

139. Supposing the requisition were lost, there would be absolutely no record in the Auckland office of the document having been received?—I suppose not.

140. Are you satisfied that this is a proper course, or that this system is sufficient?—I think it is.

141. Although it turns out that if the requisition is lost there would be no record in the Auckland office?—I think so, because the Stamp Department looks to the owner of a deed to see that his document is not allowed to lie in the office.

142. A man leaves a valuable document to be stamped, of which no record is taken in the books of the office, and the evidence of its having been received is simply a requisition, and if that requisition is lost all record is lost. Do you think that is a satisfactory state of things?—Well, perhaps, as you put it, I do not know that it is. When an individual leaves a deed at an office for the purpose of undergoing the process of stamping, his own interest in the document should be sufficient to keep its existence in the office alive.

143. *Mr. J. L. Gillies.*] Supposing the deed had been lost altogether, what position would they be in to individualize the responsibility?—I think the regulations of the Stamp Department in 1867, which I drew up, provided that the Stamp Department were not to be held responsible.

144. Is it a satisfactory system that a valuable document such as this may come into an office and be handed from one clerk to another, with the possibility of being lost, while no record is kept by which it can be traced from one hand to another?—It is scarcely satisfactory, I admit, but it will be extremely difficult to register the passage of a document from one hand to another, and the end to be achieved would be scarcely worth the labour.

145. Is it satisfactory that there is a possibility of deeds being lost, and at the same time an impossibility of tracing the responsibility?—No, that is not satisfactory, certainly.

146. *Mr. Wales.*] Do you know of any other case of neglect having occurred in the office with respect to documents having been detained?—No, I never heard of any other instance.

147. *Mr. Bryce.*] You say it is customary to receive covering letters with documents of this sort?—Yes.

148. What additional information to the requisition do these covering letters contain?—The existence of a letter of that kind keeps the question open, as the letter would remain unfiled before the Commissioner until all the action was completed.

149. Do the letters contain anything in addition to the information supplied in the requisition?—No.

150. *Mr. Richmond.*] Whom do you blame for the neglect in this matter?—I think the chief clerk, Mr. Brandon, was to blame in not seeing that a document so long in the office had been disposed of.

151. Was Mr. Brandon censured?—Yes. He laid the blame chiefly on the clerk beneath him, whose duty it was to receive and issue stamped documents, the impression being that the document came in over the counter. It was, in that case, the duty of the counter clerk to see that the document had been disposed of. This document was placed in the safe with deeds presented over the counter in Wellington. There are a good many of these, and they are kept until the owners call for them. It remained in the safe for a considerable time, when it was placed in my hands, and I saw in a moment that it had come from Auckland, and I wrote to the Commissioner of Stamps there, requesting him to ascertain who was the owner and return it to him.

152. What account did Mr. Brandon give of his conduct in not sending it before?—He considered the blame rested with the second clerk, because he looked on the document as having been handed in over the counter.

153. Was Mr. Brandon punished?—No. The matter was not brought under notice until long after the document was presented.

154. *Mr. Gibbs.*] I suppose, if a letter had been written, a copy of it would have been kept in Auckland?—No doubt.

155. That would have been a record?—Yes. I particularly inquired, as I think the correspondence will show, of the Commissioner whether his books contained any reference to this document, and he said there was not.

156. Is there any form of receipt given for such documents?—No.

157. Would that not be security to depositors?—Yes.

158. I think it used to be so?—Never in New Zealand.

---

## No. 19.

Mr. SWANSON to the Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY.

SIR,—

Auckland, 1st February, 1875.

I have the honor to enclose statement of my actual outlay and income from Dixon's No. 1 Gold Mining shares; and I would wish to call your particular attention to the amounts I was receiving in dividends during the latter part of 1869 (and much larger amounts had been paid out previous to my connection with it), as some foundation for the prices which at that time were current for shares in this mine. Had I been in a position to have given an indisputable title to my shares in November or December, 1869, or even in January, 1870, I could have realized £2,000 for them, which sum I was repeatedly offered, and, as a matter of fact, I did sell some at more money to be delivered in January, 1870; but as I was still without my title I had to forego the bargain.

I have, &c.,

WM. SWANSON.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.