from that fund. The more the office undertakes or is loaded with unremunerative work the prospect of the rate of income being increased or maintained correspondingly decreases. We think each estate should bear more of its own charges. For example, the office pays the Post Office £1,147 per annum for exchange made up of small sums on the transmission of money. Why should the Common Fund bear this and those interested escape? Further, the legal work done for each estate which does not consist of the indoor advising of the Public Trustee should be charged for according to a scale, however small, calculated to make good the cost of it to the office.

Further, when Parliament casts duties on the Public Trustee, we respectfully suggest that care should be taken to provide adequate remuneration therefor, and, where possible, he should be consulted beforehand on that point. In a recent case, duties imposed under the "Washing-up" Act in connection with a Native Trust have involved an expenditure of about £200 out of the office funds without any immediate prospect of recovery.

Fixed Deposits.

With a view to increasing the profits derivable from the investment of common funds and to the possibility of attracting estates to the office upon death, the practice has grown up during the past two or three years of taking moneys on deposit. The Act does not allow of this in terms, but it is deemed to be legalized by the Public Trustee taking an agreement from the depositor constituting the Public Trustee the depositor's agent for the sole and particular purpose of investing the sum deposited, the Public Trustee undertaking to allow interest at 4 per cent. per annum. This, we think, is an abuse of the statutory power to act as agent. The Public Trust Office converts itself into a bank of deposit. There are 178 deposits of this nature, aggregating £139,569. These accounts are included under the head of "Wills and Trusts" in the Public Trust balance-sheet. They ought to be separately specified under an appropriate heading.

Inspection.

Hitherto it has been considered part of the duty of the Deputy Public Trustee to periodically inspect branches and agencies. The pressure of work during the past two or three years has been such that this has been impracticable. This is very essential work, and we are glad to be able to say that Mr. Barnett, late District Manager at Christchurch, has been appointed Inspector, whose duty will comprise not only the office inspection of branches and agencies, but a supervision of the various properties under the control of the office. From many personal interviews with Mr. Barnett on various questions, we have formed the opinion that he is a capable and enthusiastic officer. There should be no hesitation in appointing one or more additional Inspectors if it is found (as we think it will be) that one is insufficient. Expert knowledge in farming and stock should not be lost sight of in making these appointments.

Custody of Securities.

This appears to be all that can be desired. Under the provisions of the Public Revenues Act, 1910, section 96, all the securities have to be kept by three officials, each of whom holds a key. These are—(1) The Audit officer appointed by the Controller and Auditor-General; (2) the Accountant of the Public Trust Office; and (3) the Public Trustee. So that it is only with the active concurrence of these three officials that securities can be got out of the safe. There is one exception that we think may well be made to this careful provision. The certificates of title deeds to mortgages and trust properties are daily and constantly required either for use in the office or for production to the mortgagors or their agents on the occasion of further dealings and otherwise. A great amount of the time of valuable officers is thus absorbed daily in what is mere detail work, for even if the titles were stolen or lost no great harm would be done where they were registered. We therefore suggest that these titles—not in any case the mortgages themselves—should be placed in the