1904.

NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC OFFICE

(REPORT RELATING TO THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

The Public Trustee to the Right Hon. the Colonial Treasurer.

Wellington, 31st March, 1904. Sir. I have the honour to submit a statement of the business done by the Public Trust Office during the past twelve months as compared with previous years.

The figures disclose a gratifying all-round increase. The net profits on the year's operations

amounted to £7,897 13s. 4d.

A building is badly needed for the Head Office. The present accommodation is altogether inadequate for the staff. There is no privacy for clients doing business at the counter. There is a typewriter in the room of the Chief Clerk, and one in that of the Inspector. These girls must leave the rooms when business of a confidential nature is being discussed. The cubic air-space of the two larger rooms is barely sufficient for the number of clerks employed therein. If the new building is not soon available fresh quarters will have to be obtained, otherwise the growth of the institution will be arrested.

During January last a visit was made by me to the principal Native reserves administered by the office under the West Coast Settlement Reserves Acts. A large area of these reserves is now held under perpetual lease. Some of the unleased parts are at present inaccessible, but when circumstances are favourable the balance not required for use by Natives will be from time to time submitted for settlement. The total area of the reserves is about 188,000 acres; of this, 148,712 acres, being nearly four-fifths of the total, is leased or held under occupation license by Natives. The total rents amount to £25,796. After paying rates, land-tax, office commission, and other charges there remained for payment to the Natives interested £22,703.

The system of occupation licenses was introduced to encourage the Natives to abandon the communism of the kaingas. A Native who has his own plot of ground will be more likely to cultivate it, fence it, and use it to the best advantage than if the place was the common property

When a grant contains more land than is needed for the support of the Natives interested in it the portion not so required is submitted to competition under perpetual lease, with revaluation at periods of twenty-one years for the purpose of fixing the ground-rent, the tenant's improvements being protected. If the Natives occupying the remainder desire it, the whole or a part of the unleased land is given to individuals, partners, or families who want a portion for their exclusive

occupation.

The division is agreed upon after consultation between the Reserves Agent and the beneficiaries of the grant, the boundaries being fixed subject to survey. When the survey is made licenses are issued, with accurate plans indorsed. The documents are of a simple nature, but they give the holder an exclusive right to the area mentioned and protection for his crops and improvements. The holdings vary in size from two or three acres up to two hundred or more. Some of the holders complain of having to pay a rent for these holdings, but the reason is this: In hardly any case do all the Natives interested in a grant live upon it. Sometimes a few only do. The others may be anywhere in Taranaki or in other parts of New Zealand, many of them permanently absent. In such cases those who are getting the exclusive benefit of a piece of ground belonging in part to others should pay something to the others for it. A rent is fixed, which the occupier pays. As these rents are all pooled and repaid to those interested, including these same licensees, according to the value of their respective shares in the grant, there is no hardship, while justice is done to the absent owners. If every Native interested lived on a grant it would be easy, pending changes by succession, to give families or individuals a piece of ground of a value representing their respective interests, and then no rent need be or would be collected; but this is a hypothetical condition of affairs, not existing in reality.

Natives holding occupation licenses are as a rule more industrious and progressive than those living under the communal system. The number of occupation licenses in force is 303;

area held under them, 20,304 acres; average size, about 66 acres.

It has been stated that the office charges the Natives too much for managing these reserves. This is certainly not the case. The management of these and other Native reserves is the least profitable branch of the Public Trust Office business, and the commission charged barely pays working-expenses. The following figures will show the position:—

STATEMENT of RECEIPTS and EXPENDITURE in connection with the Native Branch for Year ended 31st March, 1904.

