

In every case inspections are made at regular intervals by qualified men, and the Board has recently resolved to appoint additional Property Inspectors in the principal centres to ensure that this essential work shall be satisfactorily carried out. It has also arranged for inspections to be made by qualified tradesmen where necessary, and for repairs to be carried out under their supervision.

The Board feels that these facts should be placed on record, particularly in view of certain statements which were made public as the result of inspections carried out under the direction of civic authorities at the time of the influenza epidemic.

CONTROL OF ENEMY PROPERTY.

The scope of the duties imposed upon the Public Trustee from time to time by War Regulations are as follows:—

- (a.) *Custodian of Enemy Property*.—Practically all goods imported from enemy countries into New Zealand and not taken over by the consignors prior to the war have been sold.

Stocks, shares, &c., the property of enemy subjects, have been realized.

All rents, dividends, and interest payable to enemies in respect of any realty, shares, stocks, or debentures in any company incorporated in New Zealand, and interest on moneys lent by enemies, are payable to the Public Trustee. The amount so far collected under this heading is nearly £16,000.

- (b.) *Controller of Enemy Firms*.—Practically all enemy firms in the Dominion have been wound up. Book debts amounting to about £3,000 only remain to be collected.

Amounts collected for goods sold, and money owing to the firms under the Public Trustee's control, reached approximately £105,700.

- (c.) *Custodian of Property of Prisoners of War*.—The assets of the twenty prisoners of war, of which the Public Trustee is custodian, aggregate in value £15,000. They consist mostly of mortgages and farm properties.

Numbers of prisoners are being repatriated and desire their assets to be realized before their departure.

- (d.) *Registration of Claims against the Enemy*.—Claims against the enemy, amounting to nearly £51,000, have been received.

In March, 1919, a notice was published calling for registration of any claims against the Russian Government or its subjects. Only one such claim has been received.

ACCOUNTS.

The accounting-work of the Department has made remarkable progress during the year, and is up to date.

This satisfactory state is chiefly attributable to the consolidation of the accounting staff, the provision of improved accommodation, and the loyal and unremitting exertions of members of the staff.

Centralization of Accounting-work.—In 1918 the accounting-work connected with the administration of estates was withdrawn from the administration divisions where it had hitherto been performed, and was consolidated and placed under the direct control of the Chief Accountant.

A year's experience of the system has demonstrated its usefulness. The consolidation of the work has broken down the barriers which existed between Division and Division, and has permitted the ready exchange of officers to meet special requirements on any of the Divisions.