

Public Trustee only on matters of major importance. At branches controlling several District Manager offices, the change has resulted in an appreciable lessening in estates administration work, so much so that it has been found possible to release fourteen officers at the branches concerned.

Substantial savings have also been made in the accounting work of the Department by the widening of the measure of authority granted to accounting officers. As a result of this it has been found practicable to reduce considerably the number of Examiners and Senior Accounts Clerks at some branches, the work previously done by these officers now being shared among the remaining staff.

The staff at 31st March, 1949, numbered 902 officers; at 31st March, 1950, 846 officers, a reduction of 56 officers.

While it is not claimed that the reorganization of the work referred to above has been the sole contributing factor in effecting the reduction of staff, it has been the major factor. As a direct result of the reorganization approximately 30 officers were placed at the disposal of the Public Service Commission for transfer to other Government Departments. Other positions left vacant by officers on retirement or promotion to other Government Departments have not been filled.

An important feature of the reorganization is that, despite the reduction in staff and an increase in the volume of new business, there has been no impairment of the high standard of services rendered to clients of the Office or to the public generally.

Every effort is being directed towards reducing expenses so that the operations of the Department are conducted on a sound financial basis. At the same time action has been taken to ensure that the Department's assets yield an economic return, and with this end in view the consolidation of Office staffs has been carried out at Head Office and several of the larger branches so that further floor space might be made available for renting. Rentals exceeding £3,000 per annum are now being received for space previously unproductive. This policy will be followed wherever possible to ensure that all available accommodation is put to economic use.

Early in the year the estimates of income and expenditure were closely scrutinized, and prompt and appropriate action was taken to ensure that if possible a profit would be made. It seemed that the increases in salary from 1st June, 1949, would preclude this, but the expenditure was kept under close review throughout the year to such good effect that a profit of £7,016 was shown, as against a loss of £5,801 for the previous year.

CONCLUSION

In submitting this report I desire to place on record my appreciation of the co-operation and assistance given to me by the Assistant Public Trustees and of the services rendered by the staff at Head Office and the district offices and by the agents throughout the Dominion. The satisfactory results recorded during the year contain in themselves a tribute to their devoted and efficient service.

I have, &c.,

H. PEARCE,
Public Trustee.

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

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