	I	Receipts.							
Commission on West Coast ment Reserves at 7½ per Ditto at 3¾ per cent	Settle- cent.	£ s 1,586 1 179 1	$ \begin{array}{ccc} 8 & 3 \\ 0 & 6 \end{array} $	£	s.	đ.	£	s.	d.
			—			9			
Commission on Native reserv	e rents a	at 7½ per	cent.	009	12	8	2,436	1	5
Lease and consent fees	. •••			•••			197		ŏ
							£2,633	16	5
	Ex	penditure							_
Salaries—		L							
One-fifth proportion of other officers not d but whose time is	irectly o	n the bra	ınch,	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
therewith			1 Piece	621	0	0			
Native Branch, Head O	ffice	•••		461	0	ő			
New Plymouth, proport		 riag		371	ő	ŏ			
Nelson, half Agent's sal		109			10	ő			
Greymouth, three-fourth	ary 19 Agent	'e galary		146	5	ŏ			
Greymousii, shree-tours	is figure	5 Salary	•••				1,686	15	0
Rent—									
One-fifth proportion, He	ead Offic	e		95	0	0			
One-half proportion, Ne	lson			11	5	0			
Three-fourths proportion	n, Greyn	nouth		33	5	0			
Hawera Office				12	0	0			
							151	10	0
Travelling-expenses—									
Reserves Agent			• • •	175		.0			
Officer accompanying at		tions		35	_	0			
Relieving agencies	•••	•••		20	0	0	000	_	^
Legal expenses, being half	aongult	ina harris	star's				230	0	0
retaining fee							100	0	0
Printing and stationery		•••			• • •		160	ő	ŏ
Clerical assistance on distrib								10	ŏ
Auditing					• • •		48	ő	ő
Post Office services		•••	•••				150	-	ő
Native Board expenses	•••						27	ŏ	ŏ
Agent's Commission—	•••	•••					41	U	v
Palmerston North				5	6	4			
Hokitika				10		8			
Tauranga					15	ŏ			
200000000000000000000000000000000000000	•••	•••					17	5	0
Profit		•••						16	5
							£2,633	16	5

The annual profit, £21 16s. 5d., is a nominal sum only, and is not sufficient for insurance against the risk of the many losses to which the office is exposed in dealing with these reserves.

The average commission charged is about £6 16s. per cent., being 7½ per cent. on rents collected from European lessees, and 3¾ per cent. on occupation-license rents, a very low percentage for the work done.

The usual charge by a commission agent is 5 per cent. for simply collecting rents on account and paying them to his principal or into the principal's banking account. The office has to see to all leasing, get surveys made, roads laid off, ascertain who are the Natives interested, collect rents, distribute them twice a year to the numerous beneficiaries, keep accurate accounts, attend to Native Land Court matters, and take the risks incurred in paying to the wrong persons or being involved in expensive litigation arising out of the relationship of the office to these reserves. The work done in the management of many of the smaller grants with numerous owners is very onerous, and out of all proportion to the remuneration obtained.

Having regard to the large amount of work which must be carefully done, and the risks undertaken in connection with the management of these lands, there is little doubt that no estate of equal value involving similar difficulties and responsibilities in looking after it is anywhere administered

with greater economy.

The indirect benefit to both settlers and Natives through the office management is apparent. In some of these grants two or three hundred Natives are interested. The difficulties in the way of an intending settler wishing to deal with the Natives would in many cases be very great.

First, the owners and the trustees for the numerous infants would have to be found, and all induced to sign the lease. Interpreters' and Native Land Court fees would have to be paid. Having obtained a lease, the tenant would have much trouble in paying the rents. In all probability some of the Natives who signed the lease would be dead, and he would then have to seek the successors. All these obstacles, delays, disbursements, and risks of error would have to be taken into consideration by him when calculating his expenses, and the rent offered would be less

Under the present system a lease is obtained from the Public Trustee without any trouble. Even the preparation of the necessary documents is done at the office. The advantages to the settler of having to deal only with a Government official who prepares all necessary instruments, gives a tenure guaranteed by statute, and relieves him from all responsibility regarding the distribution of rents must be obvious. If settlers had to deal with the numerous owners direct, many of the grants would not be settled at all, and those that were could not produce nearly as much rent as they do now. A glance at the Native reserves in Taranaki not under control of the Public Trust Office will convince any unbiassed person of the advantages that accrue from the office administration. Many such reserves, although of splendid land and immediately adjoining good roads, are unoccupied, and covered with furze and noxious weeds.

