

146. Now, the Censor in Auckland is Mr. Clouston, is he not?—That is so.

147. He was formerly Censor in some other part of New Zealand, was he not?—I believe, in Christchurch.

148. He has been for many years a Postal officer?—That is so.

149. And part of his time is engaged in postal duties in Auckland?—Yes.

150. In the matter of censorship have you ever exercised, or attempted to exercise, any sort of control over him?—Never.

151. Have you any knowledge of his methods?—None whatever.

152. Has any communication of his practice or instructions from the Chief Censor been made by him to you?—No.

153. Does Mr. Clouston inform you what instructions he receives from the Chief Censor?—No.

154. Or his methods in dealing with correspondence?—No.

155. Or of the contents of any censored matter?—No.

156. Is there anything you wish to add? You have the separate reports there, I think, upon the various instances of alleged non-delivery. Perhaps they could be better spoken to by Mr. Rudd?—They could be spoken to by each witness.

157. Very well: is there anything else you wish to say?—Perhaps you might mention these to His Worship as instances of mistaken complaints.

158. Just briefly tell us what they were, without giving the names?—One case was a complaint made on the 26th July—quite recently—that a certain letter had not been delivered. It was subsequently proved, on inquiry, that the letter had been delivered, but to a brother of the addressee. He put it in his own coat-pocket, and it was found about a week back. In another complaint, dated the 14th July, it was stated by the complainant that he saw the address written on the packet, and also that before he posted it he looked at the address. The article was missing—eventually it turned up, and there was no address of any kind whatever on it.

159. These are examples for His Worship of mistakes. You have had instances, I think, of misaddressing to yourself?—A sender apparently copied my address from a parcel-card, and yet he put down “J. C. Williamson, Chief Postmaster, Wellington,” instead of “Auckland.” I have another instance of a letter addressed “Mr. Biss, General Manager, Post Office, Auckland.” Mr. Biss left the Service in 1901 or 1902, and yet the letter got to its destination—that is, to me, for whom it was intended.

160. *Mr. Ostler.*] How did it get to the correct address?—It got to the person for whom it was intended.

161. *Mr. Gray.*] Do you say it is not an uncommon experience for people to make mistakes in addresses?—Not an uncommon mistake by any means.

162. *Mr. Ostler.*] I understand you to say that on the 23rd March you caused an order to be put in the order-book ordering the censorship of correspondence of the persons using box 912?—That is so.

163. Can you produce the instructions that you had had up to that date, either from the Military Censor direct or from the head of the Post Office?—I had no communication from the Military Censor at all.

164. All the communications come through the channel of your Head Office?—Yes.

165. Will you produce all the instructions you had up to date 23rd March from the Head Office?—All that I have I can produce; but I have got to say that part of the Head Office file was referred to me on one occasion, and, of course, all the minutes on it and my replies were sent back to the Head Office.

166. Well, the Head Office file is here—Mr. Morris was referring to it yesterday. Will you produce all the instructions you had from the Head Office up to the 23rd March, 1917?—Yes. That is the first one.

167. The first is a telegram of the 18th December, 1916 [telegram read]. Had you any further instructions besides that up to the 23rd March, when you caused that instruction to be put in your order-book?—No.

168. Do you not see that that instruction refers to literature, and literature only?—Quite.

169. Do you not know from your forty-odd years' experience as a Post officer that a marked distinction is always drawn between literature and postal packets not sealed, and sealed letters?—No.

170. Pass me the Post Office Act, please. Do you really say—with all your experience as a Post officer—you do not know how sacred a sealed letter is held by every Post officer?—I know how sacred it is held.

171. Do you not know that throughout the Act a distinction is drawn between a sealed letter or packet and any other postal packet?—Yes.

*Mr. Gray:* You asked whether there was not a marked distinction between literature and other sealed letters.

172. *Mr. Ostler.*] You remember section 30 of the Post Office Act: “Where the Postmaster-General or any Postmaster has reason to suspect that any postal packet (*other than a letter or a letter-card*) addressed to any person (either by his own or any fictitious or assumed name), or to any address without a name, posted in New Zealand or elsewhere, contains or is supposed to contain any printed or written matter of any kind, or any enclosure of any kind . . . which is of a libellous, blasphemous, indecent, or immoral nature . . .” You know that section?—I do.

173. Does it not draw the greatest distinction between a sealed letter and other postal packets such as circulars?—It does.

174. And you know that a sealed letter is a sacred thing, not to be opened by any Post officer?—Yes.