

- (10.) The progress made with the disposal of enemy property and the settlement of debts between British and German nationals. These duties are discharged by the Public Trustee as Controller of the New Zealand Clearing-office, and will form the subject of a special report to Parliament.
- (11.) The uniformly favourable reports from District Officers of the Department showing the progress made by the Office throughout the Dominion.
- (12.) The deposit of 4,383 additional wills with the Public Trustee for safe custody, making the total number on deposit on the 31st March, 1923, 35,502.
- (13.) The completion of modern office buildings at Gisborne, Masterton, and Napier, and the progress made with the erection of new buildings at Blenheim, Christchurch, and Timaru.
- (14.) The proposed erection of a large and well-equipped building at Whangarei to accommodate the Public Trust Office staff and the staffs of other Government Departments located in the town.
- (15.) The introduction of savings totalling £10,367 per annum in addition to the savings of £54,516 per annum reported last year.

12. I am satisfied that the Office is now in good order, and that reliable and dependable service is being given to all those persons who are concerned with estates under administration by the Public Trustee. The losses incurred in the administration of estates and written off during the year amounted to the small sum of £100 12s. 1d. only.

During the year which has just closed there have been brought under my notice numerous expressions of appreciation by beneficiaries and others as to the prompt and satisfactory handling of estate matters by the Public Trust Office. The absence of complaints from beneficiaries and others has been a marked feature of the year's work. The few complaints received were satisfactorily disposed of.

J. G. COATES,
Minister in Charge of the Public Trust Office.

Wellington, 11th June, 1923.

REPORT ON THE WORKING OF THE PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1923.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit a report on the working of the Public Trust Office for the year ended 31st March, 1923.

1. It is pleasing to record that the most acute phase of the recent financial depression is now past, and that the work of the Office is reverting to a more normal state. The increase in the net profit, from £10,691 and £11,053 for 1920–21 and 1921–22 respectively to £58,700 for the year just closed, is a measure of the improvement which has taken place.

2. The special work arising from the war and from the epidemic outbreak of influenza in 1918 has now been disposed of, and the business which is being transacted represents the normal extent of the work of the Office independently of those special factors which have served to increase it abnormally during the last few years.

3. The staff has been substantially reduced in numbers, as will appear from the figures appearing on a later page of this report. It is, however, fully capable of coping with the business at present in hand, and the future requirements of the Office have been provided for by appointing additional cadets for training purposes.