

202. There seems to have been some laxity there. Have you not an order in that order-book, about the 6th July, on the subject of the censorship of the correspondence of this box?—Yes, that is correct: “It has come under notice that a large number of envelopes containing circulars superscribed ‘If not claimed within seven days please return to box 912’ are passing through the post. A short time ago specific instructions were given that mail-matter so superscribed was to be delivered to the Censor. This instruction has been ignored, and the officers at fault will be severely dealt with.—J. C. WILLIAMSON, Chief Postmaster, 8/7/17.”

203. Why did you find it necessary to put that in the order-book?—Because I found the previous day that circulars had been passed and the previous order forgotten.

204. The day before, I think, Mr. Elliott had rung you up?—That is so.

205. You did not say anything to him about the instruction you had to hang up these circulars, I suppose?—To submit them to the Censor, you mean? No, I did not.

206. Is there not a further instruction still from the Head Office with regard to some of these letters?—Addressed to the Chief Postmaster?

207. I do not know whom addressed to?—No.

208. Why, then, did Mr. Morris say—I think it was Mr. Morris; I do not want to do him an injustice—in regard to the letters to the ministers that were held up over the week end, that in that case the censorship was not lifted until Monday, 9th July? Were there instructions to lift that censorship?—The instructions, I take it, to lift the censorship would be to the Censor himself.

209. You know of them because Mr. Morris knew of them. You must have those instructions there?—The telegram was on the 9th July: that was the instruction to release.

210. I thought you told me just now that there were no instructions to the Post Office—that if there were any instructions they were to the Postal Censor?—What I understood you to mean was instructions to the Censor.

211. Quite so; but this is a telegram addressed to you personally?—Quite so—to release.

212. It is addressed to you, and it is dated the 9th July, 1917; and it says, “The Deputy Chief Postal Censor informs me that the Censor has been instructed to release the circulars of the Vigilance Committee. Deliver in the usual way.” You know perfectly well it is a Post Office instruction.

*Mr. Gray:* Pardon me; that was not a Post Office instruction. Mr. Waters says, “The Deputy Chief Postal Censor—”

*Mr. Ostler:* Here is the instruction addressed to Mr. Williamson himself.

*Mr. Gray:* That was plainly that the Censor at Wellington had instructed the Censor at Auckland, and consequently the Chief Postmaster was instructed to deliver in the usual way.

*Witness:* Otherwise the matter would go back to the Censor.

213. *Mr. Ostler.*] I understood you to say in answer to Mr. Gray that the circulars had not been submitted to the Censor?—As far as I knew the circulars had not been submitted to the Censor.

214. How does that square with Mr. Morris’s reply that the censorship was not lifted until Monday, the 9th July?—Probably that is a matter that rests with the Head Censor.

215. Now you say you are ready to swear here that no censorship was placed on those circulars, and yet here is a telegram from Mr. Waters, “The Deputy Chief Postal Censor informs me that the Censor has been instructed to release the circulars.” Do you still say, in face of the contents of that wire that you received, that the circulars were not submitted to censorship?—

*Mr. Gray:* It was a misapprehension on the part of Mr. Waters.

*Mr. Ostler:* Mr. Waters made the mistake—not Mr. Williamson?

*Mr. Gray:* I am not saying it was a mistake—it was a misapprehension.

216. *Mr. Ostler.*] Where does the Postal Censor do his work in your post-office?—In the clerks’ room.

217. A clerk’s room?—The clerks’ room.

218. That is, the Chief Clerk’s room?—Yes. It is the room where all the clerks of my particular office work.

219. In the room occupied by all the clerks?—Yes.

220. He does not have a private room to himself?—No.

221. What are his hours on Saturdays?—From 9 to 12, or, I understand, as much more as he likes to work.

222. I suppose he does not like to work much more on Saturday afternoon?—I could not say.

223. The work that he does is not done in secrecy—I mean the other clerks can watch him at his work?—I could hardly answer that.

224. You have been in there, I suppose, and have seen other clerks there?—Very occasionally I have been in.

225. And seen him at work and other clerks there?—Yes.

226. Can you say how he manages to get letters open—what device he has?—No.

227. I suppose it would occur to you it is pretty difficult to get a letter open without steaming it—without some steaming-device?—Yes.

228. And also that between forty and fifty letters addressed to ministers were opened and closed?—I do not know that they were.

*Mr. Gray:* Who has said they were opened? This is the first time it has been said.

*Mr. Ostler:* Mr. Williamson denies they were opened.

*Mr. Gray:* Except by themselves—the addressees.

*Mr. Ostler:* What is the value of a censorship if you do not open the correspondence?

*Mr. Gray:* Your clients have had the benefit of that.

229. *Mr. Ostler.*] You say you do not know of any device which the Censor uses to open letters in the post-office?—I do not know of any device which the Censor uses.