

22. *Mr. Ostler.*] You do not remember having been given any such instructions?—I do not remember it.

23. Of course, I can quite understand it is possible for one of the sorters to miss an occasional letter without contents; but do you think it likely that these letters should have passed through all the sortings that take place in the Post-office and at least ten have been missed?—

*Mr. Gray:* Nine, I think.

*Mr. Ostler:* You produced another—Findlay—on your list.

*Witness:* If the envelopes were stiff they may have been passed.

24. *Mr. Ostler.*] Do you think it likely from your experience in the Post-office over a considerable number of years?—If they contained anything bulky I think it would be noticed if there was a thin one amongst them.

25. They all contained a bit of pasteboard and that sheet. Do you not think it is likely, seeing they contained as much as that, that you would have noticed?—

*Mr. Gray:* Had he not better take an envelope? There are full and empty ones in front of him.

*Witness* (after handling envelopes): One is much lighter than the other, and I think it would have been noticed.

HENRY GRIBBLE, Letter-carrier, Auckland, examined.

1. *Mr. Gray.*] Your name?—Henry Gribble.

2. You are a letter-carrier in the Auckland Post-office?—I am.

3. How long have you been there?—Seven years.

4. In the Auckland Post-office?—Just ten years altogether in the Post-office; seven years letter-carrying.

5. You are familiar with the handling of mail-matter given you for delivery?—Yes.

6. What was your round in the week beginning the 2nd July?—(After consulting time-book.) On the 3rd July, Queen Street in the morning from 8 o'clock—Queen Street, Elliott Street, and Darby Street. The same round on the 5th July.

7. Do you recollect delivering a letter to Mr. Mackrell, in Smith and Caughey's Building?—Bradford Building in Elliott Street? Yes.

8. Do you recollect delivering a letter addressed to Mr. Shackelford—the letter which you gave to Mr. Mackrell?—Yes.

9. Is that the letter?—Yes.

10. You remember it?—Yes.

11. It had not then, of course, got these extra stamps and postmarks?—No; I know it by the endorsement "Received without contents" in my writing.

12. Are those your initials?—Yes.

13. When did you make those marks?—Immediately after receiving it from the sorting-case when I arrived. The runs are in different streets. It seemed to me to be light, with the result I looked at it, and finding it empty I immediately directed the attention of one of the superior officers to it, and endorsed it. That was before I went out on my delivery.

14. Are you able to say whether, when you got it, the flap was turned in or out?—That I cannot say.

15. Do you know about these marks: what do they indicate?—They indicate, I think, the stamping-machine.

16. What do you say from looking at it now?—I should no doubt say the flap was outside the envelope when it was put through the stamping-machine.

17. And it would not be likely to be interfered with by anybody before being delivered to the letter-carriers?—No.

18. It would be nobody's duty to turn in the flap?—No.

19. Did you make a report to any officer of the fact that it was received without contents?—Immediately it came to my notice I took it to Mr. Bleakley.

20. Was he in charge of the letter-carriers?—At that time.

21. When a letter is received in that condition, is it your duty to take it out as you get it—in the state in which you get it?—That was my reason for taking it to a responsible officer. I asked what should be done. I was told to endorse it "Received without contents," and then deliver the cover.

22. Had you any conversation with Mr. Mackrell, the person to whom you delivered it?—I told him, "I have a letter here; I have endorsed it 'Received without contents.'"

23. *Mr. Ostler.*] I suppose you occasionally have empty envelopes when you go your rounds to deliver?—On very rare occasions.

24. I suppose you would be likely to remember so few cases?—It may be.

25. How was it you were able to recollect this instance so well?—You get into the way of handling full envelopes, and immediately after handling one the other appeared to be light.

26. Do I understand that you letter-carriers sort them up yourselves into convenient order for distribution: is that part of your duty?—It is.

27. And you do that in the Post-office before you start?—Yes.

28. At what time in the day did you receive this letter?—I could not say the exact time, but it was before the 8 o'clock delivery.

29. Would it be after half past seven?—That I could not say.

30. Might it be?—It might and it might not.

31. You say you reported it to Mr. Bleakley?—Yes.

32. Before you left the Post-office?—Immediately on discovery.