

The number and the estimated value of the estates in the Public Trust Office on the 31st December in each of the years 1890 to 1893, and on the 31st March in each of the years 1895 and 1896, were as follows:—

NUMBER AND VALUE OF ESTATES IN PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE.

Class.	Number of Estates.					
	On 31st Dec., 1890.	On 31st Dec., 1891.	On 31st Dec., 1892.	On 31st Dec., 1893.	On 31st March, 1895.	On 31st March, 1896.
Wills and trusts (including Sinking Fund Accounts)	288	343	354	371	392	447
Intestate estates	752	794	845	868	850	812
Real estates	109	114	117	117	113	91
Lunatic estates	137	181	202	271	335	434
Native reserves	99	100	101	102	103	107
West Coast Settlement Reserves	293	293	293	293	293	293
Unclaimed lands .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	52
Totals	1,678	1,825	1,912	2,022	2,086	2,236

Class.	Value of Estates.					
	On 31st Dec., 1890.	On 31st Dec., 1891.	On 31st Dec., 1892.	On 31st Dec., 1893.	On 31st March, 1895.	On 31st March, 1896.
Wills and trusts (including Sinking Fund Accounts)	£ 418,047	£ 415,160	£ 442,671	£ 543,239	£ 586,814	£ 673,478
Intestate estates	75,305	83,381	81,650	84,436	80,287	86,132
Real estates	23,496	24,190	22,706	23,465	22,462	14,686
Lunatic estates	32,918	34,913	40,380	51,278	72,706	73,995
Native reserves	340,869	344,692	346,499	348,500	350,000	350,000
West Coast Settlement Reserves	349,462	350,289	350,839	400,000	450,000	600,000
Unclaimed lands .. .. .	..	..	..	..	..	8,662
Totals	1,240,097	1,252,625	1,284,755	1,450,918	1,562,269	1,806,953

WILLS AND TRUSTS.—Excluding the Gisborne Harbour Board Sinking Fund Account, of which the balance at credit amounted to £10,962 10s. 11d., and the Government Loans to Local Bodies Sinking Fund Account, with a balance of £85,259 1s. 3d., there are included under the heading of “Wills and Trusts” in the foregoing return fifteen other sinking-fund accounts, of which the Public Trustee is Commissioner under the authority of section 206 of “The Municipal Corporations Act, 1896.” The aggregate balance at the credit of these fifteen accounts had accumulated on the 31st of March, 1896, to £26,061 16s. 3d.

The Government Loans to Local Bodies Sinking Fund was established by section 6 of “The Government Loans to Local Bodies Act 1886 Amendment Act, 1892,” and was opened on the 9th December, 1892, and the transactions in this account have been as follows:—

Received						
During the Year ended 31st March.			From Consolidated Fund.	From Land Assurance Fund.	From Interest.	Balance at Credit of Account at close of Year.
			£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1893	...	...	14,000 0 0	7,015 11 9	...	21,015 11 9
1894	...	...	20,528 19 7	4,494 1 5	1,058 16 0	26,081 17 0
1895	...	...	11,406 13 7	3,802 4 6	2,148 0 7	17,356 18 8
1896	...	...	13,384 18 0	4,461 12 7	2,958 3 3	20,804 13 10
Totals	...	...	59,320 11 2	19,773 10 3	6,164 19 10	85,259 1 3

That the estimation still continues high in which the office stands with those who would appoint the Public Trustee to be trustee or executor, or transfer to him such an appointment, is indicated by the large increase at the close of the year in the number and value of the estates in the office subject to wills or trusts. But in every branch of the business there is evidence of a growing appreciation of the services which the office is affording and is established to afford.

The trustees of the fund voluntarily contributed to provide for the relief of those who were left destitute or in distress through the loss of life and property by the wreck, on the Great Barrier Island, of the steamer “Wairarapa,” on the 24th October, 1894, recently appointed the Public Trustee to complete the administration of the fund—that is to say, to distribute the fund among the beneficiaries according to a final settlement made by the trustees.

The large and spontaneous contribution of money for the relief of the widows and children of those whose lives were lost by the accident of the 25th March, 1896, to the Brunner Coal-mine