

2440. Mr. Ronaldson has had A to L?—Yes.

2441. How long is it since he started?—He had A to L from the beginning of the ledger.

2442. I suppose, three or four years?—Yes. When Smythe left, Mr. Ronaldson took the whole of the estates, with the assistance of Mr. Pyke.

2443. Where are those inventories filed? I do not see them attached to the papers in the intestate estates?—Yes, they are.

2445. Are they supposed to be put in the Assets and Claims book?—They are put in there too—furniture, so much. There was an estate of a man who died at Newtown a little while ago—

2446. We will take, for example, the estate of Marie Dallon, deceased, folio 39?—This was a peculiar case.

2447. Will you show us the inventory there in the papers of the estate of the property in the estate?—No, I cannot show you the inventory in the papers. I will tell you how that was. There was no inventory because the boxes containing effects were all in Mr. Morrison's possession, and we told Mr. Morrison to lock the boxes and send them down to Thomas's auction-room. After they were down there the keys were sent over, and the boxes were examined and the clothes lotted by Thomas.

2448. What kind of clothes were they?—They were all fair clothes. The clothes were much better than you would have expected her to have, considering she walked about in rags and had good clothes stowed away in boxes. That is why they are not in the papers.

2449. Were her effects all clothes?—There was jewellery.

2450. How did you get possession of it?—I do not know whether Morrison gave it to me separately, or whether I took it out of the box.

2451. Let us get this narrative as clear as possible. Do I understand that these boxes were forwarded to the auctioneer without a clerk from the department being present to examine them?—I examined them as soon as they were there. I had the keys.

2452. You went personally and examined them yourself?—Yes. They were forwarded to the auctioneer locked.

2453. Then, did you take a list of the jewellery you took out?—I have particulars of what was taken out. I do not recollect whether I took them out of the box or whether Morrison gave the jewellery to me. I rather think Morrison gave it to me.

2454. I have been through the papers, and I do not see any record?—They may be in my private book.

2455. Will you let us have that private book, and we will continue the examination?—There is a part of it in the papers.

2456. This is the portion handed over to Mr. Morrison. What I want to know is this: You have told us the practice has been to take an inventory of the effects of an intestate person. In this particular case you yourself took an inventory of portion of the goods, and left the remainder to be lotted by the auctioneer?—I took possession of the jewellery.

2457. What I want to know from you is this: to furnish the Commissioners with the inventory of those articles which you removed from the box and retained here. You say you have that?—It is very likely to be in my book.

2458. Will you let me have it?—Yes; it is necessary to have the whole thing. [Witness produces what he calls his private book.] In this case I have not the various items down, I see. They were numerous, and then I just put down "Box of jewellery," and then the whole of the items sold were accounted for in the account sales. Generally speaking, these estates only contain a watch or a watch and chain, and when there are a number of articles they are not always put down in detail.

2459. You have told us Mr. De Castro, what the principle and the practice of the office is, and yet in the first case we ask you about it turns out that the practice has not been observed?—I should say, in taking an inventory I put down "Box of jewellery." The jewellery is all under my charge, and does not leave me until it goes to the sale, and it is all accounted for here.

2460. How can you give a list of things sent to auction unless an inventory is taken?—In this case the son is supposed to be next-of-kin, and we sent him all that belonged to him, and here is his receipt for it.

2461. We may take it for a fact that in this case, at all events, the practice has not been observed of taking a complete inventory of everything belonging to the estate?—There is not a detailed account of the jewellery.

2462. You know the story of this estate?—Yes.

2463. Who furnished this general report on the estate? Whose writing is that?—That is my writing, from Morrison's dictation. I think it is all in my writing. When a person comes in to give information about an intestate estate, we are in the habit of taking down what he or she may say.

2464. I see here that the story of this woman is, "Believed to be unmarried, and one son believed to be illegitimate," and there is a memorandum, "Jewellery must not be sold at present—R. C. H.," and this memorandum initialled by yourself, "Jewellery reserved"?—Yes.

2465. That jewellery of which there is no detailed account. Yet the account sales of the auctioneer show that there was a large number of other things besides clothes—a large quantity of furniture, ornaments, chests of drawers, statuettes, decanters, travelling-bag, workbox and contents, books, glove-box, &c.?—They were all sent down by Morrison to the auction-room.

2466. Without any inventory being taken by the department at all?—Yes, because they were sent to the auctioneer at once for sale. He was supposed to furnish account sales showing everything.

2467. Do you not think it a very loose system to send articles to an auction-room without the department having an inventory of them in the first place?—Generally speaking, we have an in-