

24. Do you know the man?—The man from whom I received that paper?

25. Yes; you can answer that?—Yes; but for the reason given I cannot disclose the name. I have known him for thirty years, or at any rate many years.

26. Do I understand that you want to take legal advice before giving further evidence?—Yes; to find out how far I may be compelled to give evidence that will involve a man in trouble.

27. *Mr. Commissioner Dinnie.*] We might inquire from Mr. Isitt his object in obtaining ballot-papers from Returning Officers after the election was over: you applied for a number of ballot-papers, Mr. Isitt?—The only application I made for a ballot-paper was to see whether a genuine ballot-paper would compare with the one I had.

28. Did you write for a ballot-paper after the poll was taken?—I do not recollect doing so.

29. Is not this an extract from one of your letters: "I am anxious to obtain samples of local-option papers used in various electorates, and shall be glad if you would kindly send me two of those used in your electorate." This was sent to the Returning Officer at Nelson?—I perfectly understand that. That is a totally different matter—after the ballot-papers had been used and done with. We wanted to get samples to send to the Government to show that the headings put on the various ballot-papers were illegal practically, that according to the schedule there should be no word above the line "I vote for So-and-so, or for such-and-such an issue."

30. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] It was after the ballot?—Yes; after the poll, and after the question had been inquired into.

31. *Mr. Commissioner Dinnie.*] I say that he was asking the Returning Officers to do an illegal act?—I did not know that the unused ballot-papers were anything else than so much waste paper after the results of the election had been declared.

32. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] You wrote for ballot-papers to the Returning Officer at Nelson?—Yes; after the election was over.

33. But you wrote to him in time to have a recount?—I do not think so.

34. But you did write to the Returning Officers?—Yes; after we had regarded the remaining ballot-papers as waste paper.

35. What was your object in asking for those ballot-papers?—I have explained that to the Chairman. We wanted—

36. Who are "we." I strongly object to the "we." Mr. F. W. Isitt only is concerned?—I wrote as representing the New Zealand Alliance. The whole question had been discussed by us as to what we believed to be improper proceedings in connection with the local-option election. We took exception to the lines printed above the top voting-line of the ballot-papers, and I asked for these ballot-papers as samples, and which I believed to be mere waste paper. We believed that it was an improper way of dealing with the ballot-papers.

37. Did you get any?—I think two were sent to us.

38. Out of how many applications?—I think the others declined to send them to us, or took no notice of our letters.

39. From whom did you get the two ballot-papers?—I cannot say from memory.

40. Will you be able to tell the Committee later on?—I think so.

41. I suppose you know the electoral law of this colony?—Pretty well.

42. Were you aware that you were committing an illegal or corrupt practice?—Certainly not.

43. Were you not trying to entrap these officers?—Certainly not.

44. Was it not your object to get a recount and upset the local-option poll?—Certainly not.

45. Supposing you had obtained those papers, could you not have asked for a recount with a view of upsetting the election?—I do not think so after the poll had been closed.

46. But if that be the law could you not have done so?—If that be the law, then I carelessly did a thing I ought not to have done; but I do not believe it to be the law, and I had no desire to upset the poll. If the law be as it is now stated to me, it was an error of judgment on my part to ask for the ballot-papers under the circumstances.

47. There were certain papers questioned at Newtown: was there any collusion between you and the Returning Officer at Brooklyn?—Certainly not.

48. Did he supply you with any ballot-papers?—He did not.

49. Is it possible that he could have done so? You say that one Returning Officer gave you two?—I think two came back in answer to our correspondence; but all the correspondence does not pass through my hands, and I am not sure.

50. If you wanted to act straightforwardly, why did you not apply to the Department of Justice or to the Colonial Secretary for the ballot-papers?—It did not occur to me that there would be any harm done in getting these unused ballot-papers, and we wanted to prove our case to the Minister.

51. Why did you not apply to the Colonial Secretary, who has control of the elections, for a copy of the ballot-papers, instead of applying to the Returning Officers, and endeavouring to entrap and gag them?—Our object was merely to obtain the ballot-papers, which I thought were valueless, and then to submit the question to him.

52. If the law has stated that it is illegal, do you not think you have been guilty of a corrupt practice?—No, I do not.

53. *Mr. Commissioner Dinnie.* It is important to us to find out from whom Mr. Isitt obtained those two ballot-papers.

54. *The Chairman.*] Of course, that is so. It certainly should be before the Committee?—I attached no importance to it at all.

55. I understand that you are quite willing, if given time, to bring that before the Committee?—Quite so.

56. *Mr. Commissioner Dinnie.*] I would like to ask you whether, as an honest man, if a ballot-paper was brought you as it was to the man who has been referred to, you would refuse to