

4305. Did he not advise you in that estate?—Yes.

4306. Did he not receive the very heavy costs that were incurred in and partly impoverished that estate?—Yes.

4307. How much did those costs amount to?—£779.

4308. Nearly £800?—Yes.

4309. And what was the value of the estate altogether?—£3,700 now. It was £9,000.

4310. And this is the sort of professional man you believe in?—Yes.

4311. Notwithstanding that he advised you to incur those heavy charges in that small estate— notwithstanding that this Mr. J. C. Martin advised you, as your solicitor in Christchurch, to incur those very heavy charges which went into his pocket—nearly £800—in a matter of a disputed amount a little over £500?—The costs were no doubt very heavy, but they were taxed costs.

4312. They may have been; but what was, in the first instance, the amount involved—a little over £500?—I believe that was so.

4313. And yet you are satisfied with the private and underhand advice of this gentleman who incurred costs to the extent of 50 per cent. more than the original amount involved, to go into his own pocket. Now, are you satisfied with that?—I am satisfied, seeing the costs were honestly taxed by the Registrar of the Supreme Court.

4314. And you are satisfied because he condescends to write you a private communication decrying his friend?—I am not satisfied with that at all.

4315. Then, you tried strictly to preserve it as though you were satisfied, and acted on that communication?—And on other verbal communications.

4316. But did that letter of J. C. Martin's not guide you considerably?—Yes.

4317. Now, if that letter guided you, you came to this conclusion: that through that information received from Mr. Martin a change had better be made?—No, it was not on account of this information, because the change from the ordinary agent to the Civil Service agent had been decided in my mind for very many months.

4318. But this letter of Martin's in reference to your former agent decided you that it was not desirable to continue Mr. Acland any longer?—Yes.

4319. And you told the Colonial Treasurer so, although you did not tell him that you had received a letter from Mr. Martin, nor the contents of Martin's letter?—Yes, I believe so.

4320. When you parted with Mr. Acland, did you write him any letter or refer to the reason why he was to be dispensed with on so short a notice?—Yes, I think a letter was written to him.

4321. Will you read the letter you wrote to Mr. Acland, or state what you said when you parted company with him as your representative at Christchurch?—I wrote him the following letter:—

24th February, 1891.

It having been decided to introduce a new system for performing the work heretofore carried out by the agents of this office in the Canterbury Provincial District, I have the honour to inform you that Mr. J. J. M. Hamilton, of this office, has been appointed District Agent for the above district, and that he will commence the duties on the 2nd proximo. I have therefore to request you to be so good as to hand over to him all books, papers, and properties of all kinds belonging to this office when he applies for the same.

In relieving you of the responsible duties you have been performing, I take this opportunity of expressing my thanks for the exertion you have put forth in the interest of this office.

T. Acland, Esq., &c., Christchurch.

R. C. HAMERTON, Public Trustee.

4322. Then, when you parted company with Mr. Acland, you felt it necessary to thank him for his attentions to the business under his control?—And for his exertions.

4323. Leaving him to suppose that you were perfectly satisfied?—Apparently so.

4324. And in your heart it was some other and quite a different reason that had been propelling your action on the subject?—The simple reason was I had not that confidence which a principal ought to have in his agent.

4325. Why did you not then, as the head of this important business, at once, like a man, tell your agent you had not that confidence in him?—I did not think it was necessary.

4326. Would it not have been a more manly course, than using that deceitful mode you did use of getting rid of him?—Possibly it would have been.

4327. Had you never any fault to find with the Christchurch agency, and the manner in which it had been conducted?—No, beyond delays and inability to receive prompt answers sometimes; but, as a general rule, no.

4328. Can you point out to me any letter of your own remonstrating about delays?—I think I could if I referred to the papers.

4329. Perhaps you will have them looked up for the Commissioners on Monday. The Commissioners cannot leave the matter as finished at this stage. They desire to have much more information on the subject than they have got up to the present moment?—I shall be ready with the papers on Monday.

[Mr. Archibald Nairn, chief clerk of Messrs. Thomas and Co., auctioneers, called upon the Commissioners and informed them that the firm would be able to furnish particulars with regard to sales conducted by them on behalf of the Public Trust Office from the 29th January, 1890.]

MONDAY, 4TH MAY, 1891.

Mr. THOMAS ACLAND examined.

4330. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Acland, for a considerable time you have acted as agent in Christchurch for the Public Trustee?—Yes, my firm first, and latterly myself. I have acted solely since the 28th October, 1890.

4331. You succeeded Colonel Lean, I believe?—Yes.

4332. Now, would you kindly explain to the Commissioners when you first acted for the Public Trustee, or when you were communicated with by him on the subject of acting?—I think it