

The administration of many estates may extend over very lengthy periods, and, obviously, in the course of time the incidental correspondence in these cases often becomes very bulky. An important factor in recording is to keep the files up to date. This is secured by removing all dead matter and separately filing it for future reference should occasion arise. Likewise, when the administration of an estate or fund is completed, the relevant files are removed from those relating to current transactions and separately filed. The index cards in these cases are similarly dealt with.

40. With the passing of years the accommodation of the Office records is becoming a matter of increasing difficulty. Periodical overhauls are made to ascertain what may be safely destroyed. The estate files have, however, been kept intact, and the files in every estate handled by the Department since its establishment are still held. The wisdom of this course is proved almost daily, for as a result of numerous inquiries and references it frequently becomes necessary to consult these papers, sometimes even after the lapse of a long period of years. Moreover, the consequences of a trustee's action may be called into question years after, or he may be charged with breaches of his stewardship long after the acts complained of were committed and have passed from his memory, and it is prudent to preserve as far as practicable a complete record of his dealings. This is all the more necessary in the case of a corporate trustee which is permanent and available to be proceeded against at any time. It has been said of this,—

It is a practical matter to keep such records of the doings that years after the occurrence of the events a corporate fiduciary can show that it exercised its judgment. The ability to prove that it did the right thing is a practical matter often fully as important as the doing of the right thing. A corporate fiduciary can take little consolation from the knowledge that it did the right thing, if at the same time it has to pay damages because it cannot prove as a fact that it did it.

ADMINISTRATION OF ESTATES.

STATISTICS.

41. During the year a total of 3,526 new estates and funds came into the Office. These were of the following classification :—

	Number.	Value. £
Wills estates	1,152	3,365,106
Trust estates	290	732,738
Intestate estates	604	482,239
Mental patients' estates	423	360,552
Miscellaneous	1,057	1,571,293
	<u>3,526</u>	<u>£6,511,928</u>

The estates closed during the year numbered 2,312. Of these, 581 were estates which came into the Office after the 1st April, 1927.

On the 31st March, 1928, there were 15,800 estates and funds under administration. These are classified as follows :—

	Number.	Value. £
Wills estates	3,652	10,961,210
Trust estates	2,163	6,753,205
Intestate estates	2,223	1,541,841
Mental patients' estates	1,456	1,552,981
Miscellaneous	6,306	23,346,311
	<u>15,800</u>	<u>£44,155,548</u>

NEW ESTATE BUSINESS.

42. The volume of new estates and funds reported for administration reached a total of £6,511,928, an increase of approximately £1,000,000 beyond that reported during the previous year, constituting a record for the Office. By way of com-