

360. Quite sure?—I cannot recall.

361. I just asked because you did not appear to be quite certain. You have interrogated all your letter-carriers?—It has been done by my officer in charge of letter-carriers.

362. Did the Postal official who went to see Mrs. Stainton and Mrs. Stuart take a written statement from them?—I do not think so.

363. Were they instructed to?—No; they were instructed to pursue the usual course in such inquiries.

364. I want to ask you this: there is a letter addressed to Mr. Shackelford there; that has a note on it "Received without contents. H.G." Can you tell me who "H.G." is?—One of the letter-carriers.

365. Therefore what he means by that is that it was received by him without contents?—Apparently, yes.

366. There was also a letter addressed to Mr. Hannan. Mr. Hannan has told us he showed it to the letter-carrier, who took it away and brought it back with those words, "Received without contents." Do you know who put those on?—I cannot make out the initials.

367. Do you not know what happened about that letter from your inquiries: whom did the letter-carrier take it to?—The inquiries I made, of course, were only the other day; and it seems to have escaped the memory of the person to whom Mr. Hannan went—Oh, I was thinking of Mr. Smith's case.

*Mr. Gray:* We never heard of Mr. Hannan until Mr. Ostler gave us the list the other day.

*Witness:* I could not say that I can recall Hannan's case.

*Mr. Gray:* Woods was the letter-carrier.

*His Worship:* What is your question?

*Mr. Ostler:* What I am asking is this: Who put that endorsement on that envelope of Mr. Hannan's, and why was it put on?

*Mr. Gray:* I am going to call the letter-carrier on that round.

*Witness:* I could not say. I do not recognize the initials on the letter.

368. *Mr. Ostler:* Did you not find out in making your inquiries from the letter-carriers, which you say you made straight away, the history of that—who put it on?—As I say, I cannot recollect very much about that letter of Hannan's.

369. It has been brought to my attention that the interview you had with the *Star* representative on the 12th July was in the morning, because it says "Mr. Williamson *this morning* made the following statement." That would not have given many hours to make these inquiries before you were satisfied there was nothing in it?—No.

370. Would it be right for a Post officer, if a person came to the counter with an empty letter and said that she had received it like that, to take it and mark it "Received without contents"?—No, it would not.

371. Did you hear Miss Smith give in evidence that that was done in your post-office?—Yes.

372. That was wrong?—I made inquiry about that since, and no one will admit having seen this lady except one young man, who referred her to the elderly gentleman she spoke about. I cannot ascertain who that elderly gentleman was.

373. If her evidence is true that was not proper conduct for one of your Post officers?—It was not.

374. I suppose you will admit that there is ample opportunity, while letters are in the post-office, for persons, if they are dishonestly inclined—Post officers—to extract the contents?—There is opportunity.

375. As a matter of fact, you have trouble often, unfortunately, with dishonest officers?—Not often.

376. Have you not, since you have been in Auckland, had at least three cases?—I would not like to mention the number of cases without consulting my records.

377. I could mention the names of three persons. I do not know that I will not be doing an injustice. I will write them down.

*Mr. Gray:* How did you know?

*Mr. Ostler:* I do not think you are entitled to cross-examine me.

*Mr. Gray:* I am not entitled to ask for the information; but it is significant that you should be in possession of it.

*Mr. Ostler:* One appeared in the public Court.

378. *Mr. Ostler:* Was not one man recently sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for admitting taking several letters?—In Auckland?

379. Yes?—Since I came to Auckland?

380. I understand so?—I do not recall it.

*Mr. Ostler:* You will probably know it from being Chief Clerk in the Head Office.

*Mr. Gray:* I would point out to your Worship that although the Department has no desire to keep anything back, this is not a matter relevant to the inquiry.

*His Worship:* Except that Mr. Ostler is concerned in showing laxity.

*Mr. Gray:* It only shows that you cannot absolutely cure dishonesty.

381. *Mr. Ostler:* Read the contents, and answer if that is not true?—I know nothing of these, Mr. Ostler.

382. Not one of the cases?—No.

383. But one of those cases only happened recently, and I understand the inquiry is still proceeding: is not that so?—I do not know of it.

384. Is the Elliott Street post-office under your jurisdiction?—It is.