

230. Do you not think that if the Censor was at all an efficient officer he could have seen by opening one or two of these letters that they contained innocuous matter, and sent them on in time for Saturday's delivery?—I have no control over the Censor.

231. I know; but I am asking you, as a fair-minded man with forty years' postal experience, do you not think it would not have been a very difficult thing?—I do not know that I can say anything for the Censor or against the Censor. I am ignorant of what he does.

232. Is it not a fact, by regulations, that when through some trouble in the post-office letters are delayed you pride yourself on getting out a special delivery?—A special delivery of any delayed letter?

233. Yes, of letters delayed through something going wrong in the post-office?—We do it on occasion.

234. Upon every occasion you can?—Yes, practically, if it is the Department's fault the letters have been delayed.

235. It must have been apparent to the person who examined those letters that they were perfectly innocuous, and it was important they should be out before Monday?—The Censor does not report to me in any way whatever. I have no control over him.

236. There is a Saturday afternoon delivery in the city, is there not?—No.

237. Not in any part of Auckland?—No.

238. Only Saturday morning?—Yes.

239. Can you explain how it was that when the censorship of this correspondence was lifted on the Monday some of the letters did not reach the addressees until Tuesday morning?—We do not admit that the Post Office was to blame if they did not reach the addressees until Tuesday.

240. Why not?—Because they were all sent out on the Monday afternoon.

241. How do you know that?—By an examination which the assistant officer in charge of letter-carriers made of the cases and of the tops of the cases after the letter-carriers had gone.

242. What do you mean by "the cases"?—The letter-carriers' cases in which they keep the letters for delivery.

243. Is there anything on the letters indicating when they were sent out from the post-office?—No.

244. Not at all?—Nothing. They were in time for the letter-carriers' delivery, and they were supposed to go out immediately.

245. What time do the letter-carriers go out in the afternoon?—Most at 2 o'clock.

246. Any before?—Yes, there probably would be. There is a delivery, I think, at 12 o'clock.

247. Then did any go after 2 o'clock?—No, not to my knowledge.

248. Then did not every letter there go out in time for delivery on Monday afternoon?—Yes.

249. How is it that, at any rate, some of them were not delivered until Tuesday morning?—Has it been proved that some of them were not delivered until Tuesday morning?

250. The Rev. Bailey gave most positive evidence that his letter was not delivered to him until Tuesday morning?—The Department does not admit it.

251. I can quite understand how you get so low an average in the yearly return when a thing like that is proved in the Court and you will not admit it. Mr. Bailey gave evidence that he himself received that letter from the postman on Tuesday morning. Some of them must have gone out on the Monday morning, I suggest to you?—I think not—unless they were passed and not submitted to the Censor.

252. I just picked up the first one here and turned it over, and I find it bears the Takapuna postmark, 9th July, 2 p.m. It could not have got that postmark on it unless it left the post-office some time in the morning?—I can explain: the mail goes over at a quarter past 1 o'clock.

253. At any rate, we have your admission that every one of those letters was sent out from the General Post Office in Auckland in time for the afternoon delivery over Auckland and suburbs. Can you explain why none of these letters bear the words "Passed by the Military Censor"?—No, I cannot.

254. Do you not know anything about any regulation?—None whatever. It is a matter entirely for the Military Censor.

255. He can put it on or not, just as he likes?—As far as I know. As a matter of fact, I do not know anything about it.

256. I want to go on to the cases of empty envelopes. When a box is cleared at half past 11 on a Friday night, at what time do the letters cleared from that box or that outlying post-office reach the General Post-office here?—About half past 1 or 2 o'clock.

257. Where do they go first in the Chief Post-office?—They are placed by the chauffeur on the stamping-table.

258. And when are they stamped—straight away?—If the night clerks have time they are stamped straight away—that is the rule.

259. That might be the rule, but is it not the practice not to stamp them for two or three hours?—Not to my knowledge.

260. How comes it, then, that the postmark on all those letters is 5 a.m.?

Mr. Gray: Some are 3 a.m.

Witness: It is quite easily explained: after 1 o'clock the stamp is changed to represent 3. Anything coming in between 1 and 3 would bear "3 a.m." Anything coming in after 3 and before 5 would be stamped "5 a.m."

261. Mr. Ostler.] I will show you these envelopes which we have sworn evidence were posted at 11.20 p.m. at the Dominion Road Post-office on the 6th July, and therefore ought to have reached the General Post-office between 1 and 2 a.m.: you will see that every postmark there is 5 a.m. [ministers' letters]?—That is quite so.