

*Mr. Ostler*: It is here in black and white.

45. *Mr. Ostler*.] Where do you carry on your duties?—I am not permitted to say.

46. Come now?—Well, in the Post-office.

47. I know all about it?—You cannot know all about it.

48. Have you been carefully tutored about what you are to say before you came here?—I have not.

49. Did the Solicitor-General see you?—I saw him.

50. Did he tell you what questions you were to answer and what not?—No; it was a special point I consulted him about.

51. With regard to this stamp paper: you say you did not put it on?—I did not.

52. Can you say whether it was put on while the letters were in your charge?—It was certainly not put on while the letters were in my charge.

53. In the exercise of your duties did you find it necessary to open one of those letters?—I cannot say.

54. Who told you to say that?—I am not permitted to say how I dealt with it.

55. Who told you to say that?—The Deputy Chief Postal Censor, Wellington.

56. Did he tell you in writing?—I have got it in writing.

57. Will you produce that writing?—No; it is confidential.

58. If that is so, you can say just what you like and say you are not permitted to say?—Yes.

59. Is the Deputy Chief Postal Censor in Wellington a Postal officer or a Military officer?—A Postal officer, I believe.

60. Are you permitted to say his name?—I do not think there is any secret about his name.

61. Out with it then?—Tanner is his name.

62. I am informed that a good many clerks work in the same room as you?—That is so.

63. I suppose it is necessary for you sometimes to go out of the room?—It is.

64. And leave the other clerks there?—Yes.

65. Do you ever in the course of your duties open letters and read the contents?—In the course of my duties—how?

66. As Censor?—Of course, I do.

67. It is self-evident—you could not do much good unless you did. Can you tell me whether you opened any one of these letters addressed to ministers?—I cannot tell you how I dealt with them in any way.

68. Surely there is no harm in telling us how you dealt with any one of the ministers' letters?—I am not permitted to say.

69. Can you tell us whether you know what the contents of those letters were?—I cannot say anything about it.

70. Can you tell us whether you go out of the room ever, and leave letters to be censored on your table?—Yes; I dare say I could tell you that.

71. If you are permitted to say, would you mind telling us: do you?—Yes.

72. Do you work at an open table?—Occasionally; not always.

73. Is there any danger of other clerks getting to see the contents of the letters subject to censorship?—Absolutely no danger.

74. How is that?—They are locked up if I am away, if they are open envelopes.

75. You always lock them up?—Yes.

76. Even if you go out of the room for five minutes?—Yes.

77. There is one question I do sincerely hope you are "permitted to say": I want to know what you have done with the money sent to the Protestant Political Association which has been held up?—Do you mean to insinuate I have misappropriated it?

78. No; I would not dream of even joking about such a thing. We have information that money has been enclosed in letters which have been written. Can you give us no information about it? Can you tell me whether money has been retained?—I cannot give you any information.

79. Can you tell me where the letters are that have been kept back?—No, I cannot tell that.

80. Can you tell me whether any letters have been kept back?—No.

81. It occurs to me it is rather useless going on cross-examining. I think I will sit down. There is one question, though, I would like to ask if he is "permitted to say": did you not refer those circulars to Wellington, or one of those circulars, for instructions? Are you permitted to say that? Did you refer that [specimen held up for inspection] to Wellington?—Yes; the circular and card came into my hands as a private individual.

82. As a private individual—now we will be able to get something from you. As a private individual you will be able to give us the information. As far as that goes, what did you do as a private individual when you got this?—I suppose I handed it to myself as Censor.

83. I suggest you handed it to yourself as a Postal officer, and as a Postal officer handed it to yourself as Censor?—I suppose so.

84. Let us suppose you handed it to yourself as a Postal officer, because as a Postal officer you are permitted to say. What did you do when this circular came into your hands: did you refer it to Wellington?—I referred it to Wellington.

85. Can you tell us why?—No.

86. Cannot you tell us as a private individual?—No; I have no mind about it as a private individual.

87. Have you any mind about it as a Postal officer?—No.

88. Only as a Censor?—That is so.

89. And your duties are so important and so dread and sacred that I am not permitted to inquire, and if I do you are not permitted to say?—That is so.