

3082. Since the Commissioners have opened up that little writing-desk, and shown to you a lot of private letters, you now believe that you made a misstatement when you said you had destroyed them?—Yes, I made the misstatement in error, not intentionally, of course. There they are, as I received them.

3083. What other effects within your knowledge have been sold in connection with estates at auction besides jewellery?—Clothing and furniture. It is generally clothing and jewellery.

3084. Assorted clothing?—Yes.

3085. Even such things as musical-boxes?—I do not recollect.

3086. Writing-desks?—Yes.

3087. Musical instruments?—I do not recollect any musical instruments. We have had captains' effects, quadrants, sextants, and such like.

3088. Then you have had various kinds of scientific instruments?—Yes.

3089. Instruments for navigation?—Yes.

3090. There is no record of any of those articles in any book in your office?—They are on the records of the estate. I think there were two instances of captains dying.

3091. Then, you had assorted clothing?—Yes.

3092. Have you sold any hob-nailed boots?—We have sold a great many boots.

3093. You never had any orders to purchase boots of that class?—Never.

3094. Did you have orders for other articles?—Yes, jewellery.

3095. *Mr. Loughrey.*] Do you think that it was right and proper, you being cognisant of the section mentioned, that you should have raised any question at all as to the legitimacy or otherwise of this young man?—Well, I think we should have had the opportunity of proof.

3096. Do you think it was right or proper, knowing that section, that a question of legitimacy or otherwise ought to have crept up?—Yes, because that refers to payment to illegitimates. We gave him an opportunity of proving his legitimacy.

3096A. What difference did it make whether he was legitimate or illegitimate, as to the distribution of the effects of Mrs. Dallon?—If he were legitimate there might be other children to divide the estate amongst.

3097. Did you make inquiries?—We never heard of any other children.

3098. Look at this letter addressed to Mr. Dallon, the father of this young man, by H. C. Wilkinson, Lieut.-Colonel commanding the 16th Queen's Lancers, reporting to his father most favourably of his son, A. E. Dallon, while in the regiment?—The information I received was that there was one son.

3099. But you put "supposed to be illegitimate"?—Morrison said he supposed him to be illegitimate, too.

3100. *The Chairman.*] Now, how many articles, in the various and frequent times that you have purchased at those auction-sales, in a rough guess, have you bought?—I could not really say. It goes back to 1873.

3101. Then you have been in the business since 1873?—Yes.

3102. How many articles have you bought—fifty?—No.

3103. Forty?—I should say not twenty.

3104. You would not swear that you had not bought twenty?—No; but not more certainly, if so many; but I really could not say how many I bought.

3105. *Mr. Macdonald.*] What is your usual practice in intestate estates where you know next-of-kin exists? Do you realise personal effects?—We should realise such things as clothing, boots, &c., which we should not keep in the office.

3106. Without any reference to the next-of-kin?—Yes; but there have been cases where next-of-kin have written to New Zealand to say they would like the whole effects of a son, or whoever it may be, sent home, and they would pay expenses. We have done so.

3107. But then the sale must have taken place before the letters were received?—We might not have received the effects. A man died in Wanganui who had effects in Wanganui and in Dunedin both, and we sent home the effects at the request of the father. We had not sold, of course. We were told beforehand that the relatives would probably apply for them.

3108. *The Chairman.*] You will attend at this office to-morrow morning again?—If you want me.

3109. *Mr. Loughrey.*] Will you open that sealed packet; it is sealed by you. [Witness hesitated, saying he thought he should get the consent of the Public Trustee before opening the packet. The Chairman directed the witness to open the packet, and it was then opened by him, and disclosed a number of letters addressed to the deceased Mrs. Dallon.]

Mr. R. C. HAMERTON, Public Trustee, further examined.

3110. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Hamerton, the Commissioners are still on the estate of Mrs. Dallon. The more it opens out, and the more that information is evolved from the dealings of and its connection with the Public Trust Office, the more astounding the revelations become. Now, are you aware whether there is any Act or section of an Act giving you the power to hand over to or give the benefit of estates to illegitimate children?—Yes; the Administration Act of 1879.

3111. Is that mandatory, or does it provide under certain circumstances?—Under certain circumstances.

3112. Then, you do not think it is mandatory?—I should take it to be mandatory if the circumstances would meet the case.

3113. Do you remember what the circumstances are?—Yes.

3114. I will read you the clause. [Clause 37 of "The Administration Act, 1879," read.] Well, now, is not this case of Mrs. Dallon directly in point?—Yes.

3115. Well, then, can you tell me, under those circumstances, why you disregarded her son's