

2545. *Mr. Loughrey.*] Are such letters as those submitted to the Public Trustee before destruction, or do you take upon yourself to destroy them?—Sometimes I have shown them. I may sometimes not.

2546. So that really a great portion of the evidence that would bear on the legitimacy or otherwise of this young man is missing. Is it a fact that a number of private memoranda, the letters bearing on the legitimacy or otherwise of this young man, have been destroyed by you?—Yes; private letters.

2547. *The Chairman.*] By the instructions of the Public Trustee?—Yes. I gathered from the correspondence—you know what letters are——

2548. I have not the opportunity of seeing them, unfortunately?—Such letters as that would probably be saved.

2549. *Mr. Macdonald.*] A very simple letter, which, on the face of it, apparently had no connection with interests so vast, might form links in a chain of the greatest value hereafter; and it seems a monstrous thing that any documents respecting any estate should, on the *ipse dixit* of any officer, whether the Public Trustee or not, be destroyed at all?—If you saw some of the letters that pass through our hands you would think the sooner they were in the fire the better.

2550. *Mr. Loughrey.*] We have been told that these records contained the whole history of the estate. That is not so?—The private letters are not attached.

2551. Then, as a matter of fact, they do not contain the whole history of the estate?—No.

2552. *Mr. Macdonald.*] As a matter of fact, there is a secret history in connection with many of the estates which the Public Trustee and his officers put into the fire?—Yes. We burn private correspondence, as a rule, unless we return the letters to the relatives.

2553. *Mr. Loughrey.*] And you retain such private correspondence as you think advisable?—Yes.

2554. Here is a letter from this young man, in which he addresses her as “Dear mother,” and you do not recognise that as proof of kinship?—No.

2555. There is a letter dated the 9th March, 1889, from Arthur Dallon, as follows:—

SIR,—

Police Court, Gatton, Queensland, Saturday, 9th March, 1889.

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your memorandum of the 16th ultimo, with many thanks. I deeply regret that my telegram arrived too late to prevent the sale of my mother's effects. In reference to my furnishing the requisite proofs in support of my claim as next-of-kin, it would be almost impossible for me to obtain the information set forth in the circular you forwarded to me, more especially as all papers or letters are, or should be, with my mother's effects. I should be most deeply grateful to you if you would kindly afford me any information that would simplify matters in supporting my claim without having to call on legal advice, as that would entail on me very heavy expenses that I am not in a position to afford, and I could not come to New Zealand at present to establish my identity. I beg to furnish you with the following particulars relating to myself and my mother: My mother arrived in October, 1884, by the ship “Oamaru,” in Auckland, proceeded to Wellington, and took a house shortly afterwards next to Layfield's store, Tinakori Road. I joined her a few weeks afterwards, having just left the New Zealand Armed Constabulary, in which I had served for three years on the Taranaki coast and Waikato district. I obtained employment as supernumerary tally-clerk on the Queen's Wharf, Mr. W. Ferguson, Secretary. I left the Queen's Wharf for the purpose of going to the Kimberley Goldfields, Western Australia, sailing from Wellington in July, 1886, on board the s.s. “Triumph.” I eventually worked my way back to Sydney, and from there to Brisbane. I first received news of my mother's death from Mr. M. Leslie Morrison, Tinakori Road. Major Yelverton Goring, Armed Constabulary, and Mr. W. Ferguson, Secretary, Wellington Harbour Board, are both personally acquainted with me; also Mr. Henry Claridge, tally-clerk, Queen's Wharf, as both my mother and self stayed at his house on arrival in Wellington. My papers are all held by the police authorities here, as I have joined the Queensland Police Force. There are several men, ex New Zealand Constabulary, over here who can identify me, particularly Richard Langtry, until recently a sergeant in the Armed Constabulary Force, only lately arrived in this colony, and at present holding an appointment in the Government Stores. After all private letters and papers, the articles I am most anxious to possess are a flat deal box, containing two photographic albums—one old, other comparatively new; enclosed case, containing coloured photo. of child crawling on floor, and several views and photos. in stand frames; gold brooch, “Arthur” engraved on back, inside photo. of myself in 16th Lancers uniform, coloured scarlet with blue facings; small box, containing some of my mother's jewellery—earrings, rings, small gold watch and chain, locket and chain. Most of these articles can be of little use to anybody intrinsically, though I value them highly, and, if sold, should be most happy to come to some terms with the purchasers, if you would place me in possession of their names. I left articles of wearing-apparel, books, &c., in my mother's charge on leaving for Western Australia, in two wooden boxes with my name painted on. Have these been sold with the rest of my mother's effects? I also left a gold open-faced Geneva watch, by a Glasgow maker, in my mother's care. There was also a dressing-bag, with my mother's initials stamped in gold letters. I am her only child, she not having had any more children. I wrote to Mr. Morrison to settle everything in connection with my mother's funeral and doctors' expenses, but, by your memorandum, they will be defrayed from the sale of effects. I hope you will be kind enough to show me some way to lay claim to my own and the rest of my mother's effects; and I might ask, as a further favour, not to dispose of the jewellery, especially the brooch and my watch; or, if compelled to do so, allow me the first offer, and I will guarantee any jeweller's valuation. If amount in hand at present not sufficient to settle all claims, please let me know, and I will forward deficiency.

Hoping you will see fit to favour me with the information I require,

The Public Trustee, Wellington, New Zealand.

I have, &c.,

ARTHUR E. DALLON.

Did you, in reply to this letter, furnish Mr. Dallon with the information that would have enabled him to prove his legitimacy?—A copy of the reply to that letter is there [on the file of papers].

2556. Please answer that question [papers shown to witness]?—We did not forward information for him to prove his legitimacy. He must prove his legitimacy to our satisfaction.

2557. Would it not have been the proper course, in reply to such a letter, to have furnished this young man with the information that the office required to establish his legitimacy?—Well, there would be the schedule put in as to the proofs of kinship required—a printed form.

2558. Was that put in this reply?—It ought to have been. It ought to have been marked “Enclosure.” I do not think it has been through my hands at all. We generally enclose to persons of that sort a printed schedule.

2559. So that, in reply to this letter, the following reply was sent: “26th March, 1889.—Mr. Arthur Dallon, Police Court, Gatton, Queensland.—Marie Dallon, deceased: Replying to your letter of the 9th instant, none of your late mother's jewellery was sold. The boxes of clothing mentioned