

Rider A.

Year.		Number of New Estates.	Net Increase in Total Business. £
1906	...	136	330,510
1907	...	149	356,129
1908	...	270	194,998
1909	...	302	504,507
1910	...	298	299,110
1911	...	440	453,573
1912	...	430	362,456

Further, the number of well-founded complaints received by us is exceedingly small in comparison with the number of estates administered or in course of administration and the variety of the factors to be dealt with.

As a set off, the Public Trustee produced to us letters from various persons expressing their thanks for, and appreciation of, the manner in which their business had been attended to.

At the same time, having regard to the insufficiency of the staff, hereafter discussed, and to the varying business capacities of the Agents (in the back-blocks, for small estates, the local policeman is the realizing agent), we cannot say that the administration is as efficient as it could be made to be.

In administering wholesale in so many places through such a variety of agencies errors of judgment and want of attention are bound to occur, and the office cannot claim that in some instances it may not be justly charged with those faults.

The following table shows how small a sum has fallen upon the office by way of compensation for losses caused to estates during the past seven years :—

Date.	Estate.	Amount paid to compensate for Loss.	Remarks.
		£ s. d.	
2/8/1906	Wills 1, W.N.A. ..	21 3 2	Amount erroneously paid in full on an estate which only paid a dividend of 3s. 2d. in the £.
11/2/1908	Wills 11, W.T. ..	40 0 0	Compensation for sale of land below reserve price.
30/7/1908	Wills 1, C.D. ..	150 0 0	Loss to estate owing to fire breaking out in building nine hours after insurance expired.

This table is also evidence of careful administration.

Delays.

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 denied. 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.

A further defect which will doubtless be to some extent removed by the appointment of inspecting officers (Mr. Barnett being the first) is the insufficient inspection of the various house and other properties under the office control. The need of this has been long realized, but the insufficiency of the staff has been the excuse for its non-adoption.

Finding.

Subject to the foregoing remarks, it can be said with confidence, for the assurance of those who have, or propose to have, dealings with the Public Trust, that the office system and methods provide with the greatest care for safeguarding, controlling, and scrupulously accounting for any estate placed in its charge.