

2. The difference between the net increase in the value of estates and funds and the value of the new business for the year is represented in a large measure by the value of estates the administration of which was closed during the year by reason of expeditious administration and distribution. During the year the administration of 2,247 estates and funds valued at £1,829,584 was carried to completion, and of these estates 535 had been accepted for administration since the 1st April, 1928. This speedy administration testifies to the despatch with which the business of the Department is conducted.

3. In his report the Public Trustee deals fully with his administration of estates and funds in all its phases, the loans work, and the other duties of the Office. The business being handled has now reached very large proportions, and the organization of the Department has been built up to deal with all branches of the difficult and technical work involved. A qualified staff, including specialists in all phases of administration, accounting, investment, and legal work, is employed, and the services of experts in regard to financial, business, and farming matters are retained. The Office is self-contained, and has on its own establishment officers capable of carrying on all branches of its work. A very wide scheme of representation has been provided, and the Office has branches and agencies in 110 cities and towns throughout the country. Clients are thereby enabled without difficulty to consult an Office representative and obtain his advice or transact their business with him.

This wide representation results in speedy administration, prevents an undue traffic in correspondence and documents, and ensures that no matter where the assets of an estate may be situated there is an Office representative near at hand to protect them.

4. Coupled with this extensive representation, the Office system of decentralization plays an important part in the speedy and effective handling of the administration work. Under this scheme the administration of estates and other kindred duties are, subject to proper control by the Head Office, carried out at the various branch offices throughout the country. The estate accounts are kept at the offices conducting the administration, and payments to beneficiaries, creditors, and others are arranged by these offices. Thus the whole of the detail work in estates is carried on in the district offices in close proximity to the beneficiaries or other interested persons, and the Office is easily and promptly accessible to those for whom it acts. Beneficiaries are kept closely advised of the progress made in the administration, are freely consulted with regarding all matters pertaining to the estates, and their directions obtained whenever possible.

5. Unremitting attention on the part of the Public Trustee is required to find investments both for the continuous flow of money into the Common Fund, representing cash at credit of estates and funds, and for those estates and funds whose moneys do not fall into the Common Fund. During the year the volume of investments has been heavy, and the money invested amounts to £3,190,642. The investments controlled by the Office, which at the 31st March, 1928, stood at £28,465,963, had reached a total of £30,935,141 on the 31st March last. These figures afford evidence that it is not only as administrator and trustee that the Office serves the public of New Zealand: it is also one of the largest lending institutions in the country, and takes an important part in maintaining the supply of funds necessary to meet the requirements of an expanding community in its changing conditions and development. Critics have at times implied that moneys coming into the hands of the Public Trustee are diverted from channels which are useful to the community as a whole. This, however, is not the case, and, as the Public Trustee shows in his report, advances are made for the erection of houses by dwellers in the towns, to farmers on the security of their lands, to business men on their city properties, to local bodies, Harbour Boards, Hospital Boards, &c., to finance works of public utility. The funds are thus placed where they will assist the business community and the farming industry, as well as public bodies throughout the country.

6. Under its long-term amortization system of advances, which provides for payment of interest and repayment of principal by means of fixed half-yearly instalments over a given period, a valuable mode of finance is afforded by the