

hearted fellows, give a few shillings to those unfortunate people, so that they may not be absolutely in want. The necessity for doing this should not arise.

4382. In other words, if Canterbury is of sufficient importance to have an agency or branch of the Public Trust Office at Christchurch, the agent, whoever he may be, should have the confidence of the colony, and should be intrusted, at any rate, with the custody of the patients' funds, so that at the proper time, if any funds had to be disbursed, they might be disbursed under the authority of the agent?—Yes.

4383. *Mr. Loughrey.*] If a patient on going into the asylum has money, would he be destitute on coming out?—Yes. It would all be sent to Wellington, and before it can be brought back again he is cooling his heels about the streets in a destitute condition. The asylum authorities, of course, get money for maintenance.

4384. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Supposing a man went in with £50 in his pocket, and his maintenance exhausted that £50, when he is cured he has not a shilling?—No.

4385. And if he has personal estate, it is sold in the meantime?—I am not aware.

4386. *The Chairman.*] I see from a return which you have sent up that you were first appointed by Sir Julius Vogel in 1885, and that Acland, Barns, and Co. were appointed from the 1st January, 1887?—Yes.

4387. And I observe that, since the business came into your hands in 1887, the commission received by you was as follows: 1887, £79 7s. 6d.; 1888, £153 1s. 11d.; 1889, £114 1s. 10d.; 1890, £213 0s. 6d.?—Yes.

4388. Then, if you had had more freedom of scope in pushing business, I presume you could have made business come in more freely?—Yes; because our hands were tied. Everything had to be referred to Wellington.

4389. I find the last paragraph in the Public Trustee's letter to you of the 24th February, 1891, is as follows: "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." So that you had every reason to feel that you held his good opinion when he parted with you?—Yes.

4390. Do you think that a change having been made at Christchurch, and a manager or representative belonging to the Public Trust Office having been appointed, with instructions to visit the country districts as much as possible, he will be able to do so on a salary of £250 a year?—I do not think he will. I pointed out to the Public Trustee my objections to the change. I said, "We are always going about the country on other business of our own firm's. Your man cannot possibly leave without a sufficiently-good junior being there to take business, and this change, in my opinion, will cost you £350 additional."

4391. What do you think you would have to pay such a junior to represent the chief officer in his absence?—It would be impossible to get one under £100 to £150 a year.

4392. Would you think the munificent pay of 10s. a week too much to give a junior?—Too little altogether.

4393. The Commissioners think it fair to you to put certain questions direct which perhaps may seem at first sight a little strange; but, as certain representations have been made in an underhand manner by Mr. J. C. Martin, the solicitor for the Trust Office at Christchurch, which apart from being uncomplimentary are very derogatory to you, I beg you will excuse the Commissioners if they put one or two questions in regard to what he has said. Do you consider you are a pretty active, hard-working man of business?—Yes.

4394. More than ordinarily energetic?—I never neglected anything I could get to do.

4395. And you never had any fault found with you on the accusation of neglecting any business placed in your hands?—No. A member of the late Government, Mr. E. C. J. Stevens, came and asked me to act as trustee with Mr. McMillan, one of the Commissioners of Crown Lands, for the due performance of the contract for the Midland Railway. Mr. Stevens asked me personally to do it.

4396. That does not look as if you were a man likely to neglect business when such a strictly business man, such as Mr. Stevens, invites you to take that position?—No, it does not.

4397. Have you always been considered by your friends, and those who intrusted you with business, as a steady and reliable man?—I conclude so. I have no reason to think otherwise. I have just got a very intricate piece of business intrusted to me by Mr. Perceval, who is always a keen man.

4398. Have you ever practised any habit the reverse of being steady?—I suppose I am just like anybody else who occasionally takes a glass of grog, if I find I require it—I am not aware that I take any more than is good for me. I have been on the active management of the Christchurch Club for many years, which I dare say has been put down to me as a sin. When my partner left me, in order that I might devote more time to my business I resigned the secretaryship and treasurership of the club, so that nobody could possibly say I had any incentive to neglect my business. I have also resigned the directorship of a respectable wholesale wine company—Warre, Hoakley, and Co.

4399. Most men, Mr. Acland, have some vices—one or more: have you any peculiar or particular vice, or have you many vices?—I am no better nor worse than my fellow-men.

4400. If these and other such statements were made to the Public Trustee, are they true or false?—I consider them false.

4401. Can you say they are decidedly false?—They are decidedly false. There is one matter I would like to bring under the notice of the Commissioners. It came under my notice that the patients' effects at the Hospital were sometimes destroyed, and sometimes kept and given away to destitute patients who went out, which I considered an improper proceeding, and one that ought to be put a stop to. I mentioned this matter to Mr. Hamerton, and he entirely concurred in my advice, and told me I had done right.