

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

MONDAY, 16TH MARCH, 1891.

The Commissioners met at the Public Trust Office, Wellington, at 11 a.m.

Present: The Hon. W. J. M. Larnach, C.M.G., T. Kennedy Macdonald, Esq., M.H.R., and A. Loughrey, Esq.

Resolved, on the motion of Mr. Macdonald, seconded by Mr. Loughrey, That the Hon. W. J. M. Larnach be appointed Chairman of the Commission.

A letter was read from the Hon. the Premier, enclosing Commission under the hand of His Excellency the Governor and the seal of the Colony, and intimating, also, that Mr. James Grattan Grey, of Dunedin, had been appointed secretary and shorthand-writer to the Commission.

The Commission was then read in the presence of Mr. R. C. Hamerton, Public Trustee.

Resolved, That the inquiry be commenced from the first starting of the Public Trust Office.

A letter was read from Mr. W. C. Walker, of Ashburton, drawing the attention of the Commissioners to certain particulars in connection with the investigation. The letter was ordered to be printed.

The Public Trustee was requested to supply a list of all books at present in use in the Public Trust Office, giving details of each.

The Commission afterwards proceeded to examine the first ledgers, record-books, check-ledgers, journals, &c., belonging to the department.

The Commission adjourned at 5 o'clock until Wednesday, the 18th March, at 10 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, 18TH MARCH, 1891.

The Commission met pursuant to adjournment.

Present: The Hon. W. J. M. Larnach, C.M.G. (Chairman), A. Loughrey, Esq., and T. Kennedy Macdonald, Esq., M.H.R.

The Commissioners ordered a chronological return to be prepared showing all estates in the different classes that have come under the control of the department since the commencement of its operations, to be arranged under the respective headings indicated by the Commissioners to the Public Trustee; also a return showing the following information in intestate estates: (1.) Names of estates still open, and date when they came into office. (2.) Details of real property still unrealised, and reason for such non-realisation. (3.) Details of personal property still unrealised, and reason for such non-realisation, and where property is stored. Previous return ordered in reference to all estates to be separated into classes, and be separated in so far as respects closed and unclosed estates. Same return also in reference to all estates under will administered by the department.

Resolved, That no witness be allowed to be present during the examination of other witnesses.

The Commissioners then proceeded to examine sundry books and papers, after which they adjourned at 5 o'clock until 10 a.m. next day.

THURSDAY, 19TH MARCH, 1891.

The Commissioners met at 10 a.m.

Present: The Hon. W. J. M. Larnach, C.M.G. (Chairman), A. Loughrey, Esq., and T. Kennedy Macdonald, Esq., M.H.R.

Examination of books and records continued.

Resolved, That Mr. Hamerton be requested to forward the following memorandum to the heads of the departments in the Public Trust service, with a request to give it immediate effect: "That the Accountant and each clerk in charge of the various departments in the office be required to prepare for the information of the Royal Commission a personal report respecting the working of their respective departments, detailing the duties carried out by them; the number of officers in each department, and their duties; the average number of hours worked by each during the week; the salaries received; if guaranteed, the amount of each guarantee; and in what respects (if any), in their opinion, the administration of their departments can be simplified and improved." Reports to be forwarded as early as possible to the Commission.

Resolved, That the Public Trustee prepare and furnish to the Commissioners a return setting forth the amount handed over to the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer on account of the Consolidated Fund in reference to unclaimed balances in estates, detailing the name of each estate, the amount of the balance to its credit, and what steps (if any) were taken to find the heirs-at-law. The return also to set out details of any refunds that may have been made from the Consolidated Fund in reference to estates which have been regarded as closed.

Resolved, That the Public Trustee furnish to the Commissioners a memorandum respecting the mode adopted in conducting the business of the Public Trust Office in its several branches, detailing officers or agents in charge of such branches; their average salaries or remuneration during the past three years; whether they have given guarantee bonds, and, if so, details of same; the total annual receipts of each branch; the expenses of administration in connection therewith; and in