

WELLINGTON.

The Branch Office at Wellington is comparatively a new one. It was established a few years ago for the purpose of relieving the Head Office of the administration of Wellington city and suburban estates.

The District Manager and his staff occupied a small portion of the ground floor of the main Public Trust building, but the recent abnormal growth of the business necessitated the staff's removal to leased premises in Ballance Street.

In a few months these proved inadequate, and the Public Trustee purchased a three-story building at the corner of Stout and Ballance Streets. These premises were transformed into up-to-date offices, and are now connected by passage-ways with the main Public Trust building.

The growth of the business, however, continues to such an extent that it will soon become necessary to provide additional accommodation for the Wellington District Branch.

In March, 1917, the staff numbered thirteen. In March, 1919—two years later—it numbered forty.

The estates under administration on the 31st March, 1919, numbered 879 (of which thirty are valued at considerably over £10,000 each), with assets valued at a million and a half.

Owing to the fact that this is practically a city and suburban agency only, the estates, although not so numerous as some other central Branches, are, generally speaking, more valuable, and probably more intricate to administer.

This Branch controls about 850 business and dwelling properties in the city and suburbs of Wellington, the annual rent-roll from these being over £56,000, and their value about £730,000. It employs on its staff two property surveyors and two rent-collectors to look after these properties, collecting rents and attending to repairs, and as many of them are in the congested area of the city they naturally require a good deal of attention.

The repairs alone average about 130 per month, with an annual expenditure out of the estates they represent of about £5,000.

Prior to September, 1918, the cash receipts and payments for this Branch were made through Head Office, but in September, 1918, the Branch became a self-contained one. The cash transactions for the year ended 31st March, 1919, were—Receipts, £494,628; payments, £433,676.

In August, 1918, it was found necessary to appoint an Assistant Local Deputy Public Trustee, and later on a District Accountant was also appointed to the Branch.

For the purposes of decentralization the administration of all the Wellington estates reported before this Branch was established and which were dealt with by the Head Office is being delegated to the Local Deputy Public Trustee, the result being the absence of duplication and the more prompt attention to and despatch of business.

Sales of real estate during the year have been brisk, and, owing to the extra demand for residential properties consequent on the growth of the city and the dearth of houses to rent, properties which from their unsaleable nature were stumbling-blocks to the winding-up of estates are now selling quite readily at good prices.

In common with other Branches the Wellington Office felt the strain upon its depleted permanent staff on account of conditions arising from the war, and until the remainder of these officers return from the seat of war the staff consists mainly of temporary clerks.

The epidemic was responsible for the influx of 139 new estates, a number of which comprised amongst their assets various businesses which had to be managed until disposed of at prices acceptable to the beneficiaries.

WANGANUI.

The staff is dealing promptly with all new business, and the work of the Office is in a most satisfactory condition.

The prospects of new business are exceptionally good, as the town is steadily making progress, and with the opening of the port and the linking-up of the back