

7. Particulars of the main classes of estates and kindred matters dealt with by the Office are given below.

8. *Wills and Trust Estates*.—This class always forms the most valuable portion of the new business. In the past year it comprised estates and trusts of a value of £4,232,491 out of the total of £6,314,532.

In most of these estates the appointment of the Public Trustee as executor or trustee was made by the testator, settlor, or other interested party after considering the alternative appointments that were open to him. In many of the remaining cases the executor or trustee originally appointed under the trust instrument requested the Public Trustee to act in his stead. The fact that so many persons appoint the Public Trustee executor and trustee or request him to relieve them of their duties as such is a testimony to the confidence reposed in the Office.

9. *Intestate Estates*.—During the year, 563 estates of this class, valued at £344,597, were accepted for administration.

The Public Trustee usually acts in the administration of these estates at the request of the next-of-kin, the distribution of an intestate estate being governed by statute. In many cases, however, it is not known at the time of the acceptance of the estate who are the next-of-kin. Hence it frequently becomes necessary to make extensive inquiries overseas in the search for those entitled to the estate. Due in large measure to the more widespread knowledge that it is advisable to make a will whether the estate to be disposed of is small or large, the volume of new business under this heading does not increase as does the business referred to in paragraph 8.

10. *Agencies*.—It may not be generally known that the Public Trustee is prepared in suitable cases to act under power of attorney for persons desiring to appoint him as their agent, including persons who, for various reasons, wish to relinquish the active management of their affairs. The Public Trustee is frequently appointed the attorney of persons who are proceeding overseas, or who on account of ill-health, advancing years, or for other reasons wish the Public Trustee to manage their business affairs. Executors and administrators overseas also not infrequently appoint the Public Trustee to act as their agent in the administration of the New Zealand assets of persons who were domiciled outside New Zealand at the time of their deaths. A valuable goodwill has been built up as a result of the faithful performance of the duties so entrusted to the Office.

11. *Estates of Persons under Disability*.—Under the Mental Defectives Act, 1911, there devolves upon the Public Trustee the duty of safeguarding the assets of persons (other than Natives) who are patients within the meaning of the Act, provided no committee under the Mental Defectives Act or administrator of the estate under Part III of the Prisons Act, 1908, is in office.

Cases where application is made to the Supreme Court for the appointment of a committee to act in place of the Public Trustee are, however, few in number. In the great majority of cases, therefore, the estate of the patient is administered by the Public Trustee, and even if a committee is in office the Public Trustee is called upon to exercise a general supervision over the administration by the committee.

Unfortunately, the number of these cases shows no tendency to decrease, 480 estates having come under the control of the Office during the past year, with assets valued at £462,493. The total number of such estates under administration as at 31st March, 1939, was 2,404, with assets of a value of £2,747,250.

Under the Aged and Infirm Persons Protection Act, 1912, the Public Trustee may be appointed by the Supreme Court to act as manager of the estate of a person who by reason of advancing years, mental or physical disability, or other cause is unable to manage his affairs. The Act has two objects in view, viz.:—

- (a) To provide an alternative means to that afforded by the Mental Defectives Act, 1911, for protecting the property of persons whose condition is such that, although they are unable to manage their own affairs, it is not necessary to detain them in mental hospitals; and