

to many of the agents, I am of opinion that the time has arrived when this office should be represented in the districts about to be mentioned by gentlemen holding a position in the Civil Service of the colony, and paid such a salary as will induce them to give their whole time to the development of business and the enlargement of the sphere of usefulness of the institution. But the salary should not be the only inducement. In order to call forth the full energy of the men selected for these positions there should be a small commission allowed on all business transacted, by which the officer might reap the benefit of increased exertion. The terms of remuneration of the officer holding the position of district agent at Christchurch are as follows: Salary, £250; commission, $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. on all receipts, excluding the capital fund of all trusts placed in the office or transferred to the Public Trustee, and all moneys upon which no charge is made by the office. It is calculated that the commission earned by him during the first year will increase his income by £60 or £70. In addition to this he is allowed one guinea upon every trust transferred to, or will provisionally accepted by, the office, if effected by his influence or agency. I hand you a copy of the instructions issued to him on his appointment. Mr. Hamilton's district, unlike all the others, is territorially defined—i.e., the Provincial District of Canterbury. It follows that the existing agency at Timaru must cease as an independent agency. It will hereafter be carried on as a sub-agency of Christchurch. To enable Mr. Hamilton to personally superintend the duties devolving upon him in any part of his district contiguous to the railway-line, he has been furnished with an annual ticket which enables him to travel at any time between Hurunui and Waitaki—the boundaries of his district. It is hoped that the opportunity thus afforded of frequent intercourse with clients and the public generally in the country districts, his presence in various localities inspecting securities, supervising the realisation of estates, inquiring into the wants and wishes of widows, the requirements of orphans, and the interests and welfare of the beneficiaries generally, will in due time arouse an interest in the office which will in the near future lead to a much larger business in that district. I am of opinion that the principle recognised by his appointment should be applied to other districts of the colony as soon as the Public Trustee is prepared with suitable men for appointment, a necessary qualification for which should be a service in the Head Office for a period of at least twelve months, insuring a knowledge of office practice and requirements. An experience of eleven years, nearly, as head of the office, has convinced me that gentlemen who have served an apprenticeship in the office, and are otherwise possessed of business knowledge, will prove of greater service in the building-up of a sound connection than the average agent without such training, seeing that the former is possessed of the mind of the department, which is a sure guide to his actions, whilst the latter without such qualification is, to some extent, labouring at a disadvantage. On various occasions it has become necessary to despatch one of the staff to relieve or supersede an agent, and I have always found the duties of the relieving officer to have been satisfactorily performed.

SIR,—

Public Trust Office, Wellington, 26th February, 1891.

I have the honour to inform you that you have been appointed District Agent of the Public Trustee at Christchurch from the 1st proximo.

The salary of the office has been fixed at £250 per annum, with an allowance of $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. on all receipts upon which percentage is charged by the office, the allowance to be paid quarterly. In addition to this, a fee of £1 1s. for every new trust introduced by your exertions, and £1 1s. for every will forwarded by you for provisional acceptance. These terms are liable to revision after four years as the Colonial Treasurer may direct, and are, of course, always subject to the will of Parliament.

Your district comprises the Provincial District of Canterbury, and includes the present agency of Timaru, the agent at which place will be dispensed with as from the 1st April next. The arrangements necessary for taking over his work, records, and paraphernalia are left to your judgment and discretion.

To enable you to move about your district with celerity, and thus personally to superintend the varied business of the office, an annual railway-ticket has been obtained, and is herewith enclosed. This ticket is available on the Hurunui—Bluff line, between the northernmost station and Waitaki, the boundary of your district.

As frequent absence from your office in Christchurch will be entailed by necessary visits to various localities, a cadet will be appointed to assist you in carrying on the duties of your office.

Suitable premises have been secured for an office in the Post-office Buildings, of which you will at once take possession, and upon the windows of which you will cause to be painted in large gilt characters the words, "Public Trust Office—District Agent." You will take over from the present agent all records, books, stationery, and paraphernalia belonging to this department on the 2nd proximo, and will take from this office such a supply of forms, &c., as will probably suffice for twelve months, sending in quarterly thereafter requisitions for such articles as you may want.

You will observe the system of record now in vogue in this office, and insure that due and punctual entries are made in all books required to be kept.

As regards loans of money upon mortgage of freehold property, it is felt that a much larger business should be done. You will afford every facility and information to persons seeking advances, assisting them where necessary to fill in the necessary forms, and satisfying yourself that they are properly completed. Cause it to be widely known that no procuration fee is chargeable, and that the mortgage deeds are drawn by the local office solicitor according to an agreed scale, which should be explained to applicants.

With reference generally to persons applying for information or assistance either in placing a trust in the office, making out a claim against an estate, or otherwise howsoever, it should be your earnest endeavour never to permit a client or inquirer to leave the office unsatisfied. Even at great sacrifice of time, patience, or personal convenience a ready help should invariably be afforded to all classes. Only by this course can the office hope to earn the respect and esteem of all.

You will bear in mind that you are appointed to a district as to which it may safely be averred that ten times the business now transacted can be readily secured by ordinary courtesy, attention, and business aptitude; and whilst on this subject I would remark that it is expected that a large increase take place during the current year and in each succeeding year, otherwise it will be incumbent upon the department to make other arrangements.

A beneficial result is confidently looked for in the power which you possess of rapidly visiting numerous parts of your district by rail, and personally inquiring into and directing business, as well as interviewing persons interested—widows, trustees, claimants, auctioneers, and others—bringing you into personal contact with large numbers of people, and thus affording you many opportunities of explaining the numerous advantages characteristic of the office.

With the view of enabling you to pay preferential claims in estates in which there are assets sufficient to meet them in addition to administration charges, a sufficient imprest advance will be made to you. You will carefully note that nothing is to be paid out of this other than funeral expenses, fees for swearing affidavits, and undoubted