

of the Inspector-General; or, rather, the report of the agent would be worthless as against the report of the Inspector-General.

795. Worthless in what sense?—As to the patients' mental condition.

796. Is not your agent practically your committee on your behalf? If you were in Dunedin, would you not be justified, as the patient's committee, in visiting the asylum?—Yes.

797. Does not that hold good with your representative?—Yes; but he has not been so instructed.

798. Do not you think it would be wise to instruct him to visit the asylum occasionally, because a layman's opinion may be of value in seeing how the patient is getting on?—It would be advisable.

799. It does not appear from the correspondence whether you ever wrote to Mrs. Luby, telling her you declined to agree to the increase of remuneration?—I do not think I did.

800. Then the position she is in at this moment is, that she is under the impression that the £100 a year is being paid?—There is no reason for her to think so, because I have not informed her it is so.

801. When she has written to Dr. Alexander and expressed her willingness to pay the money, and written to you telling you so, naturally she would conclude that would be done?—I would prefer looking through the papers before answering the question.

802. As a general principle, do you think it wise or prudent, even with every desire to carry out the department economically, to save £20 a year on the maintenance of a patient, seeing that the estate is able to bear the increased cost, and seeing that the general principle holds good that when a man suffers from mental affliction his path in life ought to be made as easy as possible? When he has abundant means do you not think every effort should be made to render his path in life as agreeable as possible?—No doubt.

803. Is it a case in which the economical administration of the office ought to be brought into operation?—An administrator, as you are aware, is always between two fires. If he spends money he is chargeable with extravagance. If he does not he is charged with parsimony. It is between these two fires that I have attempted to steer. I may have erred in this case; I do not think so.

804. In this case, of course, there can be no charge of excessive liberality in the matter, because you have been instructed by those most interested in the lunatic's welfare to incur extra expenditure, and you decline to do it?—True.

805. Therefore, if there is any parsimony, the onus of such parsimony lies with yourself?—Supposing I had ten patients—and Dr. Alexander would be very much delighted to get these ten at £50 a year, and would do his duty by them in providing all their necessary wants—it surely will not be argued that I should give £100.

806. Then, do you tell us that the head of a large lunatic asylum can afford to take ten patients at £50, as well as he can take ten at £100 each?—No; but he could well afford to take the patients which he may have from the Public Trust Office at a lower rate than he would take outside patients.

807. Here you have only two patients?—So far.

808. *Mr. Loughrey.*] If near relatives were to make arrangements with Dr. Alexander to pay the increased rate, would you object to such near relatives paying such increased rate?—Not at all.

809. That is Mrs. Luby's case?—She did not say she would remit. She said she had no objection to the £2 per week being paid. I cannot prevent her sending £200 if she chooses.

810. If she sent it through you with a request, what then?—Then it would be attended to.

811. Can you tell from the papers what you are paying for Mackay?—The same rate as the other—£80 a year.

812. Will you please turn to the estate of W. Kelsall. I see you obtained administration in 1879. At what time did you wind up this estate and pay the beneficiaries? What was the amount of the estate?—I cannot tell you; it is not settled yet. We are holding on, for the beneficiaries are not twenty-one.

813. On the 25th March, 1881, you received a letter from Mrs. Kelsall asking you for a settlement?—I shall be able to tell you later on why this settlement has not taken place.

814. On the 7th September, 1881, Miss Kelsall wrote in a similar strain, asking for a settlement too?—Yes; but she was not of age, and therefore could not get a settlement.

815. On the 2nd April, 1883, Mrs. Kelsall writes again?—She wrote in her new name—Mrs. Wilson.

816. On the 12th April, 1890, there is a letter from W. A. Kelsall?—Yes. He tells me he is of age, and would be obliged for his share of the estate.

817. Did he receive it?—Yes, at once. I could not pay until he was twenty-one. As to the widow, at the family's request we kept the house unsold for a long time. The family got married and dispersed, and then I was asked to sell. That accounts for a very large amount of the delay.

818. Look now at the estate of W. A. Persten. There was a letter from William Kerr on the 17th July, 1885. Will you tell us how it was that Mr. Kerr came to write such a letter?—I cannot possibly keep in my mind everything there is in these papers.

819. I want to get from you a history of this case, and the difficulties in which Mr. Kerr found himself, owing to the negligence of the Public Trustee. There is no doubt this was a gross case of negligence?—I am in this immense difficulty: that, while I am perfectly certain that I can satisfy the minds of the Commission in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, I cannot do it without having considerable time to go through the papers. It happened, in the first place, long before I was appointed Public Trustee; and, in the second place, if it had happened in my time, it would be impossible to keep thousands of cases in my mind. —Kerr wrote an undated letter from Hastings,