

had not at that date learnt whether damage or injury had been inflicted on his property, rights, or interests, or under Article 305 where the decision is given at a later date. It should be noted that the claimants are entitled to present their claims under Article 296 to the Mixed Arbitral Tribunal as soon as they are contested, while under Article 297 memorials can be lodged without waiting for the decision of the Clearing Offices. The decisions of the Tribunal are final and conclusive. The place and time of sitting are determined by the President of the Tribunal. Sittings are held in public.

The Anglo-Austrian, Anglo-Hungarian, and Anglo-Bulgarian Tribunals have also been constituted, and have separate rules of procedure, which, although not identical in form, contain no material differences. The headquarters of all the Tribunals are at Winchester House, 21 St. James's Square, London S.W. 1.

66. On the 15th August, 1921, the Secretary of the Central Clearing Office, London, advised that the Anglo-German Mixed Arbitral Tribunal had agreed to consider an application by the Central Clearing Office for an extension of time in a large number of cases, in view of the fact that endeavours to negotiate settlement of these claims are being made with the German authorities. It was further stated that the rules of procedure of this Tribunal provided that the date for lodging with the Tribunal claims by residents in the United Kingdom was the 16th November, 1921. The 1st October was therefore fixed as the last date upon which claims could be lodged with the Central Clearing Office to give sufficient time for the preparation of a list of all claims received in order that, where necessary, an extension of time could be obtained. In those cases in which claimants have not deposited their claims with the Central Clearing Office by the 1st October they will have to prosecute their own cases before the Mixed Arbitral Tribunal, in accordance with the rules of procedure, which provide, *inter alia*, that memorials in support of claims should be lodged with the Tribunal within twelve months from the date of the publication of the rules in the place where the claimant resides. A notice was published in the *New Zealand Gazette* No. 97, dated 17th November, last, advising that the 15th December, 1921, was the latest date on which claims could be submitted through the New Zealand Clearing Office by British nationals residing in New Zealand for the proceeds of liquidation of property in Germany. It was further announced that it will be necessary for claimants who had not thus submitted their claims to the New Zealand Clearing Office by the 15th December, 1921, to prosecute their own cases before the Anglo-German Mixed Arbitral Tribunal, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Tribunal, a copy of which was published in the *New Zealand Gazette* Extraordinary, No. 13, dated 10th February, 1921.

CERTIFICATE FOR THE ISSUE OF MONEY-ORDERS PAYABLE IN GERMANY.

67. In paragraph 18 of my previous report it was stated that in order to prevent breaches of the Treaty of Peace Order, 1920, or of the War Regulations Continuance Act, 1920, in regard to the settlement of pre-war debts or the transfer of German property, the Secretary of the Post and Telegraph Department had arranged with the Public Trustee, as Custodian of Enemy Property, to examine applications for the issue of money-orders payable in Germany, and to grant permits if the remittance was not prohibited by law. During the year further instructions have been issued by the Postal Department under which permits issued by the Public Trustee are no longer necessary for the issue of money-orders payable in Germany.

CONCLUSION.

68. A summary of the more important despatches and communications from the Imperial authorities which have not been referred to specially in the foregoing report will be found in the appendix.

69. The duties connected with the management and disposal of property seized in pursuance of the War Regulations, and with the settlement of claims by and against British nationals in New Zealand through the medium of the Clearing Office, have proved to be onerous and exacting, both on account of the involved nature of many of the transactions and also on account of the reluctance on the part of some debtors to settle obligations for (as they imagine) the benefit of ex-enemy subjects. In the absence of any precedents for many of the matters dealt with the most watchful care has been called for in order that the interests of the Government and of British nationals under the various Treaties of Peace may be fully conserved, and, at the same time, that any undue hardship upon debtors may be avoided.

The readjustment of rights of property and of the settlement of mutual debts after so long an interruption of commercial relations through the operation of a state of war is a matter of almost world-wide difficulty, and the difficulty is increased by the disorganization of trade and commerce which has followed upon the upheaval in international relations as a result of the war. In many cases the position has been complicated by the question of nationality, since the old national boundaries of Europe have been profoundly modified as the result of the various Treaties of Peace.

It is now apparent that the settlement of pre-war debts between the subjects of the Allied and Associated Powers and the subjects of the ex-enemy States is likely to be protracted, especially where, as in the case of our own Dominion, the time which elapses in communicating with the Enemy Clearing Office is considerable.

Special attention is now being given to the closing of all enemy property accounts where possible. Fair progress in this direction has been made during the past few months, and in many cases the Office is only waiting the decision of the Central Clearing Office in London on questions of policy to dispose of many other cases which will be governed by the decisions given.