

27. *Mr. Ostler.*] There is not much in it that is not in Mr. Rhodes's [letter read]. You got an answer from Mr. Massey merely saying he would take an early opportunity of conferring with his colleagues?—That is so.

28. Then you finally got this reply from Mr. Rhodes [letter of the 30th July, 1914]: "It was brought under my notice that copies of the paper contained advertisements of an immoral nature relating to sexual treatment"?—I have not seen the book.

29. You saw the advertisement?—I saw the advertisement.

30. Did the advertisement relate to sexual treatment?—

31. *Mr. Gray.*] Can you produce it?—I cannot.

32. How is His Worship to judge?—I have seen the advertisement. My copy is with the Government.

*Mr. Gray:* There is the Postmaster-General's opinion of the advertisement.

*Mr. Ostler:* It is in your custody.

*Mr. Gray:* I have not seen it.

*Mr. Ostler:* It is on the Post Office file; this is P. and T. 47/49.

*Mr. Gray:* I am only referring to the Postmaster-General's opinion of the advertisement.

*His Worship:* Leave the matter of the advertisement. Go on, Mr. Ostler. [Letter read by Mr. Ostler.]

*Witness:* I would like to say that prior to seeing that in the paper I had not the slightest idea there was such a paper as *The Menace* in existence. I did not know there was one printed. It was simply the statement of the Catholic Federation drew my attention to it.

*Mr. Ostler:* That embargo on the paper was removed?

*Mr. Gray:* To that extent.

*Witness:* I followed the thing right to the bottom, and I wrote to the proprietors of that paper.

*Mr. Ostler:* I am afraid this is not evidence.

*His Worship* suggested Mr. Ostler should ask, Are the papers coming to you now?

*Witness:* I did not get any after that. I dropped the question as long as I got my point. We were not going to be dictated to by anybody in regard to our literature. Eighteen months ago I got into contact with somebody in Wellington, a representative of the paper. Being interested I started to subscribe to the paper. At least, I do not know that the Post Office has stopped them for eighteen months.

33. *Mr. Ostler.*] Quite recently you have had further trouble on the matter?—I have.

34. Can you tell us what it was?—I was sending through this friend of mine in Wellington an order for some of the papers, and I sent a postal note for £1 3s., I think it was, in payment for my order; and to my surprise she—I speak of "she" because her husband was in India at the time—she returned me the letter and envelope with the particulars that they had been returned to her censored—marked "Prohibited."

35. Is that the envelope that you sent?—That is the one she sent, I suppose. That is the one that came back to me.

36. What steps were then taken?—I think the Post Office knew me pretty well. I got a gentleman to write to the four centres—the Postmasters at Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin—and also to the Censor at Wellington. I asked him to find out whether business correspondence with *The Menace* in America was prohibited. We received word, I think, from the lot of them that it was not prohibited.

37. Then what steps did you take?—Then I came on the scene. I wrote to the Postmaster in Wellington and to the Censor in Wellington, and I wanted to know why my correspondence was censored.

[Four letters were admitted in evidence as being official documents, Mr. Gray raising no objection: replies dated respectively the 21st February, 1917, the 27th February, 1917, the 2nd March, 1917, and the 3rd March, 1917, to letters to Censor, Wellington, and Chief Postmaster, Christchurch, Wellington, and Dunedin.]

*Mr. Gray:* The best reply, of course, is from the head—the First Assistant Secretary.

38. *Mr. Ostler.*] Then you wrote to the Chief Postmaster, Wellington, and to the Censor also. Is that a copy of your letter to the Chief Postmaster?—Yes.

39. [Letter read.] Did you get any reply to that?—[Witness testified to sending and receiving certain letters.]

40. *Mr. Gray.*] You have been occupying the last three-quarters of an hour in ventilating your grievance in regard to this particular paper *The Menace*?—The grievance of Protestants.

41. Confine yourself to answering my questions. The result of your correspondence with the Post Office is this: you were informed that the Postmaster-General in the exercise of his discretion and after consulting the Crown Law Officers had directed that *The Menace* should be prohibited on the ground of what he thought was indecent matter. That was the official explanation?—I heard it was on account of the advertisement of that book.

*His Worship:* The correspondence speaks for itself.

42. *Mr. Gray.*] Do you suggest that the Hon. Mr. Rhodes, who was Postmaster-General at the time, or the Crown Law Officers, were likely to give wrong reasons?—No, I cannot say that; but I know what Roman Catholicism is, Mr. Gray.

*Mr. Gray:* You confine yourself to answering my questions.

*Mr. Ostler:* There is no evidence of the Crown Law Officers advising the Postmaster-General.

*Mr. Gray:* He said, "We have taken legal advice": those are the very words.

43. *Mr. Gray.*] Mr. Seabrook, the recent occurrence of your remittance being held up was explained by the authorities and by the Postmaster-General to have been due to some misapprehension and mistake?—But I wanted to know what that mistake was.