

the office; and the cheque is issued out of the Disbursement Account to keep the Public Trustee's Account free from innumerable cheques.

1327. But why should the Public Trustee's Account be touched with this cheque?—Because all the moneys belonging to estates are kept in the Public Trustee's own account.

1328. Do you mean to say, then, that all moneys, whether received or paid out, must permeate through the Public Trustee's Account?—Yes.

1329. Why is that necessary?—Of course, the Public Trustee's Account is an account established by Act, into which all receipts go and all payments to be made; but, instead of making payments individually, and loading it with hundreds and hundreds of cheques, one cheque only is drawn for the total amount put on any one requisition, and that sum is transferred to the Disbursement Account, on which these individual cheques are drawn, making up the total amount you transfer.

1330. Is not the Public Trustee responsible for every account in the Public Trust Office, whether earmarked as the Public Trustee's Account or not?—Certainly.

1331. Then they are all his accounts?—Yes; all his accounts.

1332. Then, does the Act, or your reading of the Act, necessitate the opening of a special account under the direct name of the Public Trustee in order to put debits and credits coming from all individual accounts in the first instance through the Public Trustee's special account?—All moneys received must be placed to the credit of the Public Trustee's Account.

1333. That is to say, your reading of the Act necessitates your opening a Public Trustee's Account at the bank, and I presume in your ledgers?—No; we have no bank account in the ledger. This is really a cash account, another name for the same thing. It is not in the ledger. We have a Cash Account in the ledger, which is virtually the bank account.

1334. The Returned-cheque Deposit Account is in a different position?—Yes: it is not a banking account; it is kept in our own ledger.

1335. Then, could that account not be dispensed with?—Well, it could, of course, if you re-credited the account with the money coming back; but then, that money coming in and belonging to another person would complicate the balance.

1336. But why could it not be re-entered, and remain in your ledger as a credit balance for the claim should that claim ever turn up?—It really does that in the Returned-cheque Deposit Account. The amount goes into that account in the individual ledger, and in the sub. ledger we should open an account for the payee.

1337. Then your Returned-cheque Deposit Account, in other words, consists of unclaimed balances?—Not unclaimed balances of estates, but unclaimed amounts that have been issued from the office—unclaimed cheques.

1338. Then you mean unclaimed claims?—It consists of moneys issued in payment of claims or shares due to Natives. I do not think we have cases of shares being issued to Europeans and not claimed.

1339. If not claimed by Europeans, would those moneys be treated in the same way as in the case of Natives?—No; the money would go back into the estate.

1340. Then, do the Commissioners understand you to say or mean this: that all the amounts to the credit of Returned-cheque Deposit Account consist of unclaimed amounts due to Natives?—And Europeans too.

1341. I asked you just now if the amounts due to Europeans would be treated in the same way as amounts due to Natives, and I understood you to say they were recredited?—I thought that question was in connection with shares due to a European. If a cheque were issued to a European as his share of an estate, that cheque would go back into the estate it belongs to, should it come back. If the cheque issued was in payment of an ordinary tradesman's claim, and was unclaimed, it would go into the Returned-cheque Deposit Account.

1342. What would the tradesman's claim be paid out of?—Out of the estate account.

1343. Then, in that case it would not go back meanwhile to the estate from which it was originally drawn?—No; it would go to Returned-cheque Deposit Account.

1344. I think we agreed yesterday that the system of vouchers in your office would facilitate the working of the Public Trust business?—Yes.

1345. In that case you would be able to do without a large number of useless and expensive books that you use now, called receipt-books?—Yes, we could do without those.

1346. Your duplicate voucher would form your receipt?—Yes.

1347. And that would simplify matters a great deal?—Yes.

1348. The putting-away of those vouchers in bundles would do away with the guard-books in which they are now pasted and kept?—Yes.

1349. For what period of time would this guard-book before me contain vouchers?—For about six months.

1350. I think you said yesterday that the cost of that guard-book would be about 4s.?—Four shillings or 4s. 6d.

1351. Not more?—I think I am safe in saying 4s. 6d. They are got from the Government Printing Office.

1352. Now, will you please tell me why the Public Trustee finds it necessary to keep two accounts in the bank. I understand that he has a Public Trust Account proper, or general account, and a Public Trust Disbursement Account?—Yes.

1353. Does not that necessitate the keeping of two bank pass-books?—Yes, certainly.

1354. Would it not be more simple to have only one account and one pass-book?—It would reduce the number of pass-books, of course. It simplifies the keeping of the cash-book in the Public Trustee's Account to have two accounts.

1355. Will you explain how?—Instead of having to make the adjustment of the balance with the bank pass-book by filling in all the unrepresented cheques, which may amount to a hundred,