

nomination of valuers to be employed by the Board, the question whether it is practicable, and, if so, desirable, to adopt standard values for stock for loan purposes; the question of keeping current accounts for borrowers; and other matters of a similar nature. Considerable assistance has been derived by the Board from the advice tendered by district boards on these subjects. A number of suggestions have been received from time to time from the district boards upon matters affecting the Board's policy, the procedure in regard to loans or matters of detail, and much benefit has been derived by the Board from suggestions placed before it in this manner.

The various district boards have been called together as frequently as necessitated by the business requiring to be transacted in the districts under their control. Economy of administration has been observed, and in cases where the business to be dealt with by district boards does not warrant the expense of a special meeting the views and recommendations of the members are obtained by correspondence. A considerable saving of travelling-expenses is effected in this manner.

It is only fitting that the fullest recognition should be given to the services rendered by the district boards, the close consideration which they have given to the matters placed before them, and the active interest shown by the members in promoting the Board's business. The success of the Board's activities will depend to a very material degree upon the manner in which the district boards operate, and the experience of the Board up to the present indicates that with the district boards its interests are in very capable hands.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND DETAIL WORK.

10. It was recognized when the legislation was first contemplated that the nature of the Board's operations would call for extensive representation throughout the Dominion, and the alternatives were to provide for the establishment of a separate organization for the conduct of the work or to utilize some suitable existing organization. The latter course was favoured, and the Act made provision for the Board, with the consent of the proper authority, to utilize the services of any Department of State in the conduct of its operations. The Public Trust Office was selected as the most suitable medium for the Board to function through, and mutually satisfactory arrangements were made for the Office to act as agent of the Board in the performance of the detail work. The Public Trust Office acts simply as the agent for the Board for the carrying-out of the policy laid down by it and the performance of the clerical and detail work involved, and beyond this and the fact that its district representatives are the local officers of the Board, it is not identified in any manner with the scheme, and has no other responsibility for or control over the operations of the Board. All expenses and charges incurred directly in the administration of the system are charged direct to the Board's account, and for the services rendered by the Public Trust Office or the expenses incurred by it for which it is not practicable to make a charge direct to the Board it is proposed to make a suitable comprehensive payment annually.

It is considered that the arrangements made provide the most economical method of conducting the Board's business. Not only would the cost of setting up a separate organization throughout the Dominion have amounted to a considerable sum, but there would also have been a certain amount of delay in launching the scheme. Again, the impossibility of knowing in advance in which districts the scheme would make the greatest progress would have made it difficult to decide upon a scheme of local representation which would have been adequate without being unnecessarily expensive in some districts.

Apart from the Public Trustee, who, as stated, is the principal executive member of the Board, with the designation of "Commissioner of Rural Intermediate Credit," and Mr. J. Snell, the Deputy Commissioner, the following officers at the Head Office of the Public Trust Office are among the chief executive officers of the Board, their duties being in addition to those undertaken by them as officers of the Public Trust Office:—

Mr. W. M. Barr, Chief Accountant of the Public Trust Office, who acts as Chief Accountant to the Board.

Mr. C. E. Cole, Assistant Solicitor to the Public Trust Office, who acts as Solicitor to the Board.