Discharge of Mortgages under Section 75 of the Property Law Act, 1908, and Section 117 of the Land Transfer Act, 1915.

80. These sections authorize the Public Trustee to give an effective discharge of an overdue mortgage when a mortgagor is absent from New Zealand, or is dead, and there is no person in New Zealand authorized to give a discharge. The number of mortgages discharged during the year was not so large as usual, amounting to four only. The principal and interest collected total £2,335 18s. 2d.

The services rendered by the Public Trustee in collecting and remitting to him the amount owing under a mortgage evoked the following striking testimony to British methods from an absentee mortgagee, a foreigner who had returned to his native country: "I have voyaged the world over, but did not find any nation as true, and just, and loyal as the British Empire."

Charitable and Public Trusts.

81. The Public Trustee is frequently called upon to administer trusts of a charitable nature or of public benefit, the special advantages of corporate trusteeship being recognized where the trust is of a more or less perpetual nature. Amongst the more important of such trusts at present under administration are the following:

Renwick Cottages. These cottages, which are under the control of the Public Trustee, were erected in Nelson in 1883 for the use of deserving poor people of that city, in accordance with directions contained in the will of Miss Adeline Renwick. The cottages, situated in a pleasant locality, are built of brick, and the plots are large enough to enable the occupants to have gardens if they so desire. There are sufficient funds at credit of the trust to provide for the maintenance of the cottages and to enable a small annual allowance to be made to the inmates.

Dobson Relief Fund.—On the occasion of my last report I mentioned that it was proposed that the Public Trustee should act in conjunction with an advisory committee to administer the funds raised by public contribution for the relief of the dependants of those who lost their lives in the disastrous explosion which occurred at the Dobson Mine, Grey Valley, on the 3rd December, 1926. The amounts held by the Dobson Disaster Relief Fund Committee were duly transferred during the year, and on the 14th September, 1927, the Court made an order in terms of section 4 of the Public Trust Office Amendment Act, 1912, defining the trusts on which the funds are to be administered by the Public Trustee, and appointing a small advisory committee to co-operate with him. The total amount received by the Public Trustee from the Dobson Disaster Relief Fund Committee and other sources is £2,799 5s. 3d., which has been invested in the Common Fund of the Office. At present there are eleven dependants, receiving payments totalling £292 10s. per annum. In keeping with the usual practice in cases of this kind, no charge is being made for the Public Trustee's services in connection with the administration of the fund.

Brunner Disaster Fund.—The amount held by the Public Trustee in respect of this fund, which was raised for the relief of dependants of those miners who lost their lives in the disaster which occurred at the Brunner Mine on the 26th March, 1896, is rapidly diminishing. On the 31st March, 1928, the balance held was £1,258 10s. 9d., and fourteen persons were receiving benefits. Efforts are being made to conserve the funds as much as possible consistent with the requirements of the dependants, amongst whom the sum of £465 8s. was distributed during the past year. On that account certain applications for assistance out of the fund had to be refused during the past year.

Kaitangata Relief Fund.—On the 31st March last the balance at credit was £3,932 17s., which shows a slight increase over the previous year. There is at present only one person receiving assistance from the fund, but as provision was made in the Kaitangata Relief Fund Transfer Act, 1892, for the relief of the widows and children of coal-miners who might lose their lives in subsequent mining accidents occurring from time to time throughout New Zealand, it is always possible that demands may be made on the fund at some time in the future.