

324. Do you acknowledge that it is correct?—Substantially.

325. Do you suggest that between the time you read the *Herald* on the morning of the 12th and the time you gave that to a *Star* reporter—what time, by the way, did you give this to a *Star* reporter?—I could not say—probably just before publication.

326. Three o'clock at the latest?—Yes.

327. Do you say that between the time you read the *Herald* and 3 o'clock you had made sufficient inquiry to enable you to say there could not possibly be something wrong?—I do, speaking as I was from a knowledge of my staff, and also from inquiries which my executive officers had in the meantime been making.

328. But you made inquiries after your publishing that statement—you pursued your inquiries very much further?—I made a few.

329. A good many more than a few: you had detectives on the job, did you not?—No.

330. Did you not employ the police to inquire into this matter?—Which?

331. The matter of the charges made, of course?—No. I will explain the whole matter. I was told it was reported that there were tickets of admission in the hands of some boys from the Mount Eden district, and it was also reported that those tickets had come into their possession from envelopes before they were posted. I immediately sought permission from my Head Office to employ a detective, seeing that the police could manage the matter probably better than the Post Office. He made inquiries, and the result was that there was no truth in the report. So far as the detective was concerned the matter ended, and there were no further detectives employed.

332. Then it is true you employed a detective?—Not in connection with the charges—in connection with the rumour that the contents of envelopes had been taken from the envelopes before posting.

333. These envelopes related to this meeting—the rumour about circulars relating to this Protestant Political Association meeting?—Yes, before they were posted, or supposed to be posted.

334. However, detectives were employed?—A detective.

335. Did not two detectives go up and interview a boy?—Not to my knowledge.

336. A detective was employed with regard to a rumour you had heard with regard to this series of circulars?—A rumour that tickets had been taken from envelopes before the envelopes were posted.

337. Surely that did not come within your province at all—that was a police matter?—And it was put into the hands of the police, was it not?

338. What did you have any concern about that for—before posting you would have no concern?—If the rumour had proved true it would have helped in the elucidation of the mystery.

339. Now we are getting at the mystery: the detective was employed to enable you to make a defence to these charges—is that true?—No.

340. You were hoping to say that the contents had been extracted before the letters were posted?—

*His Worship:* He has already said so.

341. *Mr. Ostler.*] Did you not also employ one of your private detectives—a Postal official—to go round and get some information for you?—I do not understand what you mean by a “private” detective.

342. Persons under your authority went and interviewed various people who you heard had got empty envelopes. A Postal official went and interviewed persons who had complained that they had received envelopes without contents—Mrs. Stainton and Mrs. Stuart?—That is so.

343. How did you know they had complained—they did not complain to you?—They complained to the letter-carriers.

344. How did you know they had complained to the letter-carriers?—By information received from the officer in charge of letter-carriers.

345. Then you did endeavour to get information from the letter-carriers as to whether complaints had been received?—I have said so.

346. You could not have done that after you said this in the paper?—Why should I not have gone on?

347. But I am pointing out there could not possibly be anything wrong?—Exactly; but there was no harm making further inquiries.

348. Though you thought there was nothing wrong you went on making further inquiry?—Yes; I went on making further inquiry when complaint was made by Mrs. Stainton and Mrs. Stuart.

349. Were the night sorters on that night more than ordinarily busy?—I think they would be on the first night—that is, 2nd–3rd July.

350. Not on the second night?—They might have been on the second night also.

351. Have you not inquired to find out whether they were?—I know they were on the morning of Tuesday.

352. Do you know anything about the other morning?—Not particularly.

353. Have you not inquired?—They will be here to give evidence themselves.

354. Have you inquired on that particular point?—No.

355. Have you made any other inquiries from the sorters?—Yes.

356. Did you ask these sorters on duty that week whether they had let through any empty envelopes?—Yes.

357. What was their reply?—To the best of their knowledge and belief they had not.

358. Did you take any other steps to ascertain whether it was the mistake of the letter-sorters in passing empty envelopes?—No, I do not recollect that I did.

359. None at all?—No.