

about the office, because, although I have a room of my own, I am always in and out of the public office, and want to know things almost daily from time to time.

2373. *Mr. Loughrey.*] Would it not be an advantage, having a solicitor in the office, if the applications to Court for the orders of Court for maintenance of widows and children were made by you?—They are.

2374. You mentioned about sending a petition to Buckley and Co.?—It would not have been, except that it required a loan to be made on mortgage. In all other cases I would do it.

THURSDAY, 23RD APRIL, 1891.

The Rev. CHARLES DANIEL DE CASTRO further examined.

2375. *The Chairman.*] Mr. De Castro, when you left us yesterday you were good enough to say that you would try and recall to your memory as to whether any officer had purchased, or taken part in the purchase of, any portion of any real estate?—I do not recollect your putting that question yesterday.

2376. Then I put that question to you now. Have you, within your own recollection, any knowledge of any officer or officers of the Public Trust Office participating in the purchase of any portion of any real estate?—No, I have not. The last question you asked me yesterday was as to a refund of commission on the part of Thomas and Co.

2377. Then, coming back to the purchases of which you told us yesterday, of personalty estate, you were to refresh your memory as to whether the auctioneers had ever made any rebate of commission?—Yes.

2378. Have any such rebates of commission been made?—No, they have not.

2379. Could you tell the Commissioners, as far as your memory serves you, how many articles you have purchased at auction?—No, I could not tell you. It goes back as far as 1873, in Mr. Woodward's time, when I used to buy little things.

2380. Then you have been buying for the last eighteen years?—From 1873.

2381. From time to time, from the time you first came into the office, during nearly eighteen years, you have been in the habit of making purchases of that kind?—I have bought some, but I cannot say I was in the habit. I bought one or two things for myself, one or two watches for my boys, two watches for Mr. Hamerton, and have bought for the officers in the office.

2382. Have you ever bought any other kind of jewellery than watches?—Not for myself.

2383. But for anybody?—No, I think not.

2384. Never bought any rings?—I do not recollect ever buying rings.

2385. Any brooches?—No.

2386. Well, then, during the whole time you have been in the office, whether it has been a habit or not, you have from time to time made such purchases?—Yes.

2387. Now, did you ever appear in the auction-room yourself to bid?—Yes, I have.

2388. On many occasions?—On several occasions.

2389. Did you ever buy through the instrumentality of the auctioneer or any of his clerks?—I do not recollect any instance. I think I have once or twice told one of the clerks there that I would give so much for things, and if I were not present he could buy them for me. I think I have done that.

2390. Did it ever occur to you that the auctioneer's clerk would inform the auctioneer that you would like to buy a certain article?—No.

2391. Did you ever ask the auctioneer to buy for you?—No.

2392. You told us yesterday that you bought a coat on one occasion?—Yes.

2393. Do you remember what the cost of the coat was?—I could not say now; it was some years ago.

2394. Have you worn that coat much, and have you worn it out?—Well, I have it still.

2395. Was it a coat of many colours?—It was a new overcoat.

2396. One colour?—Yes.

2397. You have taken holy orders, have you not?—Yes.

2398. Do you ever officiate now or in connection with your duties?—Yes.

2399. Now, looking at your position as second in command to the Public Trustee, the second officer of this trusted department, have you ever regarded the business in connection with the Public Trust Office as a very sacred business?—Yes.

2400. Then, in your opinion, the trust is a very sacred one?—Yes.

2401. And you have always looked upon it in that light?—Yes.

2402. Well, do you think it is right for any officer, not excepting yourself, the second in command, or Mr. Hamerton, the head of the office, to either directly or indirectly purchase, either privately or by auction, any articles that concern the trust committed to your care?—I do not see any harm in that, or I should not have done it.

2403. You do not?—No.

2404. Do you think that any person can, with justice to himself or the trust for which he may act, be both buyer and seller?—I look upon it, when we go to an auction-sale we are not officers of the Public Trust Office: we attend just in the same position as any other member of the general public, and have the same right to bid.

2405. Do you think, now, that the auctioneer, knowing that he has been favoured—and this particular auctioneer appears to have been for some reason much favoured with all that class of sales of personalty—do you think that he, the auctioneer, seeing you in the room bidding, would not likely favour your bid?—I know positively for a fact that he has not done so.

2406. How do you know?—Because I made a bid for a watch I wanted; some person overbid me, and I would not bid more. That was on two occasions.