

98. If the sorters upstairs find that the sorters downstairs have overlooked an empty envelope their duty is to mark it, I suppose?—Yes.

99. The letters go from the mail-room after the sorting by the night clerks to the letter-carriers' sorters?—Yes.

100. Therefore every letter goes through two sorters' hands?—There is the mail-room sorting, the letter-carriers' sorters, and the letter-carriers: that is three.

101. Is it not a fact that not only were none of these envelopes marked as received empty by the mail-room clerks, but there was not one marked by the sorters upstairs as received empty?—As far as I know.

102. And the first intimation we have of the letters being received without contents are the two or three letter-carriers' endorsements that you have seen?—I heard only on the Thursday from Mr. Williamson.

103. As far as shown on the envelopes the only intimation is one or two made by postmen?—Yes.

104. *Mr. Gray.* You have already demonstrated by the fact that these letters passed through the post unobserved that envelopes not very substantial in quality could be passed unnoticed. Would your observations apply also to envelopes of this kind, which are at least as thick as these others?—Yes.

105. Would it, in your opinion, be easy for envelopes like this to pass through the hands of sorters without it being noticed that they were empty?—Yes.

106. Now, you say there would be plenty of time—it would be quite easy to abstract the contents of envelopes between the time of receipt from Dominion Road and distribution by letter-carriers, because the letters would be in the post-office for some few hours in the early morning?—Yes.

107. A man would have the opportunity?—Yes.

108. Are you not entitled to rely upon the common honesty of officers of the Post Office?—We do.

109. You must necessarily do so?—Yes.

110. Have you had any reason to suspect the honesty of employees of the Post Office in Auckland other than in those cases where inquiries have been made and the offenders brought to book?—No.

111. Lapses are liable to occur, and do occur, in every large post-office?—Yes.

112. Is there any reason to suppose that the officers of the Post-office, Auckland, are less honest than officers in any other post-office?—They are an honest lot, I know.

113. You told my friend that the contents of an open envelope such as this, even with the flap turned in, might very well be shaken out in the course of handling, sorting, and so on: would that be very remarkable—would it show or imply any want of care or honesty on the part of the Post Office officials?—No.

114. It is probably not likely to happen, I suggest, with the flap turned in?—

*Mr. Ostler:* Surely it would be the duty of the post-office to return the contents to the box. If they were shaken out they would be in the post-office somewhere.

115. *Mr. Gray.* There is a rule, is there not, in the Post Office rules requiring that all matter which is identifiable must be returned to the owners?—Yes.

116. That is, of course, if it is observed?—Yes.

117. My learned friend suggested that you were committing a breach of the law in allowing these test letters, addressed to existing persons, to be detained in the usual course of post. Was there any intention in posting these envelopes that they should reach the addressees?—No.

*Mr. Ostler:* They are postal packets. I do not know what your Worship would say if Mr. Rudd were brought before you on a charge of a breach of the law.

*His Worship:* I do not know, of course.

118. *Mr. Ostler.* Can you explain why at least two of the postmen, when complained to, were able to say that the envelopes contained notices of an Orange Lodge meeting?—No; I do not know anything about the postmen.

MISS EDITH BLANDFORD, Counter Officer, Post-office, Devonport, examined.

1. *Mr. Gray.* Your name, Miss Blandford?—Edith Blandford.

2. You are counter officer, I think, at the Post-office, Devonport?—Yes.

3. You know Mr. Lowe?—Yes.

4. Do you recollect Mr. Lowe calling and making some inquiry of you in the second week in July?—Yes.

5. I think he brought an empty envelope to you and showed it to you?—Yes.

6. What did he say to you?—He asked me if I could tell him the name of a certain boxholder—I do not remember the number.

7. He showed you an envelope with the number on it, and asked who the holder of that box was?—Yes.

8. Did he ask you anything about a list?—I said we had no list, and if we had I would not be allowed to give the number.

9. What else?—I handed it to the head letter-carrier.

10. Mr. Lowe says that you said when he produced the envelope, "Oh, we have got a number of those here." This is what Mr. Lowe said: "I went straight down to the post-office to ask if they could tell who box 912 belonged to. The young lady at the counter said, 'Oh, we have a number of those here,' and she showed me what they contained—she showed me one of the full ones." Now do you recollect him producing the envelope?—Yes.