

1356. Is it not better that you are kept face to face with the moneys paid in and the unrepresented cheques?—We are, of course, in the Disbursement Account. We have to work out the adjustment there.

1357. Notwithstanding that, I understand you wish to save that trouble in connection with the Public Trustee's Account?—Yes.

1358. Then, I ask you again, where does it save time or trouble?—Well, it simply keeps the Public Trustee's Account pass-book handier by having one cheque instead of a hundred.

1359. Tell me how it does so?—If we drew the individual cheques on the Public Trustee's Account, there would probably be thirty or forty cheques for every one now drawn on the Public Trustee's Account; and in balancing, any of those cheques which were outstanding would form an adjustment, and the amounts of them would have to be brought in in adjusting the balance with our bank pass-book.

1360. Supposing the Disbursement Account pass-book was not at hand, could you balance the Public Trust Account pass-book without a reference to it?—Yes.

1361. That is, from particulars in connection with the drawing of cheques, particulars of which you have in the office in connection with those cheques that have been drawn?—There would be no complication with outstanding cheques. The cheque, when drawn, is at once debited in the Public Trustee's Account.

1362. Then, is the object of having this Public Trustee's Disbursement Account separate, and in order to keep the Public Trustee's Account proper with fewer entries in it and make it look pretty?—Yes; and free from the necessity of adjusting the balance with the balance in the pass-book.

1363. But you must adjust the balance in both pass-books?—Certainly we do; but in the Disbursement Account it can be done at leisure instead of daily.

1364. Do you operate on the chief Disbursement Account in large sums?—Yes, in large sums.

1365. Do you do it daily or weekly?—There would probably be six cheques on the Public Trustee's chief account a week.

1366. How about the credits?—They, of course, come in as they are made, daily.

1367. Then the only credits that go to the Disbursement Account are by cheque from the Public Trustee's Account proper?—That is so.

1368. A cheque on the Public Trustee's principal account would represent in reality many small amounts to be disbursed through his Disbursement Account?—Yes, that is so.

1369. Yet I cannot see how time is saved or convenience served by the keeping of the two accounts?—It is convenient to have the Public Trustee's Account free from these outstanding cheques.

1370. Do you think these outstanding cheques would make it look ugly and disfigure it?—Every day, on balancing, there would have to be an adjustment, and they would have to be set out.

1371. You still have that adjustment to make in connection with the two bank-books?—Yes.

1372. If you had only one bank-book, would that not simplify matters?—Still the same adjustment would have to be made, and done daily instead of doing it periodically.

1373. Then you do not adjust the accounts now with the bank daily?—Not for Disbursement Account.

1374. And that is really your operative account?—Yes.

1375. That is your daily active account?—Yes; that is the account on which the individual cheques are drawn.

1376. And do you adjust the Public Trustee's Account proper daily?—That is balanced weekly, not daily.

1377. Then, if you had these two accounts in one, you would be brought daily face to face with the condition of them?—Yes, we should.

1378. Then you would appreciate the necessity of adjusting them frequently?—It would be an absolute necessity to adjust them more frequently.

1379. Now, come, looking at the matter from that point of view, would it not be better to have the two accounts in one?—Yes, perhaps it would.

1380. Then, since the Audit Department were good enough to relieve you of the necessity of taking your cash-book up to the Buildings, three-quarters of a mile from your office, how has the audit been carried on?—Carried on by an Audit officer sent down to the department, whose services are divided between this office and the Government Insurance. He has audited the books, and prepared them for the Controller's signature.

1381. Does he attend at your office daily?—Yes.

1382. Has he done so since you ceased to send the cash-books to the Audit Department?—Yes. There may be days on which he is absent altogether; it is the practice to come daily.

1383. Has he been often absent?—No; he is not often absent for the whole day. His time is not allotted, so much of the day to this office and so much to the Insurance Office. He comes in when it suits his convenience.

1384. In fact, he is a superior being in the shape of an auditor?—Oh, yes! we have to defer to the Audit.

1385. You cannot dictate in any way as to when and how he shall attend your office, can you?—I have no control over that whatever.

1386. He has a right to come in here at any hour and attend to what he may consider his duties?—Yes.

1387. What he considers to be his duties?—Yes; just so.

1388. On an average, how many hours does it take the officer who may act for the Audit Department during each day?—I think he gives us the full half of his time.

1389. What is the full length of his time?—His office-hours are from 9 to 5, with an interval of an hour from 1 to 2 for lunch.