

4. It was never intended that the Office should amass large profits from the administration of estates and funds entrusted to it. Whenever these operations have returned a surplus over the expenditure and enabled proper provision to be made for depreciation and reserves the estates and funds under administration have been given the benefit of the surplus. Between the years 1916 and 1920 a bonus was distributed amongst beneficiaries and the funds administered by the Public Trustee. It is, however, considered more satisfactory to grant concessions by way of increased rates of interest and reduced charges for the services rendered. It will be seen that it has been part of the settled policy of the Office for some years to make these concessions; a portion of this policy has already been carried into effect, and it will be developed further as circumstances permit. Progress in this direction is necessarily slow at present, owing to the fact that a portion of the Office funds invested a number of years ago on long-term loans return a low rate of interest in comparison with both the rates at present returned by the Office investments and the interest credited on moneys invested in the Common Fund of the Office. However, as these investments fall in and the funds are reinvested at higher rates of interest it will probably be found possible to grant yet more extensive concessions.

The charges which the Office makes for the administration of estates, trusts, and funds have always borne favourable comparison with the charges made by concerns transacting similar business in the Dominion. This position will be regarded as all the more favourable to the Office when, as pointed out in my statement last year, it is recognized that the Office is called upon, without adequate remuneration, to administer numbers of small estates and to perform many duties of a miscellaneous nature.

5. The following is a statement of the concessions granted since 1923 in respect of interest credited on moneys invested in the Common Fund of the Office and the commission levied or other charges made for services rendered :—

(A.) By regulations made under the Public Trust Office Act, 1908, and other statutory enactments affecting the Office, dated the 26th August, 1923, and published in the *New Zealand Gazette* No. 64, dated the 23rd August, 1923, which took effect as from the 1st April, 1923, the following concessions were granted in respect of commission and charges :—

Charges upon the Capital of Estates when realized.—The commission charged on amounts from £5,000 to £10,000 was reduced from $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.; the charge on amounts from £10,000 to £50,000 was reduced from $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 1 per cent.; the charge on amounts in excess of £50,000 was reduced from $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. In certain special cases where the rate of commission on amounts in excess of £50,000 was 1 per cent. this rate was reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Commission on the Capital of Estates when transferred in Kind to Beneficiaries.—The commission charged on the value of properties so transferred was reduced from $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. to 1 per cent. on that portion of the value from £5,000 to £10,000, and from $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. to $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the portion in excess of £10,000.

Income Charges.—The commission charged on rent was reduced from 5 per cent. to $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on amounts in excess of £500 per annum and not exceeding £1,000.

Special Fees.—In addition to reducing the commission for the administration of estates, the regulations referred to above also abolished many classes of fees charged by the Public Trustee, including the fees charged for the obtaining of grants of administration, the preparation and filing of stamp accounts, the supervision of repairs to properties, the settlement of mortgages, the registering of the Public Trustee's title to property, the preparation of conditions of sale, and in most cases the charges made for the inspection of rural properties by the Office Farm Inspectors.