

21. Or remove any?—No.

22. Do you know that eight envelopes addressed to various persons were put through the post?—No; I do not know that eight were put through.

23. Did you know that any were put through?—Yes, I know of two of them. I sorted two away, and I got a report afterwards.

24. Do you know that those two envelopes were empty?—I know now.

25. How came you to pass them?—I cannot say. I do not remember the letters.

26. But you are satisfied they went through your hands?—I took the Chief Mail Clerk's word for it.

27. So that if you really did sort those letters you allowed them to go through—I do not say improperly—you allowed them to go through empty?—Yes.

28. *Mr. Ostler.*] I understand you to say with regard to those envelopes containing the circulars you put them through the machine to get the postmark, and Mr. Linton did the sorting?—He put some through the machine, too.

29. He principally did the sorting?—I did a fair amount of it, too.

30. When you get a bundle of letters all the same size and all containing the same contents—all containing a card amongst other things—is it likely you would not notice if any of them were empty?—I should think I would notice.

31. How many years' experience have you had as a sorter?—About two years.

32. And you think you would notice whether one of those envelopes was empty?—I think I should.

33. Did you mark any one as being empty?—No.

34. Or Mr. Linton?—Not that I know of.

35. Were you asked to explain why you had let through two empty envelopes?—Yes.

36. Were you asked in writing to explain?—Yes.

37. And your explanation was in writing?—Yes.

*Mr. Ostler:* I understood Mr. Williamson to say this morning he was never asked for an explanation.

*Mr. Gray:* I think Mr. Williamson said the explanation was verbal.

*Mr. Williamson:* I had no knowledge. If he was, I had forgotten.

*Mr. Ostler:* At any rate, you were asked. (To Mr. Williamson): Would you mind producing the writing?

*Mr. Williamson:* It is not here. It will probably be in the office. I will get it. [Produced later.]

38. *Mr. Ostler.*] How long after the event were you asked? Apparently these letters are said to have been posted on the 7th August: how long after were you asked to explain?—I think, the same morning.

*Mr. Ostler:* It is very curious—one left six days and the other asked the same morning.

JOHN ROBERT HERD, Messenger, Post-office, Auckland, examined.

1. *Mr. Gray.*] What is your name?—John Robert Herd.

2. What are you?—A messenger in the Post-office, Auckland.

3. How long have you been in the service?—About two years.

4. Were you in the Post-office on night duty on the nights of the 2nd and 4th July and the early mornings of the 3rd and 5th?—Yes.

5. What were you doing?—We were taking the mails to the boats departing and bringing the mails from boats arriving, and when we had finished our duty we went into the mail-room and helped face up the letters.

6. Who was the other?—Brady.

7. Whom did you assist in doing that?—Mr. Linton and Comrie.

8. You were assisting to get the letters ready to put on the stamping-machine?—Yes.

9. Did you have anything to do with them after that?—No.

10. You did not handle them beyond facing them up? You know nothing about whom they were from or whom addressed to?—No.

11. You did not handle them in any way, or the contents?—No.

12. *Mr. Ostler.*] Are you often in the mail-room in the performance of your duties?—Almost every day.

13. Does it sometimes happen that the contents of circulars fall out about the floor?—I have not seen any.

14. Have you seen no instance at all?—No.

15. Have you not after a mail has been sorted seen instances of matter fallen on the floor which had fallen out?—Only newspapers.

16. Suppose you found matter lying about the floor, what would you do with it?—Pick it up and give it to the senior officer on duty in the mail-room.

17. That is your instruction?—Yes.

18. You did not see any contents of envelopes strewn about the floor either on the morning of the 3rd July or the 5th?—No.

19. You say you were engaged in the duty of taking mails to departing boats and bringing mails from arriving boats?—Yes.

20. Do you do that with a motor-car?—No.

21. How do you carry the mails?—On a post-office truck.

*Mr. Gray:* In sealed bags.

22. *Mr. Ostler.*] Quite so. They have been made up. Is the truck pushed right down to the wharf from the Post-office?—Yes.