Advertising.—Various methods of advertising have been tried in the past—namely, by the medium of newspapers, hoardings, and pamphlets; but there is no doubt that a large portion of the public has not yet been reached.

Realization of Assets.—The realization of properties during the year has been satisfactory. The market, generally speaking, was easier than in the previous year, yet it was very difficult to effect a satisfactory sale where a large cash deposit was required. The total amount of realizations during the year was £83,500.

Office-site.—The present site of the office is not a good one. It is a considerable distance from the business centre of the town, though it is almost certain that the centre will move in this direction in the course of, say, the next decade. At present, however, it is unquestionable that the business would undoubtedly be helped if the office was occupying a suitable building on a prominent site.

Conference of Estates and Accounts Clerks.—What is probably a new departure in the organization of a branch office is the establishment of a conference of Estates and Accounts Clerks at the Auckland Branch. The conference is an unofficial one, directly controlled and organized by the Estates and Accounts Clerks themselves. The conference meets weekly, and at its deliberations matters of general interest to the office are discussed, and the conclusions arrived at are embodied in resolutions. The conference has been most beneficial in that it furnishes an opportunity for free discussion on office methods and organization, to the mutual benefit of all members.

BLENHEIM.

The following are the statistics for the year ended 31st March, 1923: Total number of estates under administration, 116; new estates accepted, 29; total value of assets and funds, £125,842; wills deposited, 46; realizations during year (realty), £257; number and value of estates closed and distributed 37, value £17,902.

The office is gaining in popularity in the district, which is a conservative one, and for many years has always looked to the private firms to carry out estate administrations. The number of wills already deposited will eventually assure a satisfactory business.

The amount invested in the district from the Common Fund is considerable, and in view of the value and productivity of the district it is doubtful if there is better security for the office funds in the Dominion in this particular class of security.

During the last year there has been very little movement in house property, with a result that practically no sales have been made. But as against this it must not be overlooked that most of the houses held are very old and are not readily saleable in view of the more modern class of building being erected.

CHRISTCHURCH.

Decentralization.—The scheme of decentralization has now been completed. The whole of the accounts in connection with the estates and funds administered by this District Office are now kept here, the only exception being in connection with the Common Fund investments, which are dealt with by Head Office.

In addition to the delegation of accounting-work to District Public Trustees, a system has been established enabling administration of estates to be completed by a District Manager under the control of a District Public Trustee. This system enables the work to be done where the estates are situated and the beneficiaries reside, and tends largely to reduce duplication to a minimum. The District Managers take a more active part in the administration-work in estates in their district, and they now mainly conduct such administration, subject, of course, to proper safeguards by the District Public Trustee.

The decentralization has been of great advantage both to clients and to this office. The whole of the administration and accounting work is now effected by or under the direct control of the District Public Trustee. This has enabled the administration of estates to be completed much more quickly than was possible previously.

Administration.—The administration of estates has proceeded very satisfactorily during the year. There have been very few complaints, and these merely of a minor nature. As against this, in several cases the beneficiaries have expressed their appreciation of the manner in which this office has conducted their business. The administration of all estates is reviewed periodically, and this prevents any avoidable delay. In addition staff changes have been reduced to a minimum, and this has enabled the members of the staff to obtain a thorough grasp of their duties and a complete knowledge of the estates, which are great factors towards the speedy and satisfactory completion of the administration of estates.

As at the 31st March, 1923, the number and value of estates on hand for administration were as follows: Number, 1,188; value, £2,143,100. Additional funds and accounts under administration are: Number, 248; value, £130,733. Thus the total estates and funds under administration at this office as at the 31st March, 1923, were: Number, 1,436; value, £2,273,833.

The number and value of new estates accepted for administration during the year were as follows: Number, 374; value, £715,815; whilst the number in which administration was completed was 300.

In order to show the expedition with which the administration is completed wherever possible, it may be mentioned that of the above 374 estates accepted during the year no less than 77, of the value of £79,480, were fully administered and closed during the same period. This number could be increased in many cases if the terms of the will or the nature of the assets permitted it.

In common with other parts of the Dominion, this district has been affected by the financial stringency which has existed during the last few years. This office is concerned in many ways, the principal of which are the difficulty of realizing estate assets, and inability to collect interest and rents from mortgagors and tenants. This district has not been affected so acutely as have certain other parts of New Zealand, and this may be attributed largely to the fact that land-values did not generally soar to the great heights reported elsewhere. Nevertheless the stringency was felt in marked degree. In many cases difficulty was experienced in collection of interest and rent, and in