

107. I suppose there was an inquiry into the matter before the Postmaster-General sent the letter to Mr. Scabrook apologizing, and, no doubt, the records of that inquiry will be on your file?—Yes.

108. I am going to ask you to produce that file also: will you do so?—Yes.

*His Worship:* Of course, you understand that it will not necessarily be produced here, as that would mean sending to Wellington for it, and would cause considerable delay.

*Mr. Ostler:* I quite understand that, your Worship.

*Witness:* Would it be sufficient to get a telegram sent up giving a copy of the record?

*Mr. Ostler:* I think I should prefer to see the file.

*Mr. Gray:* I do not see what right Mr. Ostler has to inspect the file.

*His Worship:* Now you are interrupting what I was going to say. I do not think we should consider time or inconvenience, or any one else's convenience. It is a question of whether Mr. Morris thinks these things should be produced.

*Mr. Gray:* It is for your Worship to say whether these things are relevant.

*His Worship:* I cannot say till I see them.

109. *Mr. Ostler.* Can you say how long the Postal officer has been the Military Censor in Auckland?—Twelve months, I believe. My reply, however, is subject to correction.

110. Previous to that, was the Censor a Postal officer?—Yes.

111. Another officer performed the duty up till twelve months ago?—The officer who formerly performed the duty was promoted to another position, and his place has been taken by the man now acting.

112. Ever since the censorship has been established the Censor in Auckland has been a Postal officer?—Yes.

113. Is this man also the Telegraphic Censor?—No.

114. What is the reason for the appointment of two men—one for the postal work and one for the telegraphic work?—There is too much work for one man, and they are appointed under different sections of the Act.

115. Why does not one man do both branches?—There is a distinction in every place in New Zealand. That has been determined by the Chief Censor himself.

116. Would it be possible for one man to combine both duties?—I do not think so.

117. There is a letter here received this morning from a man in Wellington, who says that he has been waiting for several months for a reply to a letter that he sent about the 1st July enclosing twelve postage-stamps to the value of 1s. 6d., as he wanted some reading-matter from the association. He has not received the literature, and the Post Office has got the twelve postage-stamps. Can you tell us anything about it?—I am afraid I cannot help you there.

118. The matter is a little more serious than that. When an officer stops these letters, what happens to the money that may be in them?—I do not know; you will have to ask the Censor.

*His Worship:* That would be a rather interesting inquiry. I think we will leave that for the Censor himself. The money may go to some philanthropic purpose.

119. *Mr. Ostler.* We would like the money back, even if we cannot get the letters. I suppose he would not save it for pocket-money?—That is not likely.

120. The percentage of error in the Post Office is about one in 440,000, or about one complaint in nearly half a million letters?—Pretty good, is it not?

121. The average did not work out so well with those 2,500 envelopes, did it?—I am not prepared to admit that those were postal errors. There has not been an investigation into them yet.

122. I want to refer to Monday, the 2nd April, when the First Assistant Secretary stated that in consequence of a communication from the Solicitor-General he desired to see something done: may I see that file?—Yes.

123. I mean the minute which states "I hardly think this is a case in which the correspondence of the offender should be forbidden passage through the post. Most likely all that is required in this particular case will be secured by submitting the postal matter to the Censor"?—Which I directed to be done.

124. You then made this minute: "Correspondence to this box should be submitted to the Censor in order that anything objectionable may be dealt with." I want you to tell me where the reference is in the Assistant Secretary's minute to this communication from the Solicitor-General?—I understood it to have relation to a communication which I now see before me. The original instruction was issued on the 18th December, 1916. It was found that the Auckland office was not strictly complying with the instruction to submit this matter to the Censor. Mr. Williamson will, however, be able to tell you about that. I know a question cropped up which served to indicate that the censorship was not observed as it should be, therefore it was necessary to repeat the instruction, and that led to the insertion of an order in the order-book.

125. When you say that the Assistant Secretary's minute refers to a communication from the Solicitor-General, do you mean the communication in December, 1916?—No, a later one; because the matter was again referred to him by the Post Office.

126. For advice?—Yes.

127. I suppose you have observed that whereas the first communication to the Solicitor-General referred only to the literature used by this committee, your orders of April directed the correspondence to be censored?—That was because we had no means of determining what was correspondence and what was literature.

128. Who directed you?—The Solicitor-General.

*Mr. Ostler:* I want that produced. I submit that I am entitled to it, because the Commission is entitled, among other things, to inquire into the reason for the censorship.