

of the close attention given to mere formalities. But to those who would bury the wretched past, and inquire what has happened since, I should think it sufficient to give one instance of what has been observed during the short period of my administration—one instance of an equally serious neglect of a “matter” of equal gravity and importance. The fact will speak for itself—and will speak volumes. Two Audit officials have been in the Public Trust Office daily, *without having, during the last seventeen months, once counted the cash.* Of such inexcusable neglect I think that I too may, not inappropriately, lament: “These matters seem to have been managed with no conception of what is necessary to secure the department from fraud.” And if I am asked why I did not, to enable the Government to bring about an amendment in such “matters,” report shortcomings so serious, I answer that the Government could do no more than represent the grievance, in the hope of amendment; and that I was myself hopeless, and that it was in this hopelessness that I made the arrangements which would save the Public Trust Office from disaster, and to which I alluded when, in my last year’s report, I wrote: “The Public Trust Office officials can now therefore observe a course which has been so arranged *of checking the accounts and the administration of the office as to afford internally the comprehensive audit which is necessary to the conduct of the business on its present basis.*”

I cannot conclude, Mr. Ward, without an expression of my regret, not that, throughout my administration of the Public Trust Office, Mr. FitzGerald should, in his attempts to coerce and dictate to me in matters beyond his control, have descended to the small irritating courses of which I have given so many examples, not that the audit of the Public Trust Office should have been conducted in a spirit which would have justified me in the interests of the public service in applying for the protection of the Government, not that I should have to divert to a reply to such a report as Mr. FitzGerald’s, a few hours of the time already insufficient for more important duties, but that your attention should be taken up with the matter. The fault, however, lies no more with me than it would lie with the ablest man living who should be administering the Public Trust Office under the legislation of 1891, by which Mr. FitzGerald’s control was removed.

J. K. WARBURTON,  
Public Trustee.

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