

If that is a marriage by a clergyman, then that is the thirty-eighth marriage in that book?—That is so.

Is it his duty to keep a book?—Not necessarily. He can solemnize a marriage and use another man's book, but a book must be kept.

That was the thirty-eighth marriage solemnized by that clergyman?—It is the thirty-eighth one at Hamilton registered in that book.

Before that marriage was solemnized, the officiating minister should have had in his possession a certificate from the Registrar at Hamilton?—Yes, to authorize that marriage.

Which he retains?—Yes, he should retain it; it does not come to me.

The marriage having been solemnized, a document of that nature should have been sent down to Wellington for record in the Marriage Register at Wellington?—Yes.

Can you say if that has been done?—I have searched the Registrar's returns of marriage notices and I cannot find that a certificate was issued to authorize the marriage. I have looked in the index without result, also, in this case.

That marriage is not recorded in your books?—No. If a copy of that had been sent to us we would have refused to accept it because there was no certificate issued to authorize it.

Assuming a document like that had been sent to you and you had refused it, what action would you have taken?—We should ask the clergyman by whom the certificate was issued to authorize this marriage.

Would it rest at that—would it be cleared up?—If he said he did not receive the Registrar's certificate authorizing the marriage, we would advise him of the seriousness of the position, and ask him to advise the parties to the marriage of the position. We would recommend them to be married again after having taken out a Registrar's certificate. I have looked up the records for correspondence about this thing, but I cannot find anything. It would appear as if a return of this was never sent to us.

Your Marriage Registers are all open to the public?—Yes.

Are the Church registers open to the outside public?—I do not think so. I may add that a further search was made for marriages solemnized by the Rev. Joseph Croke Darby, of Hamilton, respecting the sequence of his numbers. I find returns for marriages Nos. 34 to 37, and then I find marriage No. 39.

Evidently, marriage No. 38 is not in your book?—That is so. I searched the Registrar's returns for Hamilton, Cambridge, and Te Awamutu for the year 1908.

*Mr. Forbes*: Who fills in that return there?—The minister in charge of the register would fill in that return. In this case it is written out by the Rev. Joseph Croke Darby, who solemnized the marriage.

The statement made, "bachelor" and "spinster," that has to be supplied to him by the parties concerned?—That is so. Accompanying the certificate authorizing the marriage is a blue form, and he enters the particulars from that form. The Registrar makes out the blue form.

*Hon. Mr. Anderson*: If you had any correspondence in connection with that, would it have been on your records?—I am certain it would. We always record them specially when marriages have been solemnized without Registrars' certificates.

Do you have many marriages solemnized without a Registrar's certificate?—A few. In looking through my record index for the year 1908 I ran across a marriage solemnized without a Registrar's certificate.

By whom?—A Mr. Raine.

Where is it?—I did not look it up.

How did you find out?—I was trying to find this one in the index under "Marriages."

What did he say in Raine's case?—I did not look it up to see.

There might be an explanation?—Yes. I did not look it up. If you like I can get the papers.

It would be just as well?—I can let you have them.

Have you other marriages?—Yes, three or four.

You have?—Yes, where we made them get married with a Registrar's certificate.

Can you furnish this Committee with particulars of those cases?—Yes, I think so.

*Mr. Savage*: In connection with the issue of these certificates, are they kept in duplicate? In the case of an oversight occurring on the part of the Department, what protection would the officiating clergyman have? Is there any duplicate or any means of tracing the certificates?—We do not keep a duplicate, but we keep a record of each certificate issued.

But supposing that record has not been made?—The certificate could not be issued without the notice being taken and the declaration made.

Supposing there is no record kept by the clerk who drew up the certificate?—You mean to say that there would be no notice taken and no declaration made?

Then the declaration is made first, before the certificate is issued?—Yes. The notice is signed, and the declaration is made as to the truth of the contents of it. It is entered in the notice-book, and the minister's name is inserted in the same book.

*Hon. Mr. Lee*: What becomes of the marriage notices: are they filed?—The book itself is.

They sign in the volume itself?—Yes.

*Mr. Savage*: But does the clergyman do so?—No, the clergyman does not. One of the parties to the marriage must do that.

So long as the clergyman gets the authority of the Registrar he is satisfied?—Yes.

That is the point: I want to know if there is any possibility of the clergyman being misled?—By a foolish Registrar issuing a certificate without taking the notice? We have some bad ones, but that would be pretty bad.