

letter—first his cablegram, then his letter, in reference to that portion of his mother's estate, the jewellery, &c., asking that it should not be sold?—I stated yesterday there had been an unfortunate oversight, and I see it more now; but the young man has not produced anything to show he is the son.

3116. But you have admitted it. You are aware that you have admitted over and over again that he is the son. You wrote to him about his mother's death: are you not aware of that?—I have no doubt of it.

3117. Then, looking at that section in the Administration Act of 1889, does this not seem to you not only a hard case, but a very outrageous one, so far as the treatment of this young man by your office?—It has been unfortunate, no doubt. It arose, undoubtedly, from overlooking that provision you have just read.

3118. Has it not been more than unfortunate when you consider that the very articles of bijouterie that this son in a distant land wanted to obtain, to preserve and keep in remembrance of his late mother—his mother's watch and other things—that, in spite of his very proper request, made, firstly, by wire, followed up by a nicely-worded letter, you not only rush these effects to auction when it suits the whim of yourself, the Public Trustee, and your chief officer is commissioned to go to the auction and buy the articles that the son so dearly and affectionately prized—his mother's watch among them?—He shall have that.

3119. That, at this hour, has nothing to do with it. I ask you whether it is your opinion it is not worse than unfortunate?—No, I cannot call it worse than unfortunate, because it arose out of not having in view that section.

3120. Why do you hold this position, and having had the advantage of a legal training?—Oh, I cannot excuse it.

3121. Then, Mr. Hamerton, I am not going to mince matters. I am going to put it straight to you: Do you not think that transaction is absolutely dishonest?—No, I cannot think it.

3122. Well, I do; I call it dishonest, and that is my opinion of it.—[No answer.]

3123. *Mr. Loughrey.* Knowing that section in the Administration Act, do you not think it is very improper that any question should have been raised of legitimacy or otherwise of this young Dallon?—Well, without looking at the papers, I am not aware the question was raised.

3124. *The Chairman.* You shall see his letter. You admitted after reading his letter yesterday that he did make the request?—I do not know that I raised any question of legitimacy.

3125. *Mr. Loughrey.* If you look at the papers you will see that you put "Supposed illegitimate" on them? [Witness refers to the papers.]—It is on the papers only; it is not given to the outside world.

3126. The information is given to young Dallon and other persons who never suspected it. If there was no question of legitimacy raised outside the office, why were his mother's things not forwarded to him?—I see no reference at all to illegitimacy in my letters to Dallon.

3127. Were you satisfied that this young Dallon was the son of the intestate lady?—There is no reasonable doubt he was.

3128. The letters received at the office show that he was the son?—Yes.

3129. Then, why were the things not sent to him without any comment at all? He was entitled to those things, legitimate or otherwise?—Yes.

3130. Why were these articles not forwarded to him without any comment?—We always ask for proof of birth, in order to show that there is the relation of mother and child.

3131. *The Chairman.* Well, Mr. Hamerton, you have had two auction-sales in connection with Mrs. Dallon's estate, and you have now left over two packets. This lace was in one packet, and this writing-desk, photographs, letters, and so forth—little *et ceteras*—were in the other packet. Why were these not sent to young Dallon?—We were waiting for a reply to this letter: "Your claim to the residue as sole next-of-kin cannot be established without proofs of kinship." Of course, this is based on a misapprehension—ignorance, in fact—or oversight of that clause in the Act.

3132. Now, can you seriously tell me that is a proper answer from you, who have had over ten years' experience in this office?—It is unfortunate, sir, but I tell you the truth.

3133. Had this Commission of inquiry not taken place, these articles belonging to this estate would remain in these packets for how long?—Until we had written to the gentleman again.

3134. And when would that have occurred?—It is impossible to say.

3135. Do you think ever?—I do not think we should, unless we had some news either from him or of him.

3136. Was he ever likely to write to your office again, looking at the way in which you had previously bluffed him?—I cannot think there was any bluffing.

3137. Well, what is that last letter you wrote? Read it again—"Until he has proved his legitimacy"?—No, kinship.

3138. Is that not the same thing? Do you mean until he proved that this woman was his mother?—Yes.

3139. After you and your Chief Clerk admitting she was his mother?—Yes.

3140. Are you aware this packet of lace which was tendered to you by Mr. Morrison, and afterwards handed by him to Mr. De Castro, by your directions, was in the casket of jewellery?—I am not aware.

3141. Are you aware that this packet of lace was kept back from the last sale?—I was not aware, except I see it here now.

3142. And are you aware this packet of lace could not be found in the safe, where Mr. De Castro said he kept it, and where it ought to have been, yesterday?—No, I was not aware.

3143. Then, you were not aware that Mr. De Castro produced it this morning?—He had it in his hands this morning.

3144. Are you aware he only produced it this morning?—Yes.