

*His Worship:* Or can you say if the Government will in the Commission empower me to inquire into that, as it is quite possible they will do?

*Mr. Gray:* I do not think for a moment there can be any inquiry into the reasons which moved the Censor.

*His Worship:* Well, let them say. Nobody could expect me to act upon a telegram, somewhat vague—I will not say contradictory—in its terms. Let them issue a Commission. When that Commission comes I will know where I am.

*Mr. Gray:* I will communicate your views to the Government.

*His Worship:* It is not my views; it is what I am empowered to inquire into. The question is, how long is this business likely to take?

*Mr. Ostler:* I can do this to help your Worship: on the second charge, about the forty-odd letters posted to clergymen and delayed, we cannot prove that without calling forty witnesses. The facts they speak to are exceedingly brief: we got our letters on such-and-such a date.

*His Worship:* What about the other thing? I do not think we will get to that, but I may be wrong. Judging by the public interest taken I am afraid it will be long.

*Mr. Ostler:* I am afraid I cannot indicate. I am going to ask, when the inquiry commences, will your Worship be prepared to subpoena such officers of the Post Office as we name and want information from?

*His Worship:* Certainly, so long as—

*Mr. Gray:* No subpoenas will be necessary. Mr. Morris, the Secretary of the Department, is here, and is prepared to instruct the officers to appear.

*His Worship:* Mr. Ostler will submit to me a list of the persons he wants, and I will give that to you, and you to Mr. Morris.

*Mr. Ostler:* May I make one further request? Can these officers be assured of a guarantee they will have no ill consequences of their telling the truth?

*Mr. Gray:* I am authorized by Mr. Morris to say, Yes, absolutely. There is nothing to conceal—nothing to hide.

*His Worship:* I am glad to hear that. We will see whether that is so, as the inquiry goes on. Of course, no officer can be penalized. He has the right of appeal to the Public Service Board of Appeal, so that he need not be alarmed. If there was any attempt to penalize him he could call me as a witness. I am afraid we cannot go any further to-day. I am sorry to disappoint the public. They are evidently interested.

*Mr. Gray:* If the Government issues a new Commission to you, no doubt that will be done without any delay.

*His Worship:* Inquiry adjourned *sine die*. Notice will be given through the columns of the newspapers.

#### AUCKLAND, THURSDAY, 16TH AUGUST, 1917.

The Commissioner read the Warrant, dated the 15th August, 1917, extending the Commission.

*His Worship:* Mr. Ostler, do you wish to make any opening remarks?

*Mr. Ostler:* Mr. Gray kindly saw me yesterday and showed me a telegram from the Solicitor-General, who was coming up this morning, and I see has arrived, in which he asked him to endeavour to get the opening of this Commission postponed until Friday. I fell in very readily with that request because, as a matter of fact, I had not had much breathing-space, and I wished time to prepare my witnesses. I understand from my friend that he is now ready to go on; but I do ask that I be given until to-morrow morning. I know the Solicitor-General is a busy man, but no doubt arrangements can be made for him to stay on.

*Mr. Gray:* What my friend Mr. Salmond asked for was to arrange for continuation of the inquiry on Friday. I thought perhaps that meant the resumption on Friday, but what he meant was "not later than Friday." What I thought we had arranged was that my friend Mr. Ostler should go on with his opening and call some of the witnesses, then we could interpolate Mr. Salmond, and I thought it was quite possible that we should have to make application to go on to-morrow.

*Mr. Ostler:* My friend evidently thought what the Solicitor-General asked was that we should not go on until Friday. I was under that impression.

*His Worship:* I was under that impression. Mr. Gray asked whether it would be convenient. I said it was very inconvenient, but I was entirely in the hands of Mr. Gray and Mr. Ostler. I wish to meet their convenience in every way, subject to agreement between them; but if the Solicitor-General wished to get away I would facilitate it in every way. What I thought was we were only going to have a sort of preliminary canter this morning, and Mr. Gray should then arrange, subject to your consent, to take the Solicitor-General's evidence and let him get back to Wellington.

*Mr. Gray:* Could you not make your opening, Mr. Ostler?

*Mr. Ostler:* The trouble was I rather relied on that. The man I relied on, my organizer, is away. I rather banked on the fact that you asked for an adjournment. After seeing you I saw my clients—

*His Worship:* Will adjourning it until to-morrow interfere with the Solicitor-General's evidence?

*Mr. Salmond:* I should very much like to get away to-morrow; but I want to hear Mr. Ostler's evidence.