

The business of the Office is to administer estates, and from the evidence it possesses, and the fact that unfriendly critics have not touched on that point, it is felt that the Office is carrying out its important functions with a great deal of success.

No business can progress unless it satisfies its clients. The Public Trust Office does satisfy its clients. It administers the estates of succeeding generations; it supplies such proof of its ability to manage them advantageously that it attracts the attention and engages the good will of an ever-increasing circle, until now it holds the wills of over forty-four thousand living testators, and these include men who have made a success of their affairs in every class of business life. Yearly another five thousand testators are placing their wills in the Office, while others appoint the Public Trustee their executor without his knowledge until such time as their estates fall in for administration. In these circumstances it is felt that the Office is making a success of its business and that it has the confidence of the public.

The chief—in fact, the only—point of attack was the Common Fund; and it may be desirable at this stage to give some account of the fund for the information of those who are not fully acquainted with its history, its administration, and its advantages.

*Purpose and Advantages of the Fund.*—When the foundation of the Public Trust Office was originally proposed, one of the chief considerations was to ensure that persons desiring to make provision for their dependants should have at their disposal the means of doing so with the certain knowledge that the security of the funds set aside for the purpose would be beyond doubt—without any possibility of loss through theft, fraud, or misuse, or wrongful investment. It was not until the year 1891, however, that this idea was carried into such complete effect as to fulfil entirely the original intention, when by an Act of Parliament dealing with the reconstitution of the Office the present Common Fund of the Public Trust Office was established.

*Fixed Rate of Interest.*—The purpose was to provide the capital funds of estates under administration in the Public Trust Office with a fixed rate of interest—to be fixed from time to time by the Governor in Council according to the prevailing conditions—by falling into one common fund to be invested by the Public Trustee and *guaranteed by the State.*

This gave the complete security which the Public Trust Office was founded to provide. Testators now have the sure and certain knowledge that when they appoint the Public Trustee their executor and direct investment in the Common Fund the money they leave at their death will be absolutely secure for the benefit of their dependants and beneficiaries.

*Freedom from Worry.*—The chief considerations of most testators are security of their capital and a regular income to their dependants. The Common Fund provides both. Clients interested in estates under administration in the Public Trust Office and invested in the Common Fund are freed entirely from the worry so frequently attendant on the investment of their funds.

They are not concerned with the investments from the Common Fund, and any loss made by the Public Trustee must be borne by him and, if necessary, by the State. They have no cause to worry about the safety of their investments; “slumps” in value and periods of depression do not depreciate their investment or lessen the amount of their capital.

*Complete Security assured.*—Difficulties encountered by the Public Trustee are not communicated to his clients: they have no cause for anxiety—they know that, happen what may, their money is secure. To those dependent on their existing capital this must be an important consideration.

During recent years great difficulties have been experienced in the management of mortgage securities, and, following upon the depression through which the country has passed, private trustees have been given legislative power to write off principal and interest due to estates in their charge, *but there has been no writing off in estates invested in the Common Fund.*

*Interest runs continuously, and is paid regularly free of all deductions, including exchange, anywhere in New Zealand.*