

REPORT ON THE WORKING OF THE PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1930.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit a report on the working of the Public Trust Office for the financial year ended 31st March, 1930.

1. The balance-sheet and accounts disclose the large increase which has taken place in the work entrusted to the Office and the general extension of its operations during the year. This constitutes a record in the history of the Department, and the progressive increase year by year may be fairly taken as a certain indication that it is steadily growing in public favour as a knowledge of its objects and the advantages it offers is disseminated amongst the people.

2. During the past fifty-seven years people interested in all manner of estates, large and small, have had ample opportunities to test the administration of the Public Trust Office, and the size which the business has now assumed is positive proof that the Department has fully stood the test of time.

THE PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE SYSTEM.

3. The Public Trust Office system has proved an undoubted success wherever it has been established. It was inaugurated in New Zealand in 1872, and has made steady progress ever since its inception. As I will show later on in this report, the estates controlled by the Public Trustee of New Zealand number over 18,500, the value amounting to the phenomenal figure of over £53,000,000, and prospects indicate even greater expansion and more rapid development in the future. The conspicuous success of the Public Trust Office of New Zealand has led to the creation of similar institutions in other parts of the British Empire, and consideration has at times been given to their establishment elsewhere. On the basis of population and total volume of wealth in the sphere of operations, it is apparent that the Public Trustee of New Zealand handles the highest proportion of business of all State officials conducting similar work. On the 31st March, 1930, the Public Trustee, London, administered estates and funds of approximately £220,000,000 in value, the net annual income being £11,000,000, and, although in operation only twenty-two years, from the point of view of volume of business is already acknowledged to be the largest corporation in the world devoted solely to trust work. The Public Trust Office, Sydney, which has been functioning only since the 1st January, 1914, had under administration on the 30th June, 1929, estates of an aggregate value of close on £5,000,000, whilst the value of the estates handled since the commencement of that office is approximately £14,000,000.

ORGANIZATION.

4. The work for which the Office was principally designed is of a very special character, so that, in addition to those which usually confront large business concerns, it has a number of problems peculiar to itself. Organization is necessary and important in a well-regulated concern of any size, if the business is to be transacted promptly and efficiently and future expansion provided for. As I have pointed out in previous reports, the operations of the Department depend for their efficiency not only upon knowledge on the part of the officers of a specialized and technical order, but also upon peculiar care and accuracy in routine. In the transaction of its extensive business the question of providing an organization which will ensure the proper handling of the manifold matters of complexity and difficulty, and at the same time the judicious, orderly, and vigorous management of routine, is prominent and essential. The type of the Office business, with its numerous relationships and special responsibilities, justifies distinctive organization and