364.

The number of wills deposited by civilians shows a large increase, the number having risen from 6,427 on the 31st March, 1914, to 14,873 on the 31st March, 1919.

In practically all the wills held on deposit the Public Trustee is named as executor, although the Public Trust Office also accepts for safe custody, free of charge, any will in which a private executor is named.

The wills on deposit may therefore be regarded as representing a large volume of business which will in normal course come into the hands of the Public Trustee for administration.

The prolongation of the war and the calling-up of a large number of men for military service greatly influenced the making of testamentary dispositions of