

ment of Mr. H. Turner. Mr. M. C. Barnett, who has been appointed Assistant Public Trustee, has been succeeded as Chief Inspector by Mr. W. M. Barr.

After forty-two years' service Mr. W. Fordham retired on superannuation on the 28th February, 1921. The position of the Controller of the Mortgage Division is now occupied by Mr. A. Esam.

27. A further substantial reduction has been made in the amount of overtime worked by officers. An examination of the annual accounts for the past three years will show that there has been a continuous improvement in this respect.

Amount paid for year ended 31st March—

						£
1919	..	..	..	..	..	2,693
1920	..	..	..	..	..	1,740
1921	..	..	..	..	..	1,430

The position at present is in marked contrast to the conditions which prevailed during the war period and for many years prior thereto. Not only has there been a very considerable saving of expenditure under this heading, but the reduction of overtime has removed a great strain upon the health and efficiency of the staff, and has enabled officers to perform their work better during the appointed hours of business.

Every endeavour will be made to eliminate all overtime, except for special work such as the periodical balancing of the accounts.

28. At the last University examinations many officers completed their course in either law or accountancy. The results are particularly creditable in view of the exacting nature of the work on which many of the officers are engaged.

The Office now numbers on its staff thirty-six qualified solicitors and fifty-eight qualified accountants. The possession of so large a qualified staff is an assurance that the technical side of the Department's work will receive satisfactory attention.

TRAINING OF OFFICERS.

29. In the annual report for the year ended 31st March, 1918, the following remarks appeared under this heading :—

"It has become evident that before long some comprehensive and organized scheme for the training of officers must be embarked upon. The demand for skilled and qualified officers is rapidly outrunning the supply, and, as the Office cannot fairly expect to be permitted to deplete other Government Departments of their qualified men, it must face the question of training the junior officers now in its employ to fill the more technical positions in the future."

The inauguration of the scheme of training was delayed owing to the difficulty of releasing officers competent to give the necessary instruction. A definite commencement has now been made with the work in the Head Office. Instruction in law, accountancy, the administration of estates, and office routine is given to a selected number of officers during the mornings, the remainder of the day being employed in teaching the officers the practical work of the divisions to which they are attached.

Each course of instruction covers a period of two months, and examinations are held at suitable intervals to test the progress made. The handwriting of the officers receives special attention, and where necessary instruction in handwriting is given for an hour each afternoon.

In order that the benefit of the scheme may be shared by junior officers throughout the Dominion, the lectures delivered are being reported, and at the conclusion of the course they will be revised, printed, and distributed for the information of all officers.

At some of the District Offices instructional classes have been formed, and it is hoped to extend the system gradually. It is probable that before long it will be necessary to consider the establishment of a standard course of training for new entrants to the Office, to provide for their being properly grounded in the elements of administration, law, and accounting. The expenditure involved in such a scheme will be more than recouped to the Office by the improved efficiency and the usefulness of its officers.