

## LEGAL DIVISION.

27. The legal officers of the Department have been fully occupied during the year in carrying out the legal work entailed by the Office activities, which consists chiefly of the preparation of wills, the preparation and perusal of documents of various kinds, general legal advising, the obtaining of administration in favour of the Public Trustee and other applications to the Court, and the representation of the Public Trustee in Court proceedings in which he is directly concerned or in which he is directed by the Court to represent a party.

During the year administration was obtained in 2,112 estates. Other Court applications for leave to take steps necessary in administration, but not authorized by the will or by statute, numbered 85, while in 7 cases it was necessary to file a certificate under Part IV of the Administration Act electing to administer the estate concerned as insolvent. In addition, 21 exemplifications of probate or administration granted abroad and 78 exemplifications of New Zealand grants were sealed, and 48 powers of attorney issued, to enable assets situated outside the countries in which the original grant was made to be dealt with.

Upon this Division also lies the responsibility of investigating the possibility of claims for compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act in respect of estates administered by the Public Trustee, obtaining orders for the apportionment of compensation which has been awarded or paid, and furnishing the Court with reports on applications for apportionment made by other persons.

## OFFICE ORGANIZATION AND REPRESENTATION.

28. *District Representation.*—The Public Trustee has branch offices established throughout the Dominion to enable the administration of estates to be conducted in close proximity to the assets and to the beneficiaries. There are 23 main branches under the control of District Public Trustees, 21 smaller branches controlled by District Managers, 37 non-permanent agents, and 9 part-time offices, giving direct representation in 90 cities and towns.

29. *Inspections and Audit.*—The work of every branch office is inspected by one or more officers of the inspectorial staff of Head Office at intervals of approximately one year.

In addition to reviewing the administration of the estates and office systems devised to ensure that all work is carried out promptly and efficiently, a survey is made of staff requirements and other phases of a general nature.

At every branch there is maintained continuously a comprehensive internal check of cash, securities, and valuables, and this check is supplemented by a half-yearly audit conducted by the Government Audit Department. The selection of those officers who fill responsible positions involving the control of cash and securities is given very careful consideration.

## CONCLUSION.

30. I desire once again to place on record my appreciation of the devoted and zealous services rendered by the Assistant Public Trustees, the Controlling Officers, the staff as a whole, and the Office Agents throughout the Dominion. By their unremitting attention to the duties entrusted to them they have in a large measure contributed to the growth of business and the success of the Office operations. Cordial thanks are also due to the members of the Investment Board for the assistance which they have given throughout the year in the consideration of applications for loans from the Office funds.

I have, &c.,  
E. O. HALES,  
Public Trustee.

The Hon. the Minister in Charge of the Public Trust Office.

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