

6. Would you immediately commence to clear the carriers' correspondence?—I would get the letters in the mail-room, in the first place, in a basket.

7. You come through the mail-room below; put the letters in an electric lift—they are already in a basket?—Yes.

8. Then you go up to the letter-carriers' sorters' room yourself?—Yes; I would put them into the lift, go up to the room, switch on the power—that would bring them up—put them on the table, and go on with my work.

9. On that morning who was sorting besides yourself?—Mr. Bush.

10. Then you proceeded to sort the letters into the walks for the letter-carriers?—Exactly.

11. How many carriers are there?—There were thirty-five walks in the suburbs and thirty-eight in the city.

12. In sorting letters for the carriers would it be possible to overlook the fact that some open envelopes bearing penny stamps had nothing in them?—If the flap was turned inside—a lot depends on the envelope.

13. Look at that one?—It is possible to pass that when you are busy.

14. And if it is possible to pass one I suppose it is possible to pass more than one?—Yes.

15. Would it be possible to pass half a dozen out of about fifteen hundred of the same kind?—Yes.

16. Was all the mail-matter sorted out for the carriers in the letter-carriers' sorters' room before the arrival of the Wellington mail on the morning of the 5th?—I could not say that. As a rule, we have everything ready waiting for the Wellington mail, to go on with a rush when that comes in.

17. Is there usually a good deal of mail-matter to sort before the arrival of the Wellington mail?—There is usually a fair amount: at the beginning of the month there is more; at the end it slackens off. At the beginning there are invoices.

18. This was the beginning. We have been told there were about 1,250 of these letters that morning: that would be a fairly bulky mail?—A fair amount.

19. Was any special treatment accorded to letters on that morning?—I do not remember any on that morning—the usual course.

20. Do you call yourself a good sorter?—About the average sorter.

21. Well, if you are dealing with many hundreds of letters, getting them ready, putting them into the appropriate cases or walks, you have got to sort fairly rapidly?—If there is a lot of work we sort faster. Sometimes there is a lot to be done, and we are rushing it through.

22. If there is a rush is there any time to examine letters?—If we were on the lookout for any letters to be censored we would go more carefully.

23. Were you on the lookout for letters for box 912 that morning?—I do not think so.

24. *Mr. Ostler.*] That is to say, you had no instructions to hold letters for box 912 for censorship?—There were instructions, but I do not think it was that morning.

25. You think it was later?—Yes.

26. Quite right; it was on the 6th. Do I understand you to say the letters you take upstairs to do your sorting are not always in the basket?—They may not be quite finished. They leave them in the case, and we go down afterwards before the south mail comes in, get the letters and papers, and everything to be cleared.

27. In answer to Mr. Gray you said that if the flap was turned in it was possible for you not to notice that an envelope was empty. Suppose the flap is open—suppose it is turned out—what then?—If it was sticking out you might catch hold of it when sorting; if it was pressed tight against it you might not.

28. If it was like that?—It is quite possible. There is a lot in the envelope. A lot of envelopes business people send out are quite thin—it is very easy to notice if there is nothing in them; but an envelope like that is rather thick.

29. We have been told—by Mr. Bush, I think it was—that it would be hardly possible to miss an empty envelope like that?—If the flap was sticking out you would be likely to notice it, but it would be quite possible to pass it.

30. Do you know in your experience of any case where out of 2,000 envelopes at least ten would be passed through empty?—I have known where people have been posting large numbers of circulars not sealed up and empty envelopes.

31. But they would be discovered?—Not always.

32. Do you think it likely that with the three sortings these letters underwent in the Post-office ten envelopes out of 2,000-odd could be passed through unnoticed?—I think it possible.

33. Do you think it likely?—Yes.

34. I think you are the first sorter who has been bold enough to say that in this room. What is your experience?—Twenty-three years carrier, eleven years sorter.

35. How long engaged in the letter-carriers' room?—The last eleven years, in the old office and the new office.

HUGH GEORGE WOODS, Letter-carrier, Auckland, examined.

1. *Mr. Gray.*] What is your name?—Hugh George Woods.

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

3. Do you recollect meeting Mr. Bilby on the Karangahape Road?—Yes, I do.

4. And having some conversation with him?—Yes.

5. Tell us, please, what the conversation was?—I do not remember exactly what it was; but Mr. Bilby came to me and asked me if I had had any of the empty envelopes. I treated it more as a joke than anything and passed off some remark, "Oh, perhaps." He said, "Will you give