An agitation is being started by the lessees of these reserves to get the freehold of the land comprised in their leases. The lessees will argue that the perpetual lease dispossesses the Natives permanently, and if the amount representing the value of the land be invested for them a greater income than at present received will be assured to them for all time, so that their interests will be safeguarded. The Natives, however, place a higher value on mana than on mere income, and to do as the lessees ask would be regarded as a gross breach of faith by them. They have been assured in the most solemn manner that these reserves would be theirs, and their children's heritage for ever. To violate these promises would, I fear, have a disastrous effect on the Native mind. The agitation should therefore be discouraged.

I have, &c., J. W. Poynton, Public Trustee.

The Right Hon. the Colonial Treasurer.

REVENUE and Expenditure of the Public Trust Office for the Years ended 31st March, 1899 to 1904.

	Year 6 31st M 189	[arc]		Year e 31st M 190	arch		Year 6 31st M 190	arch		Year 31st N 196	Iarch		Year 6 31st M 190	larch,		Year 31st M 190	[arcl	
Expenditure.										}			1		1			
Salaries Commission to agents Clerical assistance and	£ 7,889 1,102	7		8,213	4	d. 9 8	8,409	10	d. 2 8	8,773		d. 5 3	9,143		9	£ ,810 ,154		d. 8 3
auditing Legal expenses Stationery, printing, and	272 244					0 6			5 0		3 13	8 6				$\begin{array}{c} 165 \\ 262 \end{array}$		
office requisites Miscellaneous Unauthorised Deficiency in realisation	560 4,122 443	0	0	4,359	18	9 9		15	6 7	3,396			*7,265	13 4 14 6		504 , 196 		
of mortgages Balance, being ex-	488	0	6								•					••		
cess of revenue	4,014	17	7	5,973	12	6	5,691	9	5	10,706	9	11	4,325	12 9	7	,897	13	4
Revenue.	19,137	8	10	20,856	13	11	$\frac{21,347}{21}$	6	9	25,616 ———	4	11	23,792	13 1	27	,992	3	2
Commission and charges Interest in excess of amount credited to	9,802	18	6	10,415	7	2	11,557	12	10	11,210	3	3	10,133	18 3	12	536	15	7
estates Miscellaneous	8,473 860			9,835 606		6 3	8,971 817					2 6	12,777 881			520 934		3 4
	19,137	8	10	20,856	13	11	21,347	6	9	25,616	4	11	23,792	13 1	27	992	3	2

^{*} Includes £2,676 12s. 6d. added to Assurance and Reserve Fund, £300 compassionate allowance to widow of late Accountant, and £330 15s. for deposit-safes.

† Includes £1,750 11s. 4d. added to Assurance and Reserve Fund, and £1,414 cost of plans for proposed new premises.

INCOME of the Public Trust Office Year by Year from 1898 to 31st March, 1904.

Class of Estates.	31st	r end Mai 1898.		Year 31st I			Year of 31st M			Year 6 31st M 190	arch,		Year er 31st Ma 1902	irch		Year e 31st M 190			Year 31st N 19		
Intestates'	£		s, d		s. 2	d. 1	£ 2,888	s. 13	d. 3	£ 2,845	s. d	1.	£ 3,424				s. 3				
Wills, trusts, sinking funds, &c.	2,9	59 1	9 9	3,645	18	2	3,400	7	1	3.897	6	2	3,328	8	7	3,042	8	3	4,754	б	
Real and lunatics'	5	21 1	6 6	810	18	11	1,135	18	10	958	8	D	867	4	3	792	8	9	925	8	}
Native reserves West Coast settlement	50	37	3 1	575	2	5	597	16	7	962	14 (5	600	9	0	628	16	7	669	14	:
reserves	1,3												1,779						1,768		
Miscellaneous	1,9	97	6 8	1,986	4	3	1,444	7	4	1,976	0 :	1	1,937	3	3	1,901	17	2	2,288	18	j
Interest	9,2			10,663 8,473			11,021 9,835			12,375 8,971			11,937 13,678			11,015 12,777			13,471 14,520		
Total income	17,98	33	0 11	19,137	8	10	20,856	13	11	21,347	6 9	9 5	25,616	4 1	11	23,792	13	1	27,992	8	_
Total expenditure	13,4	1 1	9 .7	16,314	3	7	15,886	15	10	15,655	17	1	14,909	15	0	19,467	0	4	20,094	9	1

CAPITAL Funds of the Public Trust Office, and how invested, from 1899 to 31st March, 1904.

