

155. Is he accountable to you or any Postal officer?—No.

156. You have been asked about a return asked for in the House: has it been given?—As far as I know, no return has been given.

157. Is it likely that a return will be given?—Inquiries would have to be made from every individual in the employ of the Postal Department as to his religion.

158. Then, if any statement has been made as to the number of Catholics in the Postal Department there is no ground for it?—I do not see that there could be, as there is no information to work upon.

159. Is there any probability that any return could have been made in your absence from Wellington?—No; because any information that has been asked for would have to include Auckland also.

160. *His Worship.*] Is the Postal Censor in each place appointed on your recommendation?—No.

161. Who appoints him?—

*Mr. Gray:* The Governor.

162. *His Worship.*] But he would be appointed on nomination?—Yes.

163. *Mr. Gray.*] What qualifications would appeal to you in nominating an officer?—A man in whom I had confidence and who was reliable in every sense of the word.

164. In the selection for appointment of these Censors was the question generally referred to you?—No; as a matter of fact, I can say that the nomination of nearly all the Postal officers was made before I came back to New Zealand.

165. *His Worship.*] What status in the service would these officers have?—As a rule, I should say they would be clerks in the £260-per-annum grade with about twenty years' service.

166. *Mr. Gray.*] Are you able to say whether the man in Auckland is a reliable and intelligent officer?—Thoroughly.

167. *His Worship.*] I suppose the officers in the Post and Telegraph Department form a large proportion of the Public Service?—Yes, the largest, except, of course, the Railways.

168. I suppose you have no knowledge if the Public Service Commissioner has any knowledge of the religion of the men in the Service?—I am quite sure he has not.

169. *Mr. Gray.*] You say that the Postal Censor is a Postal officer appointed by the Governor: how is his salary paid?—It is paid to the Department.

170. For the time being is he a Post Office official?—No; so far as the performance of postal duties is concerned, if the whole of his time is taken up by his censorship duties the military authorities pay his salary.

171. The Auckland Postal officer may have some time in which he can do Postal duties if required?—Yes.

172. Then, when he is not doing Censor work he is doing Postal work?—Yes; but so far as the Censor work is concerned he is accountable to no one.

173. *Mr. Ostler.*] Before the war broke out is it not a fact that section 27 of the Post Office Act was never used?—I have no recollection of any case in which it was used; it was brought into force for any contingency which might arise.

*Mr. Ostler:* There is exactly the same section in the English Act.

*His Worship:* Have you no direct evidence, Mr. Ostler, in regard to the dissatisfaction which you say exists because of the number of Roman Catholics in the Service?

*Mr. Ostler:* The allegations are not made by me, but they are referred to in that pamphlet. I am not in a position to answer that question just now.

*His Worship:* I merely asked out of curiosity. I have been in the Civil Service forty-three years myself.

#### AUCKLAND, TUESDAY, 21ST AUGUST, 1917.

JAMES CHARLES WILLIAMSON, Chief Postmaster, Auckland, examined.

1. *Mr. Gray.*] Your full name, Mr. Williamson?—James Charles Williamson.

2. You are the Chief Postmaster at Auckland, in charge of the Auckland Postal District?—I am.

3. By the way, what is the extent of your district?—It extends from North Cape down as far as the other side of Lake Taupo, almost to Waiouru, and across to Kawhia on the west, and almost to the east coast. There is a strip coming down called the Thames District on the east coast.

4. In area about equal to half the area of the North Island?—I should say so.

5. How long have you been in the Postal service?—Forty years on the 1st July last.

6. And how long have you been Chief Postmaster at Auckland?—Since the 1st April last year.

7. Before becoming Chief Postmaster at Auckland were you attached to the Head Office of the General Post Office, at Wellington?—Yes.

8. For how long?—About twenty-six years.

9. Eventually rising to the position of Chief Clerk, I think?—That was the position I held before I left the Head Office.

10. What staff have you at Auckland?—Individually, or as a whole?

11. Take them in classes first?—The letter-carriers' staff comprises 90 men and 1 woman; in the mail-room there are 60 men and 5 women; on the rest of the staff there are 139 men and 44 women; total staff, 339 (including myself), of whom 165 or thereabout are connected with the handling of correspondence; and in addition those in the registered-letter branch—probably about 30; and in the counter delivery—say, about 4 or 5.