

3384. Where is the clean book, so to speak?—We have no such book. This book is kept as clean as it can be under the circumstances.

3385. This is your only record of assets and claims?—It is.

3386. There is no attempt made by the department to keep any other book in a more complete form?—There is not.

3387. And the whole appearance of that book is decidedly rough?—It is decidedly rough.

3388. You told me your Assets and Claims book is a record of any jewellery or effects belonging to any estate?—Yes.

3389. *The Chairman.*] In regard to jewellery and other effects, they are not under your control?—They are not.

3390. They are kept by Mr. De Castro?—Yes.

3391. Supposing any articles so kept were to disappear, could you detect them?—I could not.

3392. So that if you were now to go through your Assets and Claims book, and make me out a list of all personalty in the shape of jewellery, wearing apparel, and other effects pertaining to that class of property which men and women die possessed of, would the list you make out show what ought to exist in Mr. De Castro's safe?—It should show.

3393. Is that ever checked periodically?—It is.

3394. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Could you make out such a complete list?—I could not. An agent will forward, "Silver watch, &c.," or "Silver watch, chain, &c." That is all I hear of it. The " &c." might embrace anything. I have to be content with that in my Assets and Claims book. I do not see it then, as a rule.

3395. Do you not know that after a parcel of jewellery is taken from Mr. De Castro's safe, under instructions of the Public Trustee, it is placed on Mr. De Castro's table for inspection?—I do not know that.

3396. Do you know that if you wanted to see the jewellery, and asked Mr. De Castro to let you see it, he would let you see it?—I dare say he would.

3397. Do you know that officers of the department have inspected jewellery going to sale before it went to the sale?—I believe they have.

3398. And they have made up their minds as to the value of any article that they desired to purchase?—I believe such is the case.

3399. Do you ever remember inspecting anything of that kind?—I inspected the watch I am wearing now before I bought it.

3400. Where did you inspect it?—I saw it before it went to the auction-room.

3401. Then, when Mr. De Castro has these parcels of jewellery prepared to go to the sale, does he give notice to the officers?—Oh, no! at least, I do not know.

3402. He does not blow a horn?—Not that I am aware of.

3403. He gives them an opportunity of seeing it?—Yes, if they wish it.

3404. *Mr. Loughrey.*] Supposing a case of jewellery comes into this office, to whom would it be handed?—To the Chief Clerk.

3405. How would you make your entry in your Assets and Claims book?—Mr. De Castro would give me "Silver watch and gold chain, &c."

3406. An " &c." would not show what the *et ceteras* are?—No.

3407. By whose instructions do the agents sell?—By the Public Trustee's.

3408. If an estate is solvent, the jewellery is sent down to you?—Yes.

3409. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Have you ever had instances of personalty being sold privately?—I do not recollect. I believe outside of Wellington it has been so sold once or twice.

3410. Have you no record in this office of the personalty of the various intestate estates that have gone through the office? Could you point out to the Commissioners any book which contains a complete detailed record of the personalty of every intestate estate that has come into this office?—I could not.

3411. Has such a record ever been kept?—Not that I know of. The Assets and Claims book is the nearest approach to it.

3412. And that by no means satisfies that position?—I do not think it does.

3413. So that it might be possible for many articles to come into the office in connection with an estate—that is, the personalty—without their being at all recorded, and to disappear without the office knowing much about them?—I dare say they could, if any one was rogue enough to do it.

3414. *The Chairman.*] Then are you not at the mercy, so far as correctness of any inventory you might make in your Assets and Claims book in regard to personalty, such as "jewellery, &c.," of the Rev. Mr. De Castro and his safe?—I certainly am, undoubtedly.

3415. Is that a satisfactory way to have valuable assets kept?—I do not know who else could have charge of them. If they were under me they would be at my mercy, just as they now are at his. He is supposed to have a small book of his own, in which he enters up all these things.

3416. Have you ever seen that book?—I have.

3417. Have you ever compared your assets and claims, and balanced that part of the assets and claims with his book?—Never.

3418. Have you ever looked into his book?—I may have for one article, to see if it was there.

3419. Do you know in what style he has kept that secret book?—Yes.

3420. Do you think it is kept in a proper style to give information to the office when wanting it if he were away?—No, I do not. You would have to refer to the safe to see what was there.

3421. Then, this secret book appears to have been commenced at a recent date?—I could not give an idea when.

3422. You never saw the inside of the book?—Yes, but I never examined it.

3423. Will you take that book and examine it, and tell me whether it is a proper book to keep as a record of a valuable amount of personal effects? [*Mr. De Castro's private memorandum-book*]