

*The Legal Profession.*

It was demonstrated to us, and, indeed, it is frankly acknowledged by the Public Trustee, that a spirit of hostility has sprung up between the Public Trustee and the legal profession during the past two or three years. Causes for this were set forth from all parts of the Dominion, and were brought by us under the notice of the Public Trustee. Without going into them in detail, it is sufficient to say that they have arisen in many cases out of zeal of the Public Trustee and his agents to attract business to the office without, perhaps, a realization of the extent to which such zeal might bring about a reaction. The Public Trustee recognizes that it is in the interests of the office that he should stand on good terms with auctioneers, land agents, brokers, and other representatives of different departments in life. Otherwise opposition grows up unfavourable to the office business. It is for the Public Trustee, now that his attention has been called to the causes of the hostile feeling referred to, to determine, with a due regard to the interests of the office, upon the best method of arriving at a better understanding.

*Land Associations under the Land Settlement Finance Acts.*

In the case of these associations, complaint has been made that the Public Trustee undertakes the preparation of the mortgage from a member at a lower price if the transfer to the purchaser is likewise prepared by him. A fee is charged for the transfer. The preparation of these documents has been undertaken by the Public Trustee as part of his duty in connection with these associations, initiated, as they are, on a very narrow financial basis; and it appears to us to be a proper and beneficial arrangement, and one that should be maintained so long as it does not involve the office in loss. Hitherto, from a return we have had made up, a profit has accrued to the office instead of a loss. At the same time, we think the terms of the circular to purchasers might well be worded so as to be less in the nature of a solicitation for business.

*Surveyors.*

Representations were made on behalf of the New Zealand Institute of Surveyors that it was unfair of the Public Trustee to call for tenders for surveys so as to induce surveyors to quote prices below the official rates. These rates, however, are not laid down as the minimum, but as the maximum. Further, where the estate is small, or there are special circumstances, the Public Trustee does not call for tenders. In the disposal of survey-work his policy is, he informs us, to follow the wishes of the beneficiaries, or to employ the surveyor usually employed by the testator if the so-doing is not contrary to the interests of the estate. We think whatever grievance the Institute may have is due to the failure of their own members to resist the temptation of departing from the standard scale.

*Property-realization Register.*

We further recommend that a general register should be kept for the Board of all unrealized properties which are in the market, or the time for realizing which has, according to the terms of the trust, arrived, and that this register should be specially reviewed by the Board at quarterly periods. It would not, however, be expected that any entry of an unrealized property should be made in the register before, say, six months after the estate has come into the hands of the office.

The District Managers and agencies must, of course, report periodically to Head Office so as to enable the register to be kept up.

Claims unsettled for a period of six months should in like manner be registered and reviewed by the Board.

*Complaint Register.*

We further recommend that a register be kept in which should be entered all complaints, and that this be laid before the Board at each meeting. The