

144. Do you think it is possible to get an imitation made of the Returning Officer's stamp?—Everything is possible. I remember, in the Wairarapa, when the stamp used for stamping the totalisator tickets was made during a protest and similar tickets were issued; and while the dispute was on £60 or £70 was paid out on a cork stamp that was a forgery.

145. Are you satisfied that this paper was not taken away from the Courthouse?—I am satisfied that no one had the chance. All the papers were double-counted. They were counted in hundreds. I counted them first, and Mr. Thomson checked them afterwards.

146. Are you sure you did not leave one bundle about or throw it into the waste-paper basket?—I am certain I did not. There were a few kept over, but they were locked in another room and were afterwards used.

147. In your room or in Mr. Thomson's office?—In a room off the Official Assignee's old room.

148. Were they in your room or in Mr. Thomson's room?—In that room only. Mr. Thomson's room is downstairs.

149. Were you ever called away from the room while the ballot-papers were there?—I would not go away without locking the door. It was only the last day before the election that the papers were taken out and put in the boxes.

150. *Mr. E. G. Allen.*] Have you had much experience in electioneering?—Yes; I have been connected with it for years.

151. Are you certain it would be impossible for a person to take papers out of your room without your knowledge?—I should think so.

152. Were the papers placed in the boxes before they were sent out?—Yes.

153. Were the keys in the lock?—No.

154. Do you think that is a safe plan—to put papers in the boxes?—We never anticipated anything like roguery in connection with it, but when ballot-papers are sent away like that they are sent away and given in charge of a responsible person. They are not handed over until the Returning Officer arrives the next morning.

155. Do you not think the papers should be placed in the hands of the various deputies?—It might be an advantage, but it would be a little more trouble.

156. I mean so that he would be responsible after having the papers placed in his hands?—He would have to take them home with him, and with sixty-odd deputies it would be difficult to sheet the loss of a ballot-paper home to one man.

157. Do the deputies count the papers out of the boxes before they take possession?—That is the instruction. He has to count his papers immediately after he opens his booth, and it is done in the presence of scrutineers and clerks.

158. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Is a receipt given for them?—Yes; they sign for everything they receive, and they return what is used, and they are set aside.

159. Did you go with these boxes in the vehicle to see to their distribution?—I think I went across with the last boxes that went to the booth in the drill-shed.

160. And in that case you had the keys of the boxes and handed them over to the deputies?—I had the key of my box.

161. And you handed that key over with the papers inside the box to the deputy?—I was the deputy, and am responsible for my box, and not for other people's boxes.

162. Who handed you your box?—I took it with me because I had the keys.

163. Does the person who is in charge of the boxes for distribution hand the box and the key over to the deputy in his presence, and does the Deputy Returning Officer count the ballot-papers and give a receipt for the number?—A receipt-form is put in showing that so many have been issued; and it is imperative, I take it, that the Deputy must count those papers, otherwise he is making a false statement when he says he is receiving, say, four thousand and if there should be one short, and he signs the form in the presence of the clerk and scrutineers.

164. You do not know that that was done?—Yes, I know it was done.

165. Does he count them over in the presence of others?—Yes.

166. *The Chairman.*] I suppose all these ballot-papers were not put loose into the ballot-boxes?—They were bound round. They had a wrapper on them as well.

167. But are they not put in in parcels and tied and sealed?—Not sealed. I have been connected with six or seven different electorates in New Zealand, and I have never seen them sealed. The knot is just cut away and they are locked up and put in the charge of a Government person.

168. The keys would be put inside the slot on the top of the box?—Yes.

169. Was that slot sealed over?—No.

170. They appear to be more careful in the country districts in regard to these matters than in the towns?—In the towns you have a number of clerks, and you pick the best. You certainly do not get the quality of men you wish for. The pittance that is given for the duties to be performed will not induce men to undertake the work.

WALTER DINNIE, Commissioner of Police, sworn and examined. (No. 11.)

171. *The Chairman.*] Any information that you can give this Committee, Mr. Dinnie, that will help us in this matter, we shall be very glad to receive?—You have got my report on the matter, and I think I have dealt pretty fully with it, and given you practically all the information I have. Mr. R. McKenzie, M.H.R., has asked me to read Mr. Henry McKenzie's statement to the police, which is as follows: "I remember Mr. Thomson cautioning me about some voting-papers being in circulation unstamped, but I never saw or heard of any otherwise, and have not been asked by any one for ballot-papers or samples, and would not have supplied any if I had. I know Mr. Isitt, and have seen him call on Mr. Thomson several times about the time of the election, but I do not remember if it was before or after the election of the Licensing Committee."