

## 4. DANNEVIRKE.

The progress of the Office in this district is steady, and as the public becomes more familiar with the scope of its functions further progress will result. During the year these functions have been well advertised through the local Press and so kept constantly before the reading public. The substantial increase in the number of wills is partly attributable to this publicity.

The past year has again been a good one for the sheep-farming community, and some of the Office clients who have had to receive concessions in the past few years have been able to retrieve their position. This has not been so general, however, with the dairy-farmers, some of whom are still feeling the results of high prices for land and stock.

One of the features of the year has been the opening of the new office building in the main street of Dannevirke. This is a handsome two-storied ferro-concrete building. The lighting, air-space, heating, and general appearance and general conveniences of the office are all that can be desired, and provide ideal surroundings for the staff in which to work, and the clients of the office to be attended to. The whole of the building is not occupied by the staff, and a portion is still available for letting purposes. The building has been the subject of much favourable comment locally. Future expansion of business has been provided for, and the site is comparatively central and in the area towards which the town is growing.

The following information shows the progress that is being made and the amount of work handled :—

## Estates under administration—

	Number.	Value. £
On 31st March, 1924 .. .. .	73	224,686
„ 1925 .. .. .	92	238,757

Thirty-one new estates, valued at £29,058, were accepted during the year. Twelve estates were closed and distributed during the year.

One hundred and thirteen wills were executed during the year, of which seventy-three were new wills. The number of new wills the previous year was thirty-five. The total number of wills deposited to the 31st March, 1925, was 472.

Eighteen sinking funds are held for local bodies in this district; the cash now held on their behalf being £17,775, an increase of £3,408 for the year.

The cash receipts were £89,109, and the cash payments £88,570.

The total amount of Common Fund investments in this district is £212,000, being—Flat mortgages, £174,000; local-body debentures, £38,000. In addition, £63,000 has been invested on behalf of special funds controlled by the Head Office, making a total of £275,000.

*Woodville Agency.*—The Office is well represented by the local Agent at Woodville. The number of wills obtained in that district is indicative of the popularity of the Office. This Agency has been visited by me regularly once every month—oftener when necessary.

*Staff.*—The staff was increased during the year by the appointment of two cadets, and now numbers six. One of these cadets was appointed in pursuance of the Office policy of training suitable lads in anticipation of business expansion. All the male members are studying either law or accountancy with the object of further qualifying themselves for the work of the Office. Including the District Public Trustee, there are two qualified accountants at this Branch.

A further step in the decentralization policy has been carried out during the year by the appointment of a Legal Clerk at Palmerston North, who, as part of his duties, has the supervision of the legal work at this Branch. This has relieved the Legal Division at Head Office considerably, and has enabled legal matters to be attended to more expeditiously, owing to the fact that, when required, the Legal Clerk can personally deal with clients either by appointments or otherwise. The work involved has well warranted his attachment to this Branch.

The prospects for the Office are good. Although no large estates have come in during the year, the number and value of the wills held is an indication of future business. The system of inspections carried out by the Office Farm Inspectors commends itself to the public when brought under notice, and the advice that has been given is appreciated both by beneficiaries and lessees, and others directly or indirectly interested. Testators also appreciate the advantage the Office has to offer in the administration of farming estates. By some the appointment of advisory trustees is desired, so that, with the advice of the Farm Inspectors in addition, an estate can have brought to bear upon its administration very practical knowledge.

## 5. DUNEDIN.

*Estates and Funds under Administration.*—For purposes of comparison, particulars are given for the past three years :—

Year.	Estates.	Value. £
Year ended 31st March, 1923 .. .. .	934	1,083,127
„ 1924 .. .. .	1,026	1,228,401
„ 1925 .. .. .	1,110	1,310,647

The steady increase in the volume of work controlled is noticeable.