

tion, of appraising the goods, or any particular article that was to be exposed for sale, before the day arrived on which the same article was to be sold?—Yes.

2062. Therefore, when they attended the auction they would be in a better position to bid, at any rate, than the public, and according to what they had considered in their minds the value of the articles was?—Yes.

2063. And they have frequently done those things?—Yes.

[At the request of the witness, on account of illness, his further examination was postponed until next day.]

Mr. MOGINIE further examined.

2064. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Moginie, when you were with us yesterday I omitted to get any information from you about the bank account which you keep in a separate book. You used first to keep that account in your ledgers?—Yes. There was a Bank of New Zealand Account in the ledgers. That was dropped, and the Cash Account takes its place in the ledger.

2065. And now you have got a separate book, in which you keep a copy of the account in the bank pass-book. Is that so?—Yes, that is so.

2066. Is this the book [produced]?—Yes.

2067. Do you find that a convenient mode?—It enables the officer in charge of the bank pass-book to pass forward his entries to the different officers in charge of estates to enter in their estate cash-books.

2068. Then, this book, which you call a bank-book in your office, is kept by yourself?—No; by Mr. Buckland.

2069. One of the Ledger-keepers or managers?—Yes.

2070. Then, does this book represent the amounts of moneys received by this office every day?—Yes. Of course, it includes those paid here in Wellington, and those paid into any branch of the Bank of New Zealand throughout the colony.

2071. If a book in the form of a teller's cash-book were adopted, this book, like many other books, could be dispensed with?—The object of this book is to have a copy of the bank pass-book.

2072. But are not your bank pass-books a copy of your Trust Office accounts in the bank ledger?—Yes.

2073. And when you have got the bank pass-books, have you not then got a copy of your accounts in the bank ledger? Why, therefore, do you want another book?—We like to return the book to the bank as early as possible, in order to get the entries made up. A copy of it is made, and it is returned to the bank at once. Then we have the copy to work on.

2074. You like to keep a copy of it in your own hands for reference at all times?—Yes.

2075. Would it not be better to keep that copy in your ledger? It is important enough to keep a record of, and why not keep it in your ledger?—Yes, it would perhaps be as well.

2076. Do you ever take any interest in, or have you anything to do with, the realisation of assets when they have to be sold?—No; that does not come in my branch at all.

2077. Have you ever attended any of the auction-sales?—No; I cannot say I have. I have looked in once or twice, but have never attended.

2078. I notice that you have frequently to dispose of a good deal of personalty in estates, sometimes very valuable, in the shape of jewellery, clothing, and nick-nacks?—Yes, that is so.

2079. I also find that some of the officers of the Public Trust Office have sometimes attended these sales, or been represented at them?—Yes.

2080. And they have made purchases?—Yes, they have.

2081. Mr. Hamerton has made some purchases?—Yes.

2082. Have you ever made any purchases?—Yes; I think I have made three purchases during the time I have been in the office.

2083. What did they consist of?—Once I bought a little whatnot kind of thing, made of New Zealand woods, and I bought two watches at different times—one for myself, and one for my son. Those are the only investments I have made.

2084. These watches were going, I presume?—Yes.

2085. Have you got those watches still?—Yes; I can show you one now.

2086. Do you remember what prices you gave for those watches?—I gave £2 10s. for the silver watch which I now produce, and for the other I gave £1 3s. The other is not nearly so good a one as this.

2087. And what did you give for the whatnot?—I fancy, about 10s. or 12s.

2088. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Whose estate was this watch bought in?—I do not know.

2089. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Hamerton, then, recognised that any officer of the Public Trust Office had a right to buy at those auction-sales?—Yes; just as one of the general public.

2090. That was his view of it?—I believe so.

2091. Then, of course, any officers of the Public Trust Office who have bought effects or articles at those sales have done it with Mr. Hamerton's knowledge?—Well, I do not know that he has been aware of it in every case. He may have been aware of it in some cases.

2092. He apparently has led the way by buying himself?—He was aware the officers do buy, and he has bought himself.

2093. And therefore he has led the way?—Yes.

2094. You have to dispose also of realty in small and large values?—Yes.

2095. Do you know of any case where realty, or a portion of any realty, has been purchased by any officer of the Public Trust Office?—No; I do not know of any case.

2096. You cannot call to mind any case where any share in any land or house has been bought by any officer of the department?—No; I cannot call to mind any case of that kind. I may mention that in buying this watch I was guided in the price by what a similar watch fetched once before.