

26. You may not have been responsible for those. You are not prepared to accept that as a fair test?—No.

27. Is it possible in sorting a large number of letters such as these for the sorter to pass empty envelopes?—He may, one or two.

28. Out of 2,500?—I should not say there would be many missed. The communication I had with the Chief Postmaster in his room was that several hundreds were reported to have gone through—he was not aware of the facts then; I said I would take an oath several hundreds had not gone through.

29. One gentleman said “thousands”?—That would mean one in ten out of the number posted that night.

30. Who assisted you on these that night or morning?—Comrie.

31. And all letters that came in were dealt with in the ordinary way?—Yes.

32. Did you take anything out of any of the envelopes?—No.

33. When did you go off duty?—5 a.m.

34. Is there any reasonable probability of any of the contents of these letters having been abstracted or of any letters having been opened during the time you were on duty up to 5 a.m.?—No, none whatever.

35. I understood you to say you put many of these letters aside?—Yes.

36. Did any go through mixed with other correspondence?—There may have been one. I would not swear to one.

37. There were not more?—I think not. They were all the same size and thickness, and it is much better for us to put them through as circulars separately.

38. Would you ordinarily get a number of letters from other people in envelopes of that size and shape?—It all depends on the class of correspondence: invitations usually go through in square envelopes.

39. It is quite probable a number of square envelopes came in—not wholly in connection with box 912?—Yes.

40. You have been speaking about what happened on one of these nights: was the same process gone through on both nights or mornings?—As far as I remember.

41. You recollect a large number of these envelopes on two mornings?—Yes.

42. Do you recollect a number of letters coming through with the same superscription on them on the Friday night, the 6th July, or on the Saturday morning?—Yes.

43. They were closed, were they not?—Yes.

44. And they were stamped?—Yes.

45. What did you do with them?—According to instructions issued by Mr. Rudd, I detained them. The instructions told me to stop all correspondence with the superscription “Box 912.” As each clearance came in they were put aside; they were date-stamped after all the clearances were received in the office. I will not say they were date-stamped at 3—perhaps it was at 5, after all the clearances.

46. What does the date-stamp “3” mean?—They would be posted up to 3 o’clock; all after that would be stamped “5 o’clock.” If we were putting a clearance through at 3 o’clock we would wait until they went through. Practically they would go through at the same time as the last clearance received.

47. Is it possible for a letter to come in at half past 1 and bear the date-stamp “5 a.m.”?—No, “3 a.m.”; any after 3 would bear “5.”

48. This would mean they were stamped some time after 3 and before 5?—Yes.

49. After stamping what did you do with them?—I placed them on the bench alongside the stamping-machine, and handed them over to the incoming officer, Mr. Cotter.

50. Did you give him any instructions?—I told him that according to instructions received they were to be held up and submitted to the Censor.

51. That ended your connection with them?—Yes.

52. Do you remember how many there were?—A bundle about that long—anything from one hundred and fifty to two hundred.

53. Some blue, some white envelopes, with the “Box 912” stamp on them?—Yes.

54. *Mr. Ostler.* How long have you been a letter-sorter?—About twelve years, I should say.

55. I suppose with twelve years’ experience you would become pretty expert?—Yes.

56. I just want you to say what was in these envelopes: you say you opened the flap and had a look?—There was a card and that circular.

57. There are about twenty. Would you mind taking those in your hand? Is it possible that sorting twenty filled envelopes all the same size, and all containing that card and that circular, you would pass an empty one?—I hardly think so. You go by the weight. An expert sorter is so accustomed to the weight of circulars, all the same weight and the same thickness. It is a matter of opinion. My opinion is that I would not.

58. Suppose by any chance you should miss one or two: is there any further check in the Post-office?—There should be.

59. What check?—The letter-carriers’ sorters.

60. Where they are sorted again?—Yes.

61. Are those letter-carriers’ sorters fairly expert in sorting?—They should be.

62. Are they men of some years’ experience?—I believe so.

63. You have mentioned in reply to Mr. Gray that you do not accept those eight letters being put through the post as a fair test of your ability to detect empty envelopes: would you mind telling me why?—Yes. In this particular instance all the letters with “Box 912” were sorted