

the plan?—No; I should say not. Our property-book under the Native Reserves Act does contain the plan; and, by the way, our terriers under the West Coast Settlement Reserves Act also contain the plan.

482. It is generally understood in England and Scotland, where it may be necessary to keep a book called a “terrier,” that it shall contain not only the description of the property, but the plan?—We have not found the necessity of it.

483. However, I suppose, without such a mystifying name, a mere record-book of properties would answer all the purposes which this book you call “terrier” does?—A rent-book would answer the same purpose. That is to say, if the terrier were called a rent-book it would suffice.

484. When you make your annual balance on the 31st December, how do you treat your agents for any moneys in their hands? When you strike your annual balance here at the Head Office, what do you do in respect of the moneys in their hands? Do you show it in any part of your balance outstanding?—They are supposed to have all their cash banked on the last day of the year, and we take cognizance of that.

485. Supposing any of the agents have money in hand which is held over from the last day of the year, can you discover it?—We should discover it by the next rent or other returns, and by the cash-book of the succeeding month.

486. Is it not necessary that the agents should make a balance of their accounts on the 31st December such as you do, and send you a copy of that balance?—If they obey orders there is no necessity for it, because all the money will be in the bank, and there will be no return to make.

487. I see you have opened a branch at Christchurch, to which one of your own officers has been appointed. When you balance how will you treat Christchurch branch?—He must obey that order, and have everything in the bank.

488. Will he have no liabilities there?—None. Agents can have no liabilities.

489. Will he have no cash in the bank?—Yes; it will be in our balance.

490. How will you show that cash in hand in the Christchurch branch on the 31st December? Say, for example, that we have just closed the 31st December; Christchurch has closed its balance on that day, and has £1,560 to its credit at the bank. How do you show that in your balance at the Head Office?—The money is paid into the Public Trustee’s Account at Wellington.

491. Do I understand you to say that Christchurch or any other branch would have nothing in hand on your balance that would be shown separately on your balance-sheet?—If he obeys instructions the money is paid daily into the Public Trustee’s Account at Wellington. So that agents have never a farthing to their credit.

492. How do they commence the 1st January—bare?—Bare. The agents have no power of disbursement, except this agent at Christchurch.

493. The others, then, are mere ordinary agencies?—Yes.

494. I want to get at your idea of how you are going to manage Christchurch branch and any other branches that you may open?—The district agent at Christchurch will pay in all moneys, exactly the same as all other agents, to the credit of the Public Trustee’s Account in Wellington. The district agent at Christchurch will have, on the 31st December or on any other day, some moneys belonging to his Imprest Account. This Imprest Account will be operated upon by him. He will only have a balance of his Imprest Account on any day.

495. On the 31st December we will presume he had a balance to his Imprest Account. Well, how do you deal with that in your balance? Do you show Christchurch debtor to your office?—No; it is shown under the head “Imprests.”

496. Then it does not show in what part of the colony these imprest balances may exist?—The published account does not.

497. I want to see how your usual balance-sheet could be improved upon so as to show the public at a glance where your moneys are and how disposed of. But if you take a credit balance for imprest for any agent, and it is mixed up with other imprests in your balance-sheet, we and the public are in the dark?—That is so.

498. Do you not think it would be an improvement if the mode of book-keeping in that respect were altered?—I do. It is only fair to say I have not had a year’s experience with Christchurch.

499. What you have stated now is what is running in your mind as to the plan that would be adopted?—Yes.

500. You told me you could not say whether the balance could be made out from the Check Ledger, or which ledgers it could be made out from?—I should not like to give an answer, as I might be wrong.

501. Can you tell me the use of the Assets and Claims Ledgers as clearly and as fully as possible—that is another new series of peculiar ledgers that have been opened in your present Accountant’s time?—The Assets and Claims books were inaugurated in order that the Ledger-keepers might have at a glance, by opening these books, a record of the properties belonging to an estate, and on the right hand the claims preferred against the estate. The obvious benefit which has accrued is, that the Ledger-keepers shall not be frequently turning up the letters which have been received, and expending time in turning over the leaves of these records, in order to find out what a page in their Assets and Claims book can show them; and in the preparation of numerous returns for the House we have found a very great advantage in that system. A return which is now being prepared for the Commissioners has been ready for some time as far back as 1881; but previous to that, from 1881 to 1873, we have to turn up every single record bearing on those estates to find out from the sheets in each record the information we want.

502. You have money-columns in these books, ruled as ledgers?—Yes.

503. Are they kept on the debit-and-credit principle, or are they considered as mere memoranda?—They are considered as mere memoranda.

504. Then, do the entries in those ledgers, Assets and Claims, and the amounts, go through your individual ledgers?—No.