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History of the profession in South Africa

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This is Main Street in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Touche, Ross, Bailey & Smart occupies offices on the seventh floor of the United Building, seen in the background on the left of photo.



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The History of the Profession

THE PROFESSION OF ACCOUNTANCY in the Union of South Africa was established towards the end of the last century and the beginning of this one through the efforts of Scottish and English Chartered Accountants and of Incorporated Accountants who had set up in public practice.

As there was no Union of South Africa at that time, separate Societies of Accountants were formed in each of the two republics of the Transvaal and Orange Free State and in each of the two colonies—the Cape and Natal.

Following the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910



PROBAS OFFICE IN DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA.

n South Africa

moves were made towards unification of the profession in South Africa. The first evidence of this was in 1921 when the four principal Societies established the South African Accountants Societies General Examining Board, but the biggest step forward was in 1927 when the Chartered Accountants Designation (Private) Act was passed, conferring upon members of the four Societies mentioned, the use of the designation Chartered Accountant (South Africa).

In 1934 the four Societies adopted uniform by-laws in which service under Articles of Clerkship was compulsory, the period being five years with a remission of two years for graduates of a recognized university.



Johannesburg's H.C. Twycross is a council member of the Transvaal Society.

In 1945 a Joint Council of Chartered Accountants of South Africa was formed to create greater unity in the profession.

In 1950 the Chartered Societies made an arrangement with the Universities of South Africa whereby the Universities would take over the training and examining of articled clerks other than in respect of the final qualifying examination which would continue to be conducted by the profession as a uniform standard of examination entry to the profession.

In 1951 after several previous abortive attempts the Public Accountants and Auditors Act was passed to establish a statutory register for those entitled to practice as auditors. This Act had become necessary because, although the members of the Chartered Societies formed by far the majority of professional accountants, there was no general prohibition on practicing as an auditor, and the State considered it preferable to have a uniform standard.

In terms of the Act, the Public Accountants and Auditors Board took over from the Chartered Societies their control of the training and examination of articled clerks.

The Act provides that all public accountants who are qualified in terms of the Act to practice, must register and be members of the Public Accountants and Auditors Board. No person who is not regis-



J. C. Macintosh is senior partner, TRB&S in Johannesburg.

SOUTH AFRICA continued

Three girls work in the reception area of the Johannesburg Office.





Partner C. I. Mun-Gavin, standing, with J. A. Stewart, senior partner, both of the Durban Office of TROBAS.

tered is permitted to practice as a public accountant and auditor. The Act regulates the training and examining of articled clerks, it further provides disciplinary rules and penalties, some severe, for contravention of these rules and also covers a code of professional etiquette. There is provision for the admittance under certain conditions of members of certain organized bodies of professional accountants outside the Union; among these are The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the Canadian Institute of Accountants, The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, the same Institutes in Scotland, Ireland and Australia and the Rhodesia Society of Accountants.

The Chartered Societies (S.A.) continue as voluntary provincial societies to deal with professional research and domestic matters and they work in close conjunction with the Public Accountants and Auditors Board.

All the Associated Firms of TROBAS in South Africa have been in public practice for from 50 to 30 years and each consists of an average of six partners and forty assistants.

In the main the practices of these firms is public auditing but they also undertake the other functions of an accountancy practice, such as secretarial work, tax consultation, trusteeships, liquidations, and financial management.



Senior staff men wait in the reception area of the Cape Town Office.

Bob Steyn, left, and Wilfrid Chetwin talk over a complex problem at the Cape Town Office of TROBAS.

