

Farm Inspector.—The Farm Inspector for the South Island paid a visit to the Coast during the year and inspected several estate properties and mortgage securities in different parts of the district. The Inspector's reports are very helpful to the Branch office, and assist in the administration of the estates concerned.

Results of the Office advertising in the District.—As will be seen from the figures given above, the increase of business for the year was considerable. This was due in no small measure to the beneficial effects of the present method of advertising by the Office. Several instances came under notice of new wills being made and other business attracted to the office as the result of such advertising.

8. HAMILTON.

The district under the control of the Hamilton Branch extends from Taumarunui on the south to Mercer on the north, following the coast-line on the east and adjoining the Taranaki District and coast-line on the west.

To serve this large district one District Manager's office, a part-time office, and thirteen Agencies have been established (under the control of Hamilton), and this organization offers very ready and effective facilities for administration of estates in even the remotest parts—a fact which is appreciated by beneficiaries and others transacting business with the Office.

As an indication of the volume of business now transacted in this district the following figures are appended:—

				At 31st March, 1924.		At 31st March, 1925.	
				Number.	Value. £	Number.	Value. £
Estates (general), wills, &c.	..	..	..	372	657,268	420	692,059
Relief funds	..	..	..	1	805	1	42
Sinking funds	..	..	..	325	130,976	364	173,212
Miscellaneous	..	..	..	41	13,392	46	18,158
Investment Agencies	..	..	..	7	6,464	30	20,805
Totals	..	..	..	746	£808,905	861	£904,276

				Number.	Value. £
Estates (general) accepted during the year (other than sinking funds)	..	..	..	170	250,643
Estates closed during the year	..	..	..	88	51,574
Cash receipts for the year	..	..	..	..	351,275
Payments for the year	..	..	..	..	351,113
Realizations for the year	..	..	..	..	50,613

Wills.—230 wills were deposited during the year, the total value of the assets involved being £784,000.

Investments in the district—

				£
Common fund investments—				
Mortgage	..	..	..	1,152,160
Local-body debentures	..	..	..	1,283,068
Investments for other funds administered by the Office—				
Mortgages	..	..	..	385,661
Local-body debentures	..	..	..	126,322
Total investments	..	..	..	£2,947,211

Twenty-eight new loans and further advances granted during the year total over £100,000.

Throughout the year very steady progress has been made in all departments of the Office, due to the functions of the Office becoming more widely known, the efficient administration, and the loyalty and co-operation of the staff and the Office Agents. The revenue for the year is a record for this Branch.

Office Accommodation.—With the growth of business the present accommodation has proved inadequate. A new three-storied building in the main street has been erected and is nearing completion. The ground floor, capable of accommodating thirty officers or more, will be sufficient for immediate needs, and the first and second floors will be let as offices. Special heating arrangements, a lift, and strong-room accommodation are provided, and a special feature will be the inauguration of a safe-deposit system in the vaults, whereby any persons requiring a place for their deeds and securities can rent for a small fee a steel locker, to which they will have access during office hours. The building should be ready for occupation shortly after Easter.

Staff.—The staff now numbers twenty-four.

Conditions obtaining in the District.—During the year a marked improvement has been in evidence, due to the good average prices obtained for the dairy-produce and the exceptional prices for wool. Butter, however, towards the end of the year has shown a decided drop. As against this the season has been an exceptional one, and the output was much increased. The year has been a difficult one from a realization point of view, but several properties were realized at satisfactory prices. The uncertainty of the position with regard to the moratorium has been a large factor in the restricted sales, but with the raising of the moratorium a much healthier tone should prevail and increased confidence in land generally should result.