

*Mr. Ostler:* The sound objection is one that rules in every matter that comes before a Court: information obtained for the purpose of working up a case before a Commission, or a Criminal Court, or anywhere, is absolutely privileged, and the other side has no ground for inquiring where that information came from.

*His Worship:* Are you seeking to ascertain where that information came from?

*Mr. Gray:* Yes, I propose to ask Mr. Elliott the extent of his knowledge about this order, and where he got his information.

*His Worship* ruled that the question might be asked.

*Mr. Ostler:* I shall advise Mr. Elliott not to answer.

*Mr. Gray:* Now, Mr. Elliott, you have intimated that there is some order—my friend said yesterday that in March an order was placed in the book, and that after the advertisement of the meeting further instructions were added to the order-book in the Post-office on the 6th July to hold back all correspondence. You communicated that information to your counsel, Mr. Elliott?—I do not propose to answer any questions on that point, in accordance with the advice of my counsel.

262. I ask you again, did you communicate that statement—that information—to your counsel, Mr. Elliott?—I decline to answer.

263. Were you informed by any person of the existence of such an order as is alleged?—I decline to answer that.

*Mr. Gray:* I ask your Worship to direct the witness to answer.

*His Worship:* You see, Mr. Gray, it opens up the whole question of information supplied to them in connection with working up their case. I do not like to force them. I can see, of course, that it is not in the best interests of the community that questions of the kind shall not be answered, to show whether there is corruption in the Post Office. That is the allegation, and I say the other side must take the onus of refusing to assist me in the investigation of the charge of corruption in the Post Office.

*Mr. Gray:* You will recollect I said the other day that the Department was anxious to get at the whole truth.

*His Worship:* Evidently there must have been some leakage in the Post-office, and information conveyed to your counsel, Mr. Elliott.

*Mr. Ostler:* How do you know that the information was not given to me?

*His Worship:* I presume you would not try to get any information. If you would, so much the worse for you.

*Mr. Gray:* Your Worship will see that it has been suggested that there has been some leakage. It is not only in the interests of the Department generally that your Worship should make that inquiry, but the head of the Department is most anxious—

*His Worship* ruled that he would not compel an answer: it would mean penalizing some particular officer.

*Mr. Gray:* Does your Worship see the result? If there has been leakage in the Post-office, has not some particular officer there committed a breach of his oath in regard to secrecy? And if it is not disclosed who the culprit is, the whole of the staff may rest under an unjustifiable stigma of breaking the confidence of the public.

*His Worship:* Yes. [Ruling adhered to.]

264. *Mr. Gray:* Well, I will put one more question to Mr. Elliott. Will you say who gave the information that I have referred to?—No.

265. Do you decline here, at this public inquiry into the conduct of the Post Office service, to give any information which will help either His Worship or the head of the Department to inquire into the truth of this allegation?—No; I would not withhold any information that I have which would not involve the people who assisted me in this matter.

266. Do you suggest then that your answering and giving the information to me that I seek would involve a Post Office official?—I am not suggesting anything.

267. I ask you the question?—I will not answer.

268. Then you decline to give me any information which will enable the head of the Department to ascertain whether or not there is a person in the Post-office who is unfit to be in the Public Service—Yes or No?—I will not answer.

JOHN WILLIAM SALMOND, K.C., examined.

1. *Mr. Gray:* Your name is John William Salmond?—Yes.

2. You are a barrister, holding the rank of King's Counsel, and you are the Solicitor-General for New Zealand?—Yes.

3. I think, Mr. Salmond, you have been responsible for the drafting of war legislation since the war, and also the War Regulations?—That is so.

4. And that you have had under your guidance and care many of the proceedings that have been instituted in New Zealand under the War Regulations?—That is so.

5. Have you also been called upon to advise as to the censorship in New Zealand of correspondence and mail-matter?—Yes, I have constantly acted as the legal adviser to the censorship.

6. Are you familiar with the matters which led up to the censorship of matter emanating from box 912, G.P.O., Auckland?—Yes.

7. Perhaps you will tell His Worship how the matter originated?—At the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917 the attention of the authorities was, upon more than one occasion, called to the activities of a body calling itself the Vigilance Association, and also to the activities of the Rev. Howard Elliott, who was in some way connected with that body.

8. Was it a Vigilance Association or a Vigilance Committee?—I think it appears on the front of the pamphlet—the Committee of Vigilance. The first occasion on which that matter came to my