

is in operation which ensures that junior officers are capable of carrying out more senior duties at an earlier period in their service than would otherwise be the case—a very essential consideration in view of the comparatively high wages which must be paid to junior officers. So far as practicable transfers of officers, particularly married ones, have been kept at a minimum. While it is considered desirable that officers should obtain experience in different offices throughout the country, the housing difficulty and the costs involved make restriction of transfers imperative; however in a graded salary scheme transfers cannot be entirely avoided.

ORGANIZATION

In the face of rising operating costs mainly due to salary increases and the lower yield on Office investments, it has become increasingly difficult for the Office to make a profit and at the same time make provision for reserves. For the year ended 1939 the salaries paid by the Office amounted to £283,215, as compared with £427,122 for the year under review, although in the latter year the number of staff had been reduced by 71 compared with the staff for 1939. Expenses are being reduced wherever possible to ensure that the operations of the Department are conducted on a sound financial basis. A careful survey of the Department's organization and systems has been undertaken with a view to simplification of procedures so that more work can be carried out by fewer staff without impairing the efficiency of the services rendered. The staff as at the 31st March, 1949, was 902, a reduction of 33 compared with the number at the same date in 1948. It is expected that as a result of the survey of the organization a further reduction will be effected in the current year. However, in the face of rising costs the Office may not be able to carry out without reasonable remuneration many statutory duties it has done in the past either without charge or for an inadequate return for the services rendered.

CONCLUSION

It gives me great pleasure to place on record my appreciation of the loyal co-operation, the energy, and zeal of the whole staff generally and of the agents of the Office throughout the Dominion. All have worked untiringly in the interests of the Department and its clients throughout the year, and their efforts have been responsible for the efficient working of the Office during the year.

I have, &c.,

H. W. S. PEARCE, Public Trustee.

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

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