	On 31st March, 1899.	On 31st March, 1900.	On 31st March, 1901.	On 31st March, 1902.	On 31st March, 1903.	On 31st March, 1904.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
The capital funds of the Public Trust Office amounted to Of which the amount held in cash at credit	956,153	1,056,868	1,672,304	1,782,951	1,936,073	1,660,716
of the Public Trustee's Account was	13,512	27,880	53,925	59,501	74,765	65,386
Leaving a balance invested of	942,641	1,028,988	1,618,379	1,723,450	1,861,308	1,595,330
The investments consisted— Of those made by the Public Trustee out of the Common Fund, and						
amounting to	653,710	794,987	1,407,419	1,049,885	1,239,027	1,477,123
Of those made by other trustees of pro-	264,296	214,411	196,230	667,587	616,798	112,689
perties afterwards transferred to the office	24,635	19,590	14,730	5,978	5,483	5,518
	942,641	1,028,988	1,618,379	1,723,450	1,861,308	1,595,330
The capital funds invested were applied to investments— In Government securities of the colony,						
to the amount of	160,308	137,778	607,798	578,323	578,343	103,363
In local bodies' securities, to the amount	10.000	10.400	10 000	00 100	91 100	44 100
of In mortgages of real estate, to the amount	12,839	19,439	19,239	28,129	31,129	44,129
of	766,371	871,771	991,261	1,116,998	1,251,836	1,447,238
In fixed deposits, to the amount of	1,689		.81		•••	600
In companies, to the amount of	1,434		•••	•••		•••
Total	942,641	1, 02 8,988	1,618,379	1,723,450	1,861,308	1,595,330

Number and Estimated Value of Estates in the Public Trust Office.

The following was the number and estimated value of estates in the Public Trust Office on the 31st March on each of the years 1898 to 1904:—

			Nu	mber of Esta	ites.								
Class.	On 31st March, 1898.	On 31st March, 1899.	On 31st March, 1900.	On 31st March, 1901.	On 31st March, 1902.	On 31st March, 1903.	On 31st March, 1904.						
Wills and trusts (including sinking	:												
funds accounts)	493	538	576	684	651	744	836						
Intestates' estates	797	821	903	867	923	989	1,062						
Real estates*	84	79	75	69	69	71	*						
Lunatics' estates	558	507	555	626	728	802	854						
Native reserves	112	115	110	110	143	143	119						
West Coast settlement reserves	293	293	293	293	309	312	333						
Unclaimed lands	76	138	155	249	226	253	266						
Total	2,413	2,491	2,667	2,898	3,049	3,314	3,470						
	Value of Estates.												
Class.	On 31st March, 1898.	On 31st Mar ch, 1899.	On 31st March, 1900.	On 31st March, 1901.	On 31st March, 1902.	On 31st March, 1903.	On 31st March, 1904.						
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£						
Wills and trusts (including sinking													
funds accounts)	789,162	865,446	933,567		1,122,404	1,279,743	1,605,143						
Intestates' estates	97,140	133,409	136,697	134,820	163,304	197,368	232,695						
Real estates*	10,572	8,414	8,313	7,459	7,317	7,585	*						
Lunatics' estates	85,890	111,793	113,525	159,087	163,306	170,585	208,573						
Native reserves	355,000	357,500	363,076	363,076	366,000	375,000	380,000						
West Coast settlement reserves	600,000	620,000	622,604	622,604	625,000	655,000	700,000						
Unclaimed lands	12,550	13,754	14,812	17,070	20,283	21,504	26,471						

^{*} Now included with unclaimed lands.

The Government Loans to Local Bodies Sinking Fund.

(Placed under control of Public Trustee by Section 5 of "The Government Loans to Local Bodies Act Amendment Act, 1892.")

