

AUCKLAND, WEDNESDAY, 22ND AUGUST, 1917.

J. C. WILLIAMSON, Chief Postmaster, Auckland, further examined.

1. *Mr. Gray.*] You were asked yesterday by my friend Mr. Ostler whether certain officers had not been convicted of certain offences or charged with certain offences, and he supplied you with the names of three individuals. Have you since investigated those cases and looked at the files?—I have, and I think I stated at the time that I did not recall the cases—for a very good reason. In one case the officer was sentenced to imprisonment; but that happened in June, 1914, about eighteen months before I came here. In the case of another officer, his conduct was inquired into. He was not suspended; it was found he had not taken the letters he was charged with taking, and one of the Public Service Commissioners held an inquiry and completely exonerated him. In the case at Elliott Street, a cadet there was dismissed for taking a few stamps from parcels.

2. And those are the results of the three cases specifically referred to by my friend yesterday with the names of the officers supplied to you?—That is so. In the second case I was absent from Auckland, and somebody else took action.

3. That will account for your absence of recollection?—Quite.

4. You were asked yesterday to produce Comrie's explanation of those letters passing through the post: is that it?—That is the explanation.

5. He is called upon for an explanation: "Mr. Comrie,—The attached letters were sorted by you this morning. Please say why they were allowed to pass and not marked 'Posted without contents.'—J. Carlaw, 7/8/17." Mr. Comrie's explanation is: "Have no explanation to make. Regret oversight.—D. Comrie, 7/8/17." You will observe he is called upon for explanation on the 7th August; and Mr. Ostler remarked that Linton was called upon on the 7th to explain the passing of letters by him on the 1st. Can you explain why there was such a delay, and no delay in Comrie's case?—As I said yesterday, it was a matter of opinion, of course, whether envelopes without contents would or would not be passed by the sorters. It was ascertained that Linton had passed those produced yesterday without contents, and it was desired to see whether the clerk who had been on with him would or would not be likely to do the same thing. Before asking for the explanation of Mr. Linton this second test was made. Of course, that other test could not be made if it was known in the mail-room it was going to be made. Therefore the asking for an explanation was held back.

6. *Mr. Ostler.*] In addition to the names I have given you, do you know anything about a letter-carrier you had dismissed just recently?—Yes.

7. Is that the name [slip handed to witness]?—I see the name.

8. Do you know anything about him?—We had one temporary letter-carrier—

9. Is that his name?—I would not like to say. I cannot recall the name just at present.

10. That was for interfering with letters, was it not?—The case I am referring to was one in which letters were detained—not delivered at the time they should have been.

11. How long ago was that?—Probably four months ago.

12. I am not blaming you: these things must occur?—I quite understand.

13. There was one question I omitted to ask. I asked Mr. Morris if he had not had a complaint that 205 petitions in favour of six-o'clock closing were posted at Morrinsville and over a hundred had been alleged to have been abstracted in course of post. Mr. Morris said he had not heard about it: have you?—Yes.

14. Those petitions were alleged to have been posted at Matamata?—That is so.

15. It is a complaint by the New Zealand Alliance that over a hundred were abstracted in course of post?—That is the allegation.

16. About that stamp paper—I omitted to ask you a question about that: do you suggest that that was not put on while it was in the custody of the Post Office or the Military Censor?—I suggest it was not put on while in the custody of the Post Office. As far as the Military Censor is concerned, I cannot say.

*Mr. Ostler.* Curiously enough, this letter was put into my hands this morning. The writer complains that on the back of the envelope—

*Mr. Gray.* Excuse me, I think this person ought to be called. Mr. Ostler ought not to read the words of the letter.

*Mr. Ostler.* I was merely going to say what information had been given. If necessary I will call the witness. A complaint that on the back of an envelope which she had received there is a stamp-edging paper sealing it down, dated the 19th August, 1917. I would like to read just the words of the letter: "I wonder—"

*Mr. Gray* protested. My learned friend is attempting to make evidence of a kind for his client: if the witness could be called—

17. *Mr. Ostler.*] I want to ask Mr. Williamson if stamp paper is not sometimes put on envelopes while in course of post?—Not to my knowledge. I have never heard of it.

18. *Mr. Gray.*] With regard to the Morrinsville statement, that, you say, is still under inquiry?—Yes.

19. And so far the truth or falsity of the complaint has not been determined?—It has not been determined.

G. W. RUDD further examined.

1. *Mr. Gray.*] I forgot to ask about your qualifications as a letter-sorter: what experience have you had as a letter-sorter?—A lifetime.

2. I understand you were for some time engaged as a Mail Agent in the San Francisco mail-service: how long?—Six or seven years.

3. In the course of that agency did you have ample opportunity of exercising your skill as a letter-sorter?—I did.