

THOMAS CORNWELL, Clerk, Chief Post-office, Auckland, examined.

1. *Mr. Gray.*] What is your name?—Thomas Cornwell.
2. What are you?—Clerk in the Post-office.
3. What are your duties: are you in the mail-room?—Yes.
4. Are you a sorter?—Not at present.
5. Have you had experience in sorting?—Yes, a good deal.
6. You have heard the evidence of the last witness, Mr. Cotter. What do you say as to the probability of a person passing a number of empty envelopes out of, say, 1,250 or thereabouts of matter like this where some of the envelopes are thicker than others?—I should say it would be even chances either way.
7. Then you would not condemn a sorter if in the early hours of the morning, a little while before going off duty, he missed a few letters in that way?—No; we are all liable to make mistakes.
8. You were not on duty in the early mornings of the 3rd and 5th July?—Not as far as I can recollect.
9. *Mr. Ostler.*] What do you think of the probability of three sortings taking place and ten envelopes being missed empty: would it still be an even chance either way?—I should say the chance would be smaller the larger number of hands they went through. The letter-carriers would have a better chance than either of the previous two.
10. You would admit the chance becomes smaller the more hands it passes through?—It must.
11. We were told by the last witness it does not often occur that ten envelopes out of 2,000-odd are passed by the sorters and they do not notice they are empty: would you agree with that?—I do not know how many complaints were made about them being received empty.
12. Would you agree it does not often occur that so many are passed all in the same sorting?—I should think it does not often occur.
13. *Mr. Gray.*] Would the fact that there were a very large number, apparently all of the same class, coming from the same persons, and containing the same matter, affect the sorter's methods?—Yes; one can sort faster if they are sorted into only three divisions instead of twenty or so in the sorting-case—if he has a good run.
14. Would he be apt to be a little less particular in his oversight if he believed he was sorting a very large number of the same class?—It should not be likely to make him any less careful.
15. Would the thickness of the envelopes have anything to do with determining his oversight?—It is very much easier to pass an empty thick envelope than an empty thin one.
16. We have here eight envelopes—
- Mr. Ostler:* This does not arise out of my cross-examination.
17. *Mr. Gray.*] We have here eight envelopes passed by letter-sorters, all of which were empty: they are not as thick, are they, as these other examples—the later examples are thinner than the circular matter?—Yes.

CYRIL DAVID KEANE, Clerk, Chief Post-office, Auckland, examined.

1. *Mr. Gray.*] Your name?—Cyril David Keane.
2. What are you?—Postal clerk.
3. In the mail-room at the Auckland Post-office?—Yes.
4. Are you accustomed to sorting?—Yes.
5. I want you to tell His Worship what your opinion is as to the likelihood of an expert sorter engaged in sorting a large quantity of mail-matter in the early morning hours—
- His Worship:* Ask his experience.
6. *Mr. Gray.*] What experience have you had?—Eleven years and a half in the mail-room.
7. A good deal of that time in sorting?—Yes.
8. Are you an expert sorter?—As good as they have got there.
9. Will you give me your opinion as to whether it is reasonable to suppose that a sorter like yourself would pass a number of empty envelopes under the circumstances described—that is, a very large number of letters apparently the same size and apparently circular matter from the same source?—It is possible I would let them go through without having contents. I do not put my hand all over the envelope. I may just pick it by the corner like that [illustrating the method].
10. Will you give an illustration: to begin with, how many letters do you take into your hand?—A good handful.
11. How do you sort?—There are cases for letter-carriers; other cases for different localities. There are sixty pigeonholes. Say I get a run for carriers—I just put them in like that. I would not take hold of the letter; I would take hold of the corner.
12. In point of fact, is there time to examine, in a large quantity of mail-matter, whether the envelope is full or not?—There is time. It all depends how fast you want to sort.
13. Well, if the letter-sorters are going off at 5 o'clock and there is a lot of matter to handle, there is not much time to waste?—It is not necessary they should sort it.
14. If they do sort it?—Yes.
15. Is it not a point of honour in the office not to leave work to other men?—Of course, every one tries to do what he is allotted to do.
16. *Mr. Ostler.*] It sometimes happens, then, that when the sorter's time to go off comes he has not quite finished the sorting of that mail?—Exactly.
17. He does not have to finish the sorting that he starts, but he leaves off at his time and the other man takes it up?—Yes—that is, if he is not finished.
18. I am glad to know that we have as good a sorter as there is in the office. Would you mind taking those in your hand and sorting them as quickly as possible, and tell me how many