

CHANGE OF CONTROL.

During the year the position of Public Trustee became vacant through the retirement of Dr. F. Fitchett, C.M.G., who had held the position since 1910.

Upon his resignation an important change in the control of the Department took place through the passing of the Public Trust Office Amendment Act, 1917. The Act provided for the appointment of two Assistant Public Trustees to be associated with the Public Trustee in the administration of the Office. In pursuance of these provisions the following appointments were made by the Governor-General in Council:—

Public Trustee: Robert Triggs (formerly Assistant Public Service Commissioner).

Assistant Public Trustees—

T. S. Ronaldson (formerly Deputy Public Trustee).

J. W. Macdonald (formerly Solicitor to Public Trust Office).

It was further enacted that the Public Trustee and the Assistant Public Trustees should together constitute the Public Trust Office Board, with the Public Trustee as Chairman.

POWERS OF THE BOARD.

This Board replaced the Public Trust Office Board which had existed prior to the passing of the Act, and which consisted of the Minister of Finance, certain officers of the Public Service, and two non-service members.

The two main classes of business dealt with by that Board were,—

(a.) The consent to the acceptance by the Public Trustee of any administration, agency, or other appointment under the Public Trust Office Act.

(b.) The approval of investments of moneys held by the Public Trustee in the Common Fund of the Office.

In addition, the Board determined questions relating to sales of property and complaints, and considered such general matters affecting the Office as were referred to it by the Public Trustee.

The new Public Trust Office Board enters much more largely into the administration of the Office than was possible in the case of the old Board, meeting as it did at weekly intervals only. With the exception of the matters referred to under (b) above, the new Board performs all the functions of the old Board, and also acts in an advisory capacity with respect to all such matters relating to the administration of the Office as may be referred to it by the Public Trustee or the Minister of Finance.

THE PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE INVESTMENT BOARD.

The control of the investment of moneys from the Common Fund, as referred to under (b) above, is exercised by a Board known as the Public Trust Office Investment Board, the constitution of which conforms closely to that of the former Public Trust Office Board, with the important exception that no non-service member now sits on the Board. This Board also was created by the Act of 1917.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE BOARD.

The Public Trust Office Board assumed office on the 10th October, 1917. Since that date the administration of the Office has demanded the close and constant attention of the Public Trustee and the Assistant Public Trustees.

The Board has met at almost daily intervals, and has thus been able to deal promptly with the matters requiring attention. It has been found that the prompt consideration and despatch of business by the Board has had an excellent effect on the work of the Office.

Shortly after the Board took office action was taken to define the matters which should be referred by Divisional Heads and District Officers for decision, and as a result the volume of the business transacted by the Board has shown a constant increase. It is felt that close association of the Board with the administration of estates and with the conduct of the Office work generally has resulted in increased efficiency and in the adoption of improved and economical methods of administration.