

are empty. You are not going as quickly as possible?—I am looking for the empty ones. When I am sorting I am not looking for them.

19. How many empty ones did you find?—I think I have five. There may be more.

20. The best sorter in the office has picked two empty ones and two full ones?—That is what I say.

21. *Mr. Gray.*] But that is not the way in which you actually sort?—Of course not. I was looking.

CHARLES EDWARD JAMES, Clerk, Chief Post-office, Auckland, examined.

1. *Mr. Gray.*] What is your name?—Charles Edward James.

2. Are you in the Auckland Post-office?—Yes.

3. How long have you been there?—In the Post-office, about twelve years; in the mail-room here, sixteen months.

4. Are you engaged in sorting?—Yes.

5. Do you call yourself an expert sorter?—Oh, no; just ordinary.

6. As an ordinary sorter it often falls to your lot to sort a good deal of mail-matter?—Yes.

7. Do you agree with the last witness that in sorting a large quantity of mail-matter it is quite possible for the sorter not to observe that some of the envelopes are empty?—Quite possible.

8. In sorting have you time to make a special examination, by feeling or otherwise, to ascertain whether open envelopes have anything in them?—It all depends on the amount of work to be done.

9. Would you expect it could be done when, with all the other city correspondence, there were 1,250 circulars of this kind to be sorted in the early hours of the morning?—It is quite possible some would be missed and some stopped.

10. Were you on duty in the early hours of the 5th July?—[After consulting the time-book witness said he was not on duty on the 3rd, but was on the 5th.]

11. At what time did you go on duty on the 5th?—5 a.m.

12. And you were engaged in the mail-room?—Yes.

13. Was the ordinary routine followed that morning?—As far as I remember, yes.

14. You do not recollect anything out of the ordinary being done with the correspondence?—No.

15. Just treated in the ordinary way. Do you recollect anything lying about the mail-room floor?—No.

16. *Mr. Ostler.*] I suppose it does not often occur that a batch of letters like these pass through all the sortings which take place in the Post-office without any being marked by the sorters “Received without contents”?—I should not think so.

FRED HARRY BUSH, Letter-carriers' Sorter, Auckland, examined.

1. *Mr. Gray.*] What is your name?—Fred Harry Bush.

2. You are one of the letter-carriers' sorters in the Auckland Post-office?—That is so.

3. How long have you been engaged in those duties?—About five years.

4. Will you kindly tell His Worship what the routine is with regard to the sorting for the letter-carriers in the early hours of the morning?—The letter-carriers' sorters who come on for that particular duty come on duty at 5 a.m., and the one who arrives in the office first of all clears the letters from the mail-room and sends them up through a lift. He goes through the mail-room, takes the matter for the letter-carriers' sorters and sends it up through a lift to the letter-carriers' sorters' room. He then goes to the letter-carriers' room upstairs, removes the letters from the lift, and after the necessary preliminaries—in the way of signing the attendance-book—the letters are sorted by the men on duty. They are taken out of the lift and put on the table.

5. As a matter of fact there are two letter-carriers' sorters?—Yes—three; but at present one is not doing sorting. The letters are separated by the mail-sorters in the mail-room into two divisions—city and suburbs. One of the letter-carriers' sorters takes the city letters and sorts them, and the other the suburban division.

6. And are they sorted into all the carriers' walks?—Yes—thirty-eight walks for the city division and thirty-five for the suburbs.

7. And each letter appropriated to its particular walk?—Yes.

8. Is any examination made during that process of sorting as to whether envelopes are full or empty?—Not unless attention is attracted to those envelopes by the feeling or appearance of them being thin and liable to be empty.

9. Would you mind taking that bundle into your hand. There are two kinds—one thick, white, and one not quite so thick, blue.

*Mr. Ostler.* Both the same quality.

10. *Mr. Gray.*] Would it be impossible for a letter-carriers' sorter in sorting a very large number of envelopes of that kind to miss seeing that some of them were empty?—It would be quite possible that he would miss noticing they were empty, considering the quality of paper, unless a flap was not turned inside the envelope, as this is; then attention would be attracted—at least, it would attract my attention.

11. Suppose some of these letters had been posted with the flaps out, would it be certain to be noticed in sorting rapidly?—I would not like to say absolutely certain, but I believe I would notice it.

12. You pay attention, do you not, to the addresses on the front?—More particularly that.

13. You have no reason to turn it over and look at the back?—I have no reason unless my finger at the back feels something unusual.