

Last year a public fund, which was supplemented by a grant of £250 from the New Zealand Government, was raised in the Timaru district for the benefit of the widow and children of Constable James Dorgan, who was murdered whilst in execution of his duty. The control of this fund has been placed in the hands of the Public Trustee.

INVESTIGATION AND AUDIT OF PRIVATE TRUST ESTATE ACCOUNTS.

55. By section 11 of the Amendment Act, 1913, the condition and accounts of any private trust estate may, on application to the Public Trustee, by or on behalf of any private trustee or beneficiary, be investigated and audited by any solicitor or public registered accountant as is agreed on between the applicant trustee or beneficiary and the Public Trustee, or, in default of such agreement, as is appointed by the Public Trustee. During the past year several applications have been made to the Public Trustee in this connection.

REVIEW OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES.

56. The system of reviewing the administration of estates locally has continued to demonstrate its value as an aid to the efficient conduct of the work of the Office.

Since the introduction of the system in June, 1920, practically every estate in the Office has come under the notice of the Reviewing Inspectors. These officers not only review the past administration of an estate, but also afford the District Public Trustees the benefit of their advice as to the future conduct of the administration. As a consequence of the thorough overhauling the estates now receive, oversights are detected and corrected without delay, and the administration is pushed through to completion at the earliest date.

The reviewing system has also assisted materially to educate the staff to a better knowledge of its duties, with the result that, as a rule, the oversights discovered by the Inspectors are of a minor nature. Another important result, to which it is considered the reviewing system has largely contributed, is that the average time taken for the administration of an estate has been considerably reduced.

The existence of the reviewing system, with its checks and safeguards, has enabled the Office to complete its system of decentralization without hesitation.

ACCOUNTS.

DELEGATION OF ESTATE ACCOUNTS TO DISTRICT PUBLIC TRUSTEES.

57. The transfer to the District Public Trustees of estate accounts under the administration of the Head Office was finally completed early in the year, and the whole of the estates accounting-work throughout New Zealand is now conducted at the District Offices. The result has proved to be satisfactory both to the Office and its clients—to the Office by reason of the removal of an unwieldy mass of business from one overburdened office at Wellington and its more equal distribution among the several District Offices, and to the clients by reason of the advantages of having their affairs managed locally.

Trained and expert officers have been appointed to the district staffs, and experienced inspectors make regular visits to the District Offices to ensure that the business is being conducted along proper lines.

It may be stated confidently that the system has been highly successful.

Following upon the delegation, it has been found that the accounting-work has been more promptly completed than was possible previously when all the accounts were prepared at the Head Office. Stamp accounts are filed expeditiously, and administration accounts are in the hands of beneficiaries more promptly than the previous system would allow, and generally the accounts throughout New Zealand are in very good order.

CREDIT IN LONDON.

58. There is a large amount of business transacted in London on behalf of the Public Trustee, and to provide readier facilities for its completion an account has