

207. With reference to these bundles of ballot-papers, we have it in evidence that they were printed short: what is your version of that—do you think you printed and delivered them all?—I do. As far as my memory goes, when this trouble arose I heard that a parcel of 100 had disappeared. Of course, it worried me, and I went down and saw Mr. Thomson; or, rather, I sent my representative to him. I had seen Mr. Thomson before, because he had been in and seen me about the matter.

208. If they had been printed and got into other hands would they not possibly have been used in the election? Supposing any one had obtained these papers, and got the official stamp, could he not have used them in the election?—This 100?

209. Yes?—If any one got 100 papers like this one, so far as my knowledge of the thing goes, I suppose he could use them.

210. You are satisfied you delivered them?—Yes, I am satisfied I did deliver them. The object in view might have been served by one paper, and it was a very easy thing to put the other ninety-nine into the fire. If they had used the other ninety-nine broadcast I think the evidence would have been so strong that the offence could have been sheeted home to some one. I felt very strongly on the matter.

211. Is it your opinion that this paper was taken out of the 100 parcel that was missing?—Yes, that is my opinion. If 100 have disappeared, then I should say this particular paper came out of that parcel.

212. If these papers were numbered consecutively, and made into a book with a block at one end, do you think it would be a check?—I do not know that it would help it.

213. If one was missing out of a book of 100 would you be able to tell?—I think a very good way would be to adopt the system used in connection with stamps. In this case every sheet is numbered as it comes from the mill, and has to be accounted for. If that were done, and the sheets were sent in to the printer, and there was a number missing, when they came back they could be traced.

214. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] But we import the stamp-paper?—It would be an easy thing to import ballot-paper.

215. *Mr. Taylor.*] Your answers to Mr. McKenzie's questions as to safeguards, I presume, must be quite conjectural: you have never had any experience in conducting an election?—No; practically there has been no safeguard over these papers—no special safeguard. Any dishonest person could have got hold of them.

216. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] Do you mean from your office?—From my office or anywhere else. If this paper had been taken from my office I should say it had been stolen.

217. *Mr. Taylor.*] It is said that this was taken actually out of the ballot-box just before the ballot commenced. The ballot-box was left in the building, and was not protected against intrusion. Is it not as likely that it was taken from there as by one of your employees from your place?—I suppose it is just as possible.

218. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Those ballot-boxes were under lock and key?—I did not suspect my employees, but it is quite possible they might have taken one.

219. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] They had every opportunity?—Every opportunity.

220. *Mr. Taylor.*] Is there any limit to the possibilities?—These things were laid out in a room, and ten people had access to them: so that any one of those ten could have taken one of the papers and put it in his pocket.

221. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] On the other hand, you are satisfied that whoever stole that ballot-paper stole 100?—I am not convinced as to that. I say that 100 disappeared, and my opinion is that that is one of the hundred.

222. *Mr. Hall.*] Do you remember the boy you sent these ballot-papers with?—I cannot remember his name; but I could hardly think that he would do it.

223. Is he in your employ?—Not now. He was a message-boy, and such boys come and go. They just run messages for two or three months, and leave to go to some one else.

224. Did you send these ballot-papers in packets of 100 or in packets of several hundreds?—As far as I can recollect they were put in packets of 100, and then put into larger bundles.

225. Then, this boy would be the sole custodian of those papers between your office and the office of the Returning Officer?—Yes; but I may say that the boy was as good a boy as I have ever had in my employment.

226. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] What was his name?—I could not give you his name without looking up my book.

FRIDAY, 20TH NOVEMBER, 1903.

F. W. ISITT further examined. (No. 5.)

1. *The Chairman.*] The other day the Committee deliberated as to their course of action on your declining to give certain information to the Committee. Since then it has come to the knowledge of the Committee that other ballot-papers have to be accounted for, and I have been directed to ask you if you have any other ballot-papers in your possession than the one which has been produced?—I have none at all.

2. Do you know of any one who has?—No.

3. You have no knowledge of any ballot-paper beyond the one that is now before the Committee?—No.

4. I understand from members of the Committee that during my absence you had positively declined to divulge the name of the person from whom you got the ballot-paper?—Yes, I felt bound by my promise.

5. And you still feel bound by that?—Yes.