

3624. You have no doubt about that?—No. Well, of course, I do not know anything about that. I understood him to say so.

3625. Now, there must be no prevarication. I want you to state distinctly—be under no fear, but state distinctly—what passed between you and Mr. De Castro?—Well, I understood him to say the parcel had been there all the time.

3626. You have no doubt about that?—No.

The Rev. CHARLES DANIEL DE CASTRO further examined.

3626. *The Chairman.*] When does your leave expire, Mr. De Castro?—On the 20th June.

3627. Are you going out of town immediately?—I expect to go shortly.

3628. *Mr. Loughrey.*] Were the private letters that you state were found in Mrs. Dallon's estate referred by you to the Public Trustee?—No, not that I know of. I think I showed him afterwards those I put in the sealed cover. I am not sure about it.

3629. Is it not usual for the Public Trustee to inquire to see all letters?—Not private letters.

3630. So you formed the conclusion yourself that this young man was the illegitimate son of Mrs. Dallon?—Yes.

3631. And you were well aware at the time of "The Administration Act, 1879"?—Yes, the clause I pointed out yesterday.

3632. *The Chairman.*] Then, you looked upon the character of that unfortunate woman as rather tainted from those circumstances?—Certainly.

3633. Well, you did not think her watch was tainted when you bought it for the Public Trustee?—No, I did not.

3634. *Mr. Loughrey.*] And, notwithstanding that you had full knowledge of that section of the Act, and notwithstanding you had a letter from the son desiring you to preserve her effects, you ordered these things to be sold?—The Public Trustee ordered them to be sold.

3635. *The Chairman.*] Do you and the Public Trustee ever consult together on those matters of sales?—Yes.

3636. Then I have no doubt you had consulted in this case?—Yes, as to whether we should sell or keep. Do you want that book [referring to his private jewellery-book in possession of the Commissioners]? will you allow me to take it?

*The Chairman:* This is your secret, private book. I cannot part with this book.

*Witness:* There is an entry to be made in it of a watch.

*The Chairman:* Then send up particulars of that watch, and they can be entered here.

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

3637. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Hamerton, can you call to mind what articles you have in your possession that you purchased at the different auction-sales belonging to deceased persons' estates?—Yes. There are four gold watches and three gold chains; there are two silver watches and two silver chains; two rings, and I am not quite sure whether there is a third.

3638. Nothing else?—I do not call anything else to mind, unless Mr. De Castro bought some small oval photographs of streets in a cathedral city. I cannot call it to mind. The jewellery was all out of estates.

3639. Speaking of Mrs. Dallon, you have supposed her to have an illegitimate son?—Yes.

3640. In that case you would look upon her as somewhat tainted—that her fair fame had been tainted?—Yes. You mean to say the world would look upon it in that way.

3641. Yes. Now, Mr. Hamerton, did it occur to you that the watch you bought for your daughter was tainted?—It did not occur to me.

3642. Well, now, would you be prepared to disgorge and give up all those articles you have bought belonging to dead men and dead women?—Most clearly.

3643. If you did, do you think that would recompense all those people who may be interested in those particular articles?—No; the damage is done and cannot be undone.

3644. Then, Mr. Hamerton, let me put this very seriously to you. As a man arrived at a fair age of life, and of considerable experience, do you think, when the public come to know of these transactions that have taken place in connection with yourself, your second officer, your third officer, your Solicitor, and other more subordinate officers as to your dealings with the estates of deceased men and women, and in your acquisition of effects belonging to those estates, that such transactions will be likely to inspire confidence in the Public Trust Office?—No. Since I first saw you I have thought very seriously over it, and I cannot think that it will inspire confidence.

3645. Do you not think that they are likely to do a great deal of harm?—I think it must do so.

3646. Well, now, I want to say this to you: Mr. De Castro has been again before the Commissioners this morning, and I wish you to hear read the evidence which has been extracted from him. I may premise my remarks by stating that you are aware that the Commissioners made minute inquiries yesterday in respect of a packet of lace. You are aware of that?—Yes.

3647. And that through your son, Mr. Stanley Hamerton, a message was conveyed to the Commissioners from Mr. De Castro, handing in a packet of lace, and stating where it had been found, and where it had been kept since the last sale of jewellery in March, 1890, in the estate of Mrs. Dallon. Now, when you have heard the evidence of Mr. De Castro it will then be my duty to ask you how you intend to act, because, in my opinion, and, I believe, in the opinion of my colleagues, when you have heard what Mr. De Castro has revealed this morning, you will agree with the Commissioners that the matter requires prompt action—not only prompt, but very decisive. Will you, Mr. Grey, now read your shorthand notes, in order that Mr. Hamerton may learn the nature of the evidence of the Rev. Mr. De Castro to which I have just referred. [Mr. Grey read his shorthand notes of the evidence given by Mr. De Castro that morning.]