

have been had normal times been experienced. The present conditions restricted the amount of cash available for investment, and helped to reduce the profits earned.

7. It is pleasing to record that the complaints received have been few in number and confined to matters of a minor nature. On the other hand, many clients and beneficiaries have written expressing their appreciation of the Office administration, and their satisfaction with the results obtained by the Public Trustee in the estates with which they are concerned.

8. The Office possesses a highly qualified staff, including fourteen graduates of the University—ten in law, three in arts, and one in commerce. There are twelve barristers, forty-six solicitors, and sixty qualified accountants in the employ of the Office. The presence of these officers on the staff is an assurance that the technical side of the Department's work will be adequately dealt with.

9. Important provisions have been enacted by the Mental Defectives Amendment Act, 1921–22. Among the changes introduced is a provision entitling the public officer administering mental patients' estates in any British possession to which the Act is made to apply, to appoint the Public Trustee of New Zealand to administer assets in New Zealand of a patient resident in such British possession. A reciprocal right to call on the services of such public officer in any British possession is in like circumstances given the Public Trustee when a patient is resident in this country.

It is also enacted that when the Act is specially extended to England or any other part of the Empire, Court orders made in such country relating to mental patients' estates may be sealed in New Zealand and have the same operation as if made by the Courts here. In like cases orders of the New Zealand Supreme Court may be made effective in other parts of the British dominions.

Up to the present the provisions have been availed of in the case of Victoria.

The system will assist greatly in cases where the Public Trustee is called on to administer the affairs of a mental defective who has assets in another jurisdiction.

10. One of the most popular provisions in the law regulating the work of the Public Trust Office is that contained in the Public Trust Office Amendment Act, 1913, permitting of the appointment of one or more advisory trustees to co-operate with the Public Trustee in the administration of estates. This provision represents an important modification of the general principle that the Public Trustee cannot act as trustee in conjunction with any other person. Testators are showing an increasing tendency to avail themselves of the provision by appointing their solicitors, kinsfolk, friends, or business associates in an advisory capacity to assist the Public Trustee in the administration of their estates.

The system generally has worked well. It enables a testator to secure the benefits of the State guarantee for his estate, and at the same time makes it possible for him to enlist the special knowledge or experience which will prove of use in the administration of his estate.

Important changes in the law to permit of the better working of the system have been made by the Public Trust Office Amendment Act, 1921–22.

11. In recent years there has been a prevailing tendency on the part of Judges of the Supreme Court to appoint the Public Trustee to represent the interests of certain parties when applications are made to the Court by private trustees in connection with estates under administration.

The position of the Public Trustee in such cases has hitherto been somewhat anomalous and ill-defined, and opportunity was taken when the Public Trust Office Amendment Act, 1921–22, was drafted to provide that the Public Trustee could be appointed by the Supreme Court to represent the interests of any party to any proceedings, or any class of persons interested, such as infants, absentees, or other persons who, through disability or otherwise, could not themselves properly protect their interests.

12. The Public Trust Office affords an excellent mode of investment for trust funds of friendly-society lodges, and similar institutions. In several cases this course has been adopted by friendly societies in order to avoid the inconvenience occasioned through frequent changes of trustees. The system is one which will, no doubt, commend itself to other institutions as soon as it becomes more widely known.