During the Year ended 31st March.			From Consolidated Fund.	Transferred from Land Assurance Fund.	Net Income from Investments.	Total Receipts during each Yea			
1893			£ s. d. 14,000 0 0	£ s. d. 7,015 11 9	£ s. d.	£ s. d. 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	$\begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$	17.356 18 8			
1896	•••		10,004 10 0	4.461 12 7	2,958 3 3	20,804 13 10			
1897	***		14,960 1 10	4,986 14 0	$\begin{bmatrix} 2,360 & 3 & 3 \\ 3,651 & 3 & 11 \end{bmatrix}$	23,597 19 9			
1898	•••		16 406 0 0	5,498 14 6	4.477 3 5	26,472 1 7			
1899			17 000 7 0	5,955 9 2	5,942 8 3	29.764 5 1			
1900			19,245 9 8	$6.415 \ 3 \ 2$	8,049 0 7	33,709 13 5			
1901	•••		10 5/1 1 0	7.127 6 8	8,314 6 6	34.982 14 4			
1902			20.901 2 5	7,997 7 4	9,472 18 11	38,371 8 8			
1903			23,641 8 10	9,204 14 9	10,354 4 9	43,200 8 4			
1904			26,588 11 2	10,526 18 8	12,017 17 0	49,133 6 10			
	Total		218,560 17 7	77,485 18 6	68,444 3 2	364,490 19 3			

"THE GOVERNMENT ADVANCES TO SETTLERS ACT, 1894," DEBENTURE SINKING FUND.

STATEMENT showing Principal Moneys paid over to the Public Trustee, and Amounts withdrawn for Reinvestment.

During the Year ended 31st March.								e ent by nt.	Amounts o withdr Superinte Reinve	Balance at Credit on 31st March in each Year.					
-			£	s.	d.	£	8.	d.	£	s.	d.	£		8.	à.
1896	• • •		3,369	12	7	20	17	3				3,3	69	12	7
1897	•••		23,843	17	6	435	1	7				27,2	13	10	1
1898	•••		71,187	19	8	2.112	5	3				98.4	01	9	9
1899			104,473	0	2	1,177	8	0	171.284	13	10	31,5	89	16	1
1900	•••		136,532	5	10	1.221	13	1	118,443	6	8	49,6			3
1901			155,237	9	6	1,912	2	- 8	134,076	8	4	70,8	39	16	5
1902			172,268	12	3	2,689	12	11	147,154	1	3	95.9	54	7	5
1903			257,443		- 1	3.579			227,530		5	125.8		-	10
1904	*		258,305		11	4,666			225,652		ŏ	158.5		4	

and to 31st March, 1904, the Capital of the Public Trust Office, and how invested, and the Income EXPENDITURE of the Office. Year by Year, from 1887 STATEMENT showing

