

and in the Land Valuation Court, which are incidental to the administration of estates in the Office, and generally advise upon such legal matters as are not of such difficulty or importance as to warrant reference to the Office Solicitor.

During the year ended 31st March, 1950, administration was obtained in 2,345 estates, 70 exemplifications of New Zealand grants were sealed, and 20 foreign grants were resealed. Powers of attorney to the number of 41 were prepared for the purpose of obtaining grants of administration overseas, and 79 applications were made to the Supreme Court on various matters relating to estates and trusts.

REPRESENTATION

To meet the convenience of the public and to enable the work of the Office to be carried out with the least possible delay it is necessary for the Public Trustee to be represented throughout the Dominion. At the present time this representation comprises 26 District Public Trustee offices, 22 District Manager offices, 15 part-time offices, and 38 agents, a total of 101 representatives. The organization is extended from time to time when it can be shown that the public interest will be better served by the appointment of additional representatives. During the year under review part-time offices were opened at Norsewood and Kaitangata under the control of the District Public Trustees at Dannevirke and Invercargill respectively.

Representation Overseas.—Since June, 1947, the Public Trustee has been represented in London by an experienced officer seconded from New Zealand. This officer is engaged in the administration of assets in the United Kingdom and in tracing overseas beneficiaries. This service, previously performed by the Office of the High Commissioner for New Zealand, has proved of great benefit to clients of the office.

INSPECTION AND AUDIT

The system in force for the regular inspection of the work at branch offices has been maintained throughout the year. The system covers review of all phases of the Office work, particularly the administration of estates, investment of Office funds, and internal audit checks. The cash transactions are also subject to a supplementary audit by the Government Audit Office. The staffing of the branches and the organization and co-ordination of the work also receive careful consideration in order to promote efficiency and effect economy where desirable.

STAFF

Because of the cost involved in the transfer of officers from one locality to another, every endeavour is made to keep staff movements to a minimum consistent with efficiency. The acute housing shortage in all parts of New Zealand has also added greatly to the problem of arranging the efficient use of the staff available. It is not possible, however, to limit arbitrarily the number of transfers as in many cases officers' promotion depends upon their assuming higher duties in other districts.

During the year under review it was necessary to arrange a considerable number of transfers to replace senior officers who had retired on superannuation, and special efforts were made to effect the transfers more or less contemporaneously so that the officers concerned would have the opportunity of arranging exchanges of houses. This worked reasonably well and resulted in a considerable reduction in the amount which would otherwise have been payable by way of accommodation allowances to officers awaiting housing accommodation.