

This report was submitted to Controllers of Divisions, and as the outcome all the recommendations made were given effect to.

Following on the introduction of new and improved methods in the Head Office the Board arranged for experienced women officers to visit the District Offices at Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wanganui for the purpose of examining the work of the shorthand-writers and typists, and suggesting improvements where possible.

### ISSUE OF NEW OFFICE HANDBOOK.

A new handbook containing full information regarding the Public Trust Office will shortly be issued.

Opportunity has been taken to bring under the notice of the public the facilities which exist for the appointment of Advisory Trustees to co-operate with the Public Trustee in the administration of estates. The Board is of opinion that these facilities when more widely known will be greatly appreciated by the business and farming communities.

### DELAYS IN ADMINISTRATION.

A disturbing feature which occasioned grave anxiety to the Board was the existence of delays in connection with the administration of estates. This defect was especially apparent in connection with—

- (a.) Replies to correspondence from the public and from the Branch Officers of the Department:
- (b.) The rendering of statements of account to beneficiaries in estates.

These delays have existed for many years past, and were remarked upon in the following terms by the Commission which reported upon the working of the Office in 1913:—

Both as between Head Office and its agencies and as regards third parties, delay in answering correspondence and in rendering accounts are serious and existing defects which cannot be continued. These are due largely to the insufficient manning of the skilled departments, as will be apparent from our subsequent remarks on the Office organization. These defects are, we are assured, in the course of removal, but while they exist they cannot but impair efficient administration. [Report of the Macintosh-Hosking Commission, page 8.]

Some account of the delays which took place in the rendering of statements of account to beneficiaries, and the steps taken by the Board to deal with the matter, will be found under the heading of "Accounts."

Careful and searching investigation by the Board into the correspondence work of the Office showed that the serious delays which existed were largely attributable to three causes, viz.:—

- (a.) The unsatisfactory condition of the record system in the Head Office and at District Offices.
- (b.) The absence of an effective system of check in the Head Office divisions.
- (c.) The constant cross-correspondence and traffic in documents, resulting from the necessity of referring matters from Head Office to District Offices and *vice versa*.

The following paragraphs will indicate the steps taken to remedy these defects.

### IMPROVEMENT OF RECORD SYSTEM.

In the past there has been a tendency to make each of the divisions in the Head Office self-contained. One effect has been to institute separate systems of records for the various divisions. Up to the year 1909 the Office possessed a centralized system of records, but in that year the records were placed in the separate divisions. This action may have resulted in some temporary advantage, but with the large increase in the volume of business it has produced some very unsatisfactory consequences.