

(i) The appointment of Mr. C. N. Irvine, District Solicitor, Masterton, to the position of District Solicitor, Dunedin, *vice* Mr. R. Gray.

28. *Rehabilitation*.—As stated in my last report, over five hundred officers of the Department have been in the Armed Forces or were seconded for duty to Departments connected with the country's war effort. A number who were absent with the Services returned to the Department during the year, and a training scheme is in operation to ensure that the gap in their official experience is bridged as speedily and as effectively as possible. The difficulties confronting these officers, who in many cases left for service with the Forces after a comparatively short period in the Office, are fully appreciated, and it is hoped that the arrangements by way of lectures and personal tuition will effectively assist them in overtaking the loss of experience occasioned by their absence with the Armed Forces. It is anticipated that the coming year will throw a greater strain upon the senior officers in the training of returned servicemen, but it is a duty which all officers will willingly undertake.

The scheme evolved within the Office for the training of returned men is simple and effective and will enable personal attention to be given to their training. It is pleasing to report that returned servicemen generally are displaying great keenness to recover the experience and knowledge lost as a result of their absence on military service. In the majority of cases these men, in addition to making special efforts to bring their departmental knowledge and experience up to date, are also studying for either the Accountancy Professional or Law Professional Examinations.

INSPECTIONS AND AUDIT

29. In an organization which covers the whole Dominion it is essential that there should be an effective uniform system of check and supervision throughout the many branches, and this work is dealt with by officers of wide experience and long service.

Although through staff shortages it was necessary to divert the activities of some of the Inspectors to other work for a considerable portion of the year, several branches, including some of the larger ones, were inspected. Comprehensive surveys were made of staffing requirements, organization, and other phases of a general nature. In addition, reviews of estates, which in some cases included farms and businesses in active operation, were carried out.

A system of internal audit in regard to the custody and handling of cash, securities, and other valuables was carried out by specially selected officers at all branches, and the cash transactions were subjected to a supplementary audit by the Government Audit Department.

LEGAL DIVISION

30. The volume of work requiring the attention of the Office Solicitor and the legal staff throughout the Dominion has continued to be heavy and of a very varied nature, but I am pleased to say that it has been promptly and efficiently carried out. In matters relating to trust administration and conveyancing the departmental solicitors have, by reason of the volume handled, a very wide experience. In the large number of estates administered by the Public Trustee every variety of law question has to be dealt with, and, as will be seen from the figures set forth in paragraph 4 of this report, the preparation of wills is of great volume. The experience gained from practical administration matters is valuable in the preparation of wills. With this experience the legal staff of the Department are specially qualified to advise testators upon all matters arising out of the preparation of their wills.

During the year administration was obtained in 2,822 estates. Other Court applications for leave to take necessary steps in the administration, but