

4167. What is the income resulting from this estate, as managed by the Public Trust Office?
—I cannot say without reference to the ledger.

4168. Would the papers there give the full information as to the management of the estate?—They would not give the amount of costs paid.

4169. On whose recommendation did you enter into this expensive litigation—by whose advice? Did you do it of your own motion?—We were served with a writ by the uncles of this young lady.

4170. Did you inquire into the rights of the uncles after they served the writ?—I put the matter into the hands of Mr. Martin, of Christchurch, to do what was necessary.

4171. Does the Public Trustee never try to settle actions rather than incur great costs in expensive litigation?—Yes; I have done so.

4172. Was no attempt made to settle this action?—Not by me personally. I left it to Mr. Martin, who defended the case.

4173. And did Mr. Martin receive all these costs—£779?—I believe so.

4174. Read the minute you made on the papers on receiving Mr. Martin's report of the result of the action?—It is as follows:—

Minute by Public Trustee on Position of Estate of Hugh Wright, after Order of Court of 30th Day of October, 1888, was granted.—The position, as I understand it, is as follows: The recent action has resulted in depriving the estate of all the Malvern property, and in pledging the Riccarton property to the extent of £1,300, entailing not only the loss of rent of the former land, but an annual charge of £78. The position is shown clearly in a statement prepared for Messrs. Stout and Mondy, on the 8th ultimo, attached, 89/180. It is evident that £1 10s. per week cannot continue to be paid to Miss Wright out of a net annual income of £59 10s. 8d., with the father's maintenance and incidental expenses also. There is owing for the latter's maintenance nearly £120. Either further property must be sold or the allowance to Miss Wright very greatly curtailed, and this should be pointed out to Messrs. Stout and Mondy. Pay Miss Wright £24 to 19th June instant. Pay Public Account £117 to 31st May ultimo.—R. C. H. 15/6/89.

4175. And some of the property, being mortgaged, was, in consequence of the action brought by the brothers, sold to pay the costs and their claim?—Yes.

4176. Are you surprised that Miss Wright is very much dissatisfied?—I am not surprised.

SATURDAY, 2nd MAY, 1891.

The Rev. CHARLES DANIEL DE CASTRO further examined.

4177. *The Chairman.*] Mr. De Castro, I received a letter from you addressed to me in Mulgrave Street, where I live, and you ask me if I would grant you a private interview at my house at such time as might be convenient to me. Of course you must be aware that I can hold no private communication with you or with any officer of the Public Trust Office unless in this way. Now, I shall be glad to hear from you what that certain information, which you say in your letter has been given to you, is?—Is this all to appear?

4178. Yes, it will all be taken down?—Then, I am afraid I must leave it alone. I thought I might speak to you privately. The fact is, I was informed the blunders or errors which have been discovered in your investigations have been laid to my charge, and that the whole blame has been laid on my shoulders. If that is the case, I hope you will give me an opportunity of answering any such charge made against me.

4179. Is that all the "certain information" you refer to?—Yes.

4180. All I can say is this: that the Commissioners, up to the present time, have been employed in going through the books and the work of the office, and in taking evidence. That evidence up to Saturday last, after it had been printed and corrected by the several witnesses examined, has been sent to the Government, without any opinion on its nature from the Commissioners at all. So that the Commissioners have offered no opinion as yet?—I do not say the Commissioners have thrown any blame on me, but I was told by an old friend that the blame of certain errors has been thrown on me by officers of the Public Trust Office.

4181. By more than one officer?—I do not know. I only know I am told the blame of certain errors that have been discovered has been thrown on my shoulders.

4182. I can tell you this—so far as I can speak, as having heard the whole of the evidence—that no officer who has already given evidence before the Commissioners has attempted to throw any blame upon you, in my opinion. They have merely answered plain questions put to them by the Commissioners?—That was mentioned to me, and I was obliged to see you. I rather expected you would treat it in this way.

4183. Well, Mr. De Castro, do you remember the estate of Winter, in Blenheim?—Yes.

4184. Do you remember desiring to purchase a dog that belonged to the late Mr. Winter?—There was a dog, and I asked Mr. Macalister, our agent there, if he was any good. I was so pestered with rats that I wanted to get the dog to kill them.

4185. Did you communicate with Mr. Macalister and ask him to purchase that dog for you?—He told me it was a mongrel, and there was an end of it.

4186. Then, you would not buy a bad thing?—No. He told me it was a wretched thing. I never saw it.

4187. And you are not in the habit of buying bad things?—Not if I know it, sir. I hope you are satisfied about the bracelet. I never had it. It is said the bracelet is missing.

4188. To be plain with you, I am very far from being satisfied?—I can assure you, if I never speak a word before God—

4189. Why shed tears? I am not accusing you of anything, but the position you must see is a very unsatisfactory one. The Trust Office has given no account of that bracelet, and considering that you were the custodian of that particular class of personalty effects for so many years, and there is no record or trace of it?—I know that, and it is very bad. I am certain Morrison never