	TOTAL EXPENDITURE OF OF OF 1.			£ 8.406	8,653 9,145	8,469	(2)14,001	(4)17,289		(°)14,902	$(^{6})13,569$ $(^{7})13,472$	(8)16,314	(9) 15,887	15,656	(10) 19,467	27,992 (11)20,094
	PPICE.		Total.	£ 9.913	11,220 14.327	9,161	12,090	19,229		15,242	14,500 17,933	19,137	20,857	21,347		27,992
NO SWOOM	Public Trust Office.	Surplus	on Invest- ments.	£ 3.735	4,012	3,080	6,177	10,163		7,560	6,376 8,648	8,473	9,835	8,972	12,777	14,521
	Public	Commis-	sion, Charges, &c.	£ 6.178	7,208	6,081	5,913	9,066		7,682	$8,124 \\ 9,285$	10,664	11,022	12,375	11,015	13,471
			Total.	£ 301.226	366,886	478,895	551,101	594,337 656,836		757,573	841,974 912,971	942,641	1,028,988	1,618,379	1,861,308	1,595,330
		Shares	in Com- panies.	ಆ	: :4	1,608	1,584	1,852 4,512		4,171	3,821 1,884	1,434	:		: :	:
	ed in	Fixed	Deposits in Banks.	e# rc	60 59 799	60,001	1,449	630 444		:	380	1,689	:	5	: :	009
	Invested in	Mort	gages of Free- holds.	£ 196.978	144,783	215,909	276,393	289,680 354,933		432,455	482,206 $651,160$	766,371	871,771	991,261	1,251,836	44,129 1,447,238
		Local	Bodies' Securi- ties.	£ 1	1,607	2,174	2,067	2,067 1,839		1,839	1,839	12,839	19,439	19,239		44.129
FICE.		General	ment Securi- ties.	£ 179, 336	220,436 219,208	199,208	269,608	300,108 295,108		319,108	354,108 251,708	160,308	137,778	607,798	578,343	103,363
PRUST OF		Total Common Fund	and Special.	£ 301 226	366,886	478,895	551,101	594,337 656,836		757,573	841,974 912,971	942,641	,028,985	1,618,379	1,861,308	,595,330
Public			Total.	£ 106.965	162,029 245,839	279,273	142,870	188,117 298,540		264,785	253,491 281,155	288,931		210,960 1 672 565 1		118,207 1,595,330
CAPITAL OF THE PUBLIC TRUST UFFICE	Total.	Specially.	By Former Trustees.	£ 19.775	48,380	46,787	46,798	$\frac{43,919}{39,261}$		58,156	47,549 29,512	24,635	19,590	14,730 5 978	5,483	5,518
CAPITA	Invested Total		By Public Trustee.	£	113,649	232,486	96,072	144,198 $259,279$		206,629	205,942 251,643	264,296	214,411	196,230	616,798	112,689
		E .	Common Fund.	£		198,622	408,231	406,220 358,296		492,788	588,483 631,816	653,710 264,296		,407,419		
		Yearly Increase or	in Amount.	£ 35 039	71,599	30,115	43,792	48,602 53,274		105,596	84,105 103,000	Decrease. 5,485		561,511 1	_	Decrease. 275,357 1
		Total.		€ 309.541	381,140 463,746	493,861	567,061	615,663 668,937		774,533	858,638 961,638	956,153			936,073	660,716
		In Invest-	ments.	£ 301 226	366,886	478,895	551,101	594,337 656,836		757,578	$841,974 \\ 912,971$	942,641	27,880 1,028,988 1,056,868	53,925 1,618,379 1,672,304	74,765 1,861,308 1,936,073	Decrease. 65,386 1,595,330 1,660,716 275,357 1,477,123
		In		£ 8315	_	14		21,326 12,101		16,960	16,664 48,667	13,512	27,880 1,	59,925 1,	74,765 1,	65,386 1,
				inded 1887	1888	1890	1892	1893 months	1 31st 1895	ed 31st 1896	::	.: 6	:	:	: :	:
		İ	İ	Year ended 31st Dec. 1887	2 :	: : :	: :	Fifteen	ended 31 March, 1895	Year ended 31st March, 1896	Ditto, 1897 ,, 1898	6681 "	1900	1901	,, 1903	,, 1904

Approximate Cost of Paper.--Preparation, not given; printing (2,675 copies), £8 8s.

Including £3,280 on account of expenses of Royal Commission.

Including £1,286 on account of expenses of Royal Commission, and £1/17 on account of deficiency on realisation of mortgages.

Including £3,040 on account of deficiency on realisation of mortgages, and £370 for unauthorised expenditure, and £320 to account of deficiency on realisation of mortgages, and £1370 or account of deficiency on realisation of mortgages, and £1370 or account of deficiency on realisation of mortgages, and £1370 or account of deficiency on realisation of mortgages, and £1370 or account of deficiency on realisation of mortgages, and £443 for unauthorised expenditure, and £230 for Assurance and Reserve Fund.

Including £180 on account of deficiency on realisation of mortgages, and £443 for unauthorised expenditure, and £1,192 for Assurance and Reserve Fund.

Including £100 written of on maturity of Kahlu Valley Raliway Company's debentures, and £1,102 for Assurance and Reserve Fund.

Includes £2,076 12s, 64 added to Assurance and Reserve Fund, £300 company's debentures, and £1,04 added to Assurance and Reserve Fund, £300 company's or widow of late accountant, and £330 15s. for deposit-safes.) Includes £1,750 11s. 4d. added to Assurance and Reserve Fund, and £1,414 cost of plans for proposed new premises. 9864665865E