

in any case where the Attorney-General considered it necessary that a custodian should be appointed. Very wide powers and duties were conferred on the Public Trustee under the foregoing regulations. Arrangements were made to pay to such internees small amounts on account of their personal expenses while detained. Payments were also arranged for the maintenance of the wives and children of these men.

(iii.) *Disposal of Amounts held by the Custodian of Enemy Property.*—(a.) The amounts due to the prisoners of war who have been permitted to remain in New Zealand have been paid to such persons on their release from internment.

(b.) All the prisoners of war who were repatriated from New Zealand were interviewed by officers from this Department, as the military authorities required such prisoners to hand their cash assets to the Public Trustee for payment to them on their arrival in England or at a European port of disembarkation. Such aliens were also required to supply full details of any other property belonging to them in New Zealand, and to advise the address to which they desired the proceeds thereof to be forwarded. The Public Trustee has accordingly realized all the property belonging to such persons. In regard to the aliens belonging to southern Europe, payment of £50 each was made to such prisoners whose funds would so permit during the period they were in Australia awaiting repatriation. The amounts belonging to the German prisoners, and the balances due to the other prisoners, were forwarded to the High Commissioner for New Zealand in London, who was instructed to follow the practice of the Imperial Government in similar cases in the United Kingdom. Payment has been withheld until the German and the Austrian Governments release the amounts due to or earned by the British prisoners of war who were interned in Germany or Austria during the war. In regard to the repatriated prisoners of war who have acquired the nationality of an Allied or Associated State under one of the principal Peace Treaties, the amounts due to such prisoners are released on production of satisfactory evidence of nationality. The total amount forwarded to Sydney and to the High Commissioner for New Zealand for payment to repatriated prisoners of war was £30,674 2s. 11d.

10. REGISTRATION OF CLAIMS AGAINST THE ENEMY AND OF ALL BRITISH PROPERTY IN ENEMY TERRITORY.

(i.) *Action by Internal Affairs Department.*—The advisability of the Government being in possession of accurate data regarding the extent to which enemy firms and persons were indebted to British subjects in New Zealand was recognized in the early stages of the war. In order to obtain this information notices were published in the principal papers in the Dominion requesting all persons having monetary claims against enemy subjects to forward full particulars thereof to the Under-Secretary, Department of Internal Affairs, not later than the 31st December, 1915. Copies of the notice were also exhibited in all post-offices throughout the Dominion.

(ii.) *Compulsory Registration of Claims with the Public Trustee.*—The provisions of two Proclamations made by His Majesty, published on the 7th September, 1916, and on the 27th November, 1917, were issued in New Zealand under the War Regulations Act on the 28th February, 1918. Every British subject resident in New Zealand, and every company or other corporation incorporated in New Zealand, was required to make to the Public Trustee a return in writing of the following matters on or before the 30th April, 1918 :—

- (a.) All property which belonged to that British subject or corporation and which was situated within the territories of His Majesty's enemies :
- (b.) All property which belonged to that British subject or corporation and which was situated within any territory which was in the military occupation of His Majesty's enemies :
- (c.) All pecuniary claims of that British subject or corporation against any enemy Government :
- (d.) All pecuniary claims of that British subject or corporation against any persons or corporations resident or carrying on business within the territories of His Majesty's enemies :
- (e.) All pecuniary claims of that British subject or corporation against any person or corporation resident or carrying on business in any territory which was in the military occupation of His Majesty's enemies.

(iii.) *Total of Claims notified.*—Claims amounting to nearly £52,000 were notified to the Public Trustee in pursuance of the foregoing regulations.

(iv.) *Disposal of Claims.*—The claims registered in this Office are being disposed of as follows :—

- (a.) Claims against German nationals which fall within the provisions of Article 296 or 297 of the Treaty of Versailles are being settled through the Clearing Office (see later).
- (b.) Claims against the German Government in regard to losses sustained by enemy action have been referred to the Secretary to the Treasury, Wellington, as he is dealing with claims under the reparation portions of the Treaty.
- (c.) Persons who have claims against Austrian firms have been advised that a clearing office is not being established for the settlement of debts between British nationals in New Zealand and Austrian nationals in Austria, and that consequently such persons are at liberty to collect the amounts due to them through any channels which may be open.
- (d.) Persons who have registered claims against enemy subjects who have acquired the nationality of one of the Allied or Associated States have been advised that they may arrange for the direct settlement of such debts.