

for all the expenditure which an ordinary commercial undertaking would have to meet, including the payment of income-tax and allowance of depreciation on plant and buildings. The profits for the past five years have been :—

	£
1920	78,246
1921	10,691
1922	11,053
1923	58,700
1924	65,542

5. Following upon the successful results of the working during the previous year, the rates of commission for administering estates were considerably reduced as from the 1st April, 1923, and certain fees previously charged to estates were abolished so as to make the commission inclusive of all administration charges. There is no doubt that this had the effect of increasing the business to a marked extent, as shown in the number and value of the new estates reported and accepted during the year.

There has also been a marked increase in the number of large estates entrusted to the Office for administration, and the wills of living testators throughout New Zealand deposited for safe custody show that estates possessing assets of great value will fall due for administration in future years.

In addition to the reduction in charges, considerable concessions have been made in recent years by way of bonus and increases in the rates of interest, and every effort will be made to extend the benefits already conferred.

6. By an amendment of the statutes under which the Public Trust Office was originally constituted, power has been given to enable advisory trustees to be appointed to co-operate with the Public Trustee in the administration of estates. Full reference to the system will be found in the Public Trustee's report.

The system is commending itself to an increasing number of testators whose estates require specialized knowledge for their satisfactory administration, and many business men and farmers are now availing themselves of the provisions enabling them to appoint advisory trustees in their wills.

7. The Public Trustee has been in a position to materially assist in the development of the country by providing funds for advance on mortgage to farmers and others, and for loans to local bodies for works of public utility. During the year the new money advanced reached the considerable total of £2,198,185. Of this large sum £1,422,870 was advanced by way of mortgage, chiefly on country securities, and £438,745 was invested in local-body debentures.

8. The amount invested as at the 31st March, 1924, has reached a total of £19,895,285, of which £12,997,242 has been lent to private mortgagors and £5,079,135 to local bodies. These figures indicate the large part the Office has played in the development of the Dominion.

9. Special attention has been paid by the Public Trustee to the collection of interest on mortgages, as it is from these proceeds that the necessary funds are found to provide the interest on moneys held for beneficiaries in estates under administration by the Public Trustee. At the same time the unfortunate position in which many farming mortgagors have found themselves has been fully appreciated, and the Public Trustee has afforded every concession possible to mortgagors who have been in difficulties in meeting their interest.

The liberal policy adopted by the Office has been greatly appreciated by mortgagors, and has enabled many of them to retain their properties which they would have been compelled to relinquish if a more exacting policy had been adopted.

10. The small number of cases in which securities for Office advances have had to be taken over by the Public Trustee and realized at a loss is a tribute to the care which has been exercised in making the investments of the Office.

11. The Public Trust Office already performs varied duties for several Departments of State.

During the year just closed an additional duty undertaken by the Office has been the preparation of debentures and security for loans granted to local bodies by the State Fire Insurance Office.