

here is to do nothing but pick holes in the department. We want to see what is the real state of things. And we want to interfere as little as possible with your regular duties—holidays or anything else?—Just now the staff is very hardly driven with the work of this Commission, and we have been back at work every night.

87. If the staff will inform the Commissioners that they are suffering in consequence of extra work now entailed upon them, we shall try and make arrangements to prevent that. There is no necessity why work should be piled on to the present staff, because the Commissioners are at liberty to appoint any necessary extra clerical labour required?—The Public Trustee has engaged five extra clerks.

88. If twenty are necessary, there is no reason that your staff should suffer. I wish you to make that distinctly understood?—Yes. Of course there is a limit to the capacity of the office. We might get an extra one, making six.

89. Could you not get another room—for instance, that record room which was offered to us? Could you not rearrange office-room. Only let the staff work with peace of mind. We are really disposed to be their friends, not their enemies. Now, when were these summations made?—At the end of the year.

90. Do you know the object of making summations of the transactions in the ledger? I understand the object is to check the balance?—That is, as a matter of fact, the object.

91. If you opened a ledger with the summations completed, in order to check the balance you would for your purpose make use of the summations?—Yes.

92. Then, will you check that balance by the summations, £12,720 1s. 2d.? That should be the balance—the difference between the summations?—Yes.

93. The summations or the balance is wrong, and it is absolutely useless for summations to appear there unless they are correct? It is not usual, I observe, for you to bring over your summations with your balance?—It has been usual to enter them separately, credit transactions and debit transactions, and final balance.

THURSDAY, 26TH MARCH, 1891.

Mr. P. PURVIS WEBB examined.

94. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Webb, you belong to the Audit Department?—Yes.

95. Have you been long in the Audit Department?—I have been seventeen years, but twenty-two in the Civil Service.

96. That is nearly as long as it has existed?—I do not think quite so long as that.

97. Do you attend at the Public Trust Office every day?—Yes.

98. And what is your system of audit? What do you do in dealing with the cash entries? Which books do you look for as the chief ones in this office?—There are a number of cash-books.

99. And a general cash-book. How do you check this general cash-book?—From the various cash-books. You see this is the summation of the whole thing. The general cash-book focusses the entries of the six cash-books. The difference between the two sides of it equals the bank balance, less unadvised—the unadvised being moneys paid into the bank, but of which the Public Trustee has not sufficient information to enable him to bring it on charge.

100. In the course of your examination you have occasion to refer to all other cash-books?—Yes, I go through the other cash-books in detail.

101. These are what are called the daily cash-books?—Yes.

102. And you take the amounts from these daily cash-books?—Yes.

103. How do you know that you have checked these amounts?—Because I check these from the receipt-books in the office.

104. Then you check these entries with the general cash-book?—No; that is not checked with the general cash-book, but from other sources.

105. What mark do you put on a book when you have checked it?—All entries are checked from the blocks.

106. Do you not put any marks—initials, or ticks—in them?—Yes, as a rule; but not in these instances, because I went straight through these, taking each receipt seriatim. The rule is to tick.

107. Have you no systematic or regular kind of tick?—Yes. I did not do it here because I had three or four months to do.

108. Does it come within your province, when you find a book not properly written up and ruled off, to refuse to audit it even when the summations are not made?—The summations are always made.

109. I have come across some cash-books where the summations have not been made—have been, in fact, very irregularly made?—I have only been connected with this office for about two years.

110. Within that time have you found the summations made?—You will find all the summations made in that time.

111. You have checked all these in this book?—I have checked up to the 9th March.

112. What right has the Auditor-General to sign any book in this office until he has checked it? Do you mean to tell me that the Auditor-General signs on the faith of your audit up to this date, when those other daily cash-books have not been checked?—Yes, he signs in accordance with the Act.

113. Whether it has been checked or not?—Yes.

114. *Mr. Macdonald.*] Will you show us that in the Act?—I think the provision I refer to is in section 34 of the Act of 1872. At that time the Audit used to keep a duplicate set of books, but since then they have been done away with, and the cash-book is sent up once a week.

115. You say the cash-book is sent up once a week?—Yes.