

*Mr. Ostler:* Is there any objection to producing the book?

*Mr. Gray:* No.

30. *Mr. Ostler:* All you have in that book is the time you left on the second round?—It is the time we left for the first and then for the second.

31. Were the Dominion Road letters brought in in the first round?—Yes.

32. It was about ten or fifteen minutes past 1 you got in on the first round?—Yes.

33. *Mr. Gray:* It may have been thought, in view of the question I asked the First Clerk, that I made a deliberate omission. May I ask, are you a Roman Catholic? Or what is your brand of religion?—A Presbyterian.

ALEXANDER LINTON, Clerk, Chief Post-office, Auckland, examined.

1. *Mr. Gray:* What is your Christian name, Mr. Linton?—Alexander.

2. You are one of the night sorters, I think?—In charge, sir.

3. How long have you been in the Auckland Post-office?—About fifteen years.

4. How long in the Postal service?—Nineteen years.

5. How many years have you been engaged in or connected with sorting?—Pretty well all that time—fifteen years.

6. You may consider yourself an expert by this time?—Yes.

7. We have been told that on each night, including the 3rd and the 5th, in the first week in July Hayes, the chauffeur, brought in correspondence collected by him on his round, and put it on the table and handed it over to you: is that correct?—Yes.

8. Let us speak of the early mornings of the 3rd and 5th July: do you remember those mornings?—Yes.

9. The chauffeur came in about a quarter past 1?—Yes.

10. Do you recollect that amongst the correspondence there was a large number of envelopes bearing the superscription of box 912?—There was a large number bearing a superscription which I did not notice.

11. I suppose you are used to seeing them, and did not take any notice of what it was?—It is a regular thing to have such correspondence.

12. It is a frequent thing to have letters going through your hands with some sort of superscription such as this?—Yes.

13. Your attention was not particularly directed to it?—No.

14. Were all those letters stamped and forwarded to be delivered in the usual way?—In the course of facing-up they were put aside and collected, and put through afterwards. We have a method, and if we have a lot of correspondence for Auckland we put it aside, and put it through the machine and send it upstairs. In the course of facing-up I noticed these. We put them aside and sorted them after the general clearance—

15. You noticed there were a large number of circulars bearing penny stamps and having a superscription on the front, and that many of them were for places outside the city, and would therefore not be deliverable by letter-carriers. You say you put them aside, as far as you could, until the general clearance had been disposed of?—Yes, that one particular clearance.

16. Then these were stamped and sent upstairs?—No, not sent upstairs—placed in baskets and left to be handed over to the morning letter-carriers' staff. Prior to these going through the machine—that is the practice with a number of circulars—I opened the flap of one.

17. What for?—For examination to see whether they could pass under the penny rate. I noticed when I opened it it was a lodge notice and a card. I naturally took it there was no embargo. Had the words "Vigilance Committee" appeared I would at once, I think, have recognized they were subject to censorship.

18. The notice "Box 912" did not convey anything to you?—We sign so many orders we do not remember any particular number, but we remember the text. That is the sole reason I let them go through.

19. It was either a lack of recollection or some lack of oversight on your part that allowed all these circulars to go through and not be submitted to the Censor?—I will not say that.

20. The strict order had not been complied with?—In regard to the word "Vigilance" it had. "The literature may probably be from . . ." Had I noticed the word "Vigilance" I would at once have held it up. I think the text of the order would have flashed through my mind.

21. Did you observe whether any of the envelopes were empty or not?—Not as far as I have any recollection. I do not remember any.

22. Is there any test employed by you or your assistants to see whether circular envelopes, or envelopes presumably containing circular matter, are filled or empty?—Only in the course of sorting. You hold a bundle of probably twenty letters in your hand; you take them by the corner; that finger presses on them, and you can feel the contents in them. If I in sorting felt that letter, and the letter was thin and the contents were not in, I would mark it accordingly. On this particular night I do not remember any in that way.

23. You know now, having had an experiment tried on you, that letters can be passed that were empty?—No; I refuse to take that as a test: it was not a genuine test.

24. You may be right?—I am perfectly right. This test was told me as a test. If that test was aboveboard—I was in the room—why was I not called to that case with the Assistant Postmaster and the Chief Postmaster—

25. What you suggest is that you were not responsible for the passing of these letters?—How do I know I did not put them in the "taxed" pigeonhole, where we put letters for outside Auckland?