

New Wills.—The number deposited during the year surpassed all records, and reached 670. There has been a steady increase year by year, and the future can be looked forward to with confidence. The total number of wills deposited by living testators is 5,789.

Agencies.—Steady progress in the districts served by the Agents at Pukekohe and Helensville continues. The prospects for future business are bright, and the question of extending the Office representation is now under consideration.

Staff.—At present the staff numbers fifty-three, an increase of six juniors for the year. The training of juniors has received careful attention, as it is imperative that ample provision be made for the steady expansion of the Office. Classes have been continued and lectures delivered regularly on the practical aspects of the work of the Office. Also, every encouragement is given to officers to attend the University, and the great majority have either qualified or are studying law or accountancy. This policy is bound to result in increased efficiency on the part of the staff.

Farm Inspector.—The value of the services and practical knowledge of the Farm Inspector to those estates where there are country properties or securities is particularly evident at the present time, in view of the difficulties experienced by farmers, lessees, and mortgagors. As far as possible all estate properties or mortgage securities are visited by the Assistant District Public Trustee or myself, and the personal knowledge gained has been of decided benefit in handling such assets.

General.—Generally speaking the year has been one of steady progress, and more rapid expansion in the future can confidently be looked for. It is recognized that the Office can expand only if a high standard of efficiency in its work is maintained. So long as its clients are satisfied that their interests are being thoroughly and efficiently safeguarded, then its business is bound to extend at an ever-increasing rate.

2. BLENHEIM.

The following information is supplied :—

Estates and funds under administration—

	Number.	Value. £
On 31st March, 1924	136	163,722
„ 1925	171	265,604

New estates accepted during the year—

Wills	7	12,816
Trusts and Agencies	6	6,022
Intestates	12	2,207
Mental Patients	4	5,541
Investment Agencies	18	14,606
Miscellaneous	3	73,086
	50	114,278

Estates closed and distributed during the year	15	3,860
Wills deposited during the year	59	..
Total number of wills deposited to 31st March, 1925	523	..
Sinking funds in district	33	16,117
Securities held .. .. .	..	6,072
Cash receipts .. .. .	..	136,431
Cash payments .. .. .	..	136,118
Total amount of Common Fund investments in the district—		
Flat mortgages .. .. .	..	400,619
Local body debentures .. .. .	..	73,761
Loans granted during the year .. .. .	..	117,110

The Marlborough Provincial District is a scattered one; though most of the back country is hilly and mountainous the province is noted for the fertility of its plains, and is an excellent wool-producing district. Many of its settlers are old-established, and property has not changed hands to the extent that it has in the North Island. Consequently the district is in a sound financial condition, and there are few instances where property has been bought at an overvalue. There are many wealthy farmers in the district, and there is also a considerable class of people in comfortable circumstances who have retired and settled in Blenheim and the surrounding district.

I am satisfied that there is ample scope for the development of the Office. The farmers and business men are being favourably impressed with the Office methods and the expedition with which its work is carried out. This can only mean that eventually new business must come into the Office.

The value of the estates and funds under administration on the 31st March, 1925, is £265,604, compared with £163,722 for the previous year.

The new Office building is an architectural feature of the town, and is in itself an excellent advertisement for the Office.

The advertisements in the local paper are also effective, bringing before the public the usefulness and scope of the facilities offered by the Office.

There has recently been a number of inquiries as to the services the Office performs, and I am confident that new business will steadily increase.