

As already stated, Mr. Woodward was a Treasury officer at the date of his appointment to the position of Public Trustee.

Mr. R. C. Hamerton, prior to his appointment, held the position of Secretary for Stamps, which position was for a time amalgamated with that of Public Trustee.

Mr. J. K. Warburton was transferred to the position of Public Trustee from the Post and Telegraph Department.

Mr. J. C. Martin relinquished the position of Stipendiary Magistrate at Wellington to take up the position of Public Trustee, and at the termination of his period of office as Public Trustee was appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court.

Mr. J. W. Poynton was previously Stipendiary Magistrate at Invercargill, and on leaving the Public Trust Office became Secretary to the Treasury.

Dr. F. Fitchett came to the Public Trust Office from the position of Solicitor-General, and on relinquishing his appointment entered into the private practice of his profession.

Mr. Robert Triggs was formerly Assistant Public Service Commissioner of the Dominion, his appointment as Public Trustee terminating on his death on the 12th November, 1920.

Mr. J. W. Macdonald, the present holder of the position, was formerly Office Solicitor of the Public Trust Office, and later Assistant Public Trustee.

A return prepared by the Public Trustee in 1885 and submitted to the Hon. Colonial Treasurer sets out interesting particulars regarding the early staff of the Office.

The first person to be appointed in addition to the Public Trustee was Mr. Charles D. de Castro, who was appointed as Chief Clerk at a salary of £300 per annum on the 1st November, 1873.

On the 1st October, 1880, Mr. John C. Moginie was appointed as Accountant at a salary of £300 per annum.

Further officers were appointed in May, 1881, June, 1882, April and November, 1883, and December, 1884. By the end of April, 1885, the staff of the Office consisted of fourteen officers, with salaries totalling £3,440 per annum.

By the year 1891 the staff had increased from fourteen to twenty-six, and by the year 1896 it had reached the total number of thirty-eight.

The steady increase in the volume of work performed by the Office was reflected in the staff increases, and by the year 1905 fifty-one officers were in the employ of the Department.

The table printed below will indicate the growth of staff year by year since 1908 :—

Year.	No. of Staff.	Year.	No. of Staff.	Year.	No. of Staff.
1908	98	1913	182	1918	426
1909	103	1914	206	1919	529
1910	112	1915	237	1920	646
1911	138	1916	278	1921	678
1912	160	1917	321	1922	557

The large increases of staff during the war period are accounted for by the necessity of replacing a large number of the skilled staff of the Department with temporary officers who were largely unfamiliar with the work. The staff was also increased as a result of the large amount of work undertaken in the administration of soldiers' estates and agencies.

The problem of staffing the Office has been a difficult one throughout the whole of its history, owing to the shortage of competent men trained in the work of administering estates. This matter was referred to by the Public Trustee, Mr. J. K. Warburton, in his report for the year 1893, and the following extract from his remarks will be of interest :—

"The change which the staff of the Office has undergone in consequence of the increase in business and of the transfers and retirements has rendered necessary clerical assistance for which permanent officers of the Civil Service and of the required qualifications were unavailable on account of the exigencies of their Departments, or because the salaries of such officers were higher than this Office could afford. There has therefore been no course but to appoint temporary or extra clerks, and in the selection of these preference has been given, all other things being equal, to men who, having previously been employed in other branches of the Service, have the necessary qualifications."

The first appointment of Deputy Public Trustee—an appointment required to afford the necessary relief to the Public Trustee from the pressure of the business which demanded his personal attention—was made on the 4th November, 1895. The position continued to be occupied until the year 1917, when the passing of the Public Trust Office Amendment Act of that year abolished the position of Deputy Public Trustee.

ROYAL COMMISSIONS.

During its history the working and management of the Public Trust Office has been twice specially investigated by Royal Commissions, firstly in 1891, and secondly in 1912. Its system, in common with other Government Departments, was also investigated early in 1912 by a Commission set up to inquire into and report on the methods adopted in the Public Service, particularly with reference to book-keeping, accounting, custody of securities, and the receipt and expenditure of money.

Royal Commission of 1891.

Prior to 1891 the activities of the Office were very much impeded by the inelastic legislation governing it. The Public Trustee's powers in connection with the administration of estates were too restricted to enable the work to be carried out efficiently and expeditiously.