

public platform, and which at least one of his supporters has ventured to advertise and enlarge upon in the course of this inquiry. It is not necessary that I should make detailed reference to the matters which Mr. Ostler referred to in his opening address, wherein he referred to the alleged aims and objects of the Roman Catholic Church in this and other countries, and to the reasons for bringing into existence the Protestant Alliance. It is highly regrettable that there should be anything in the nature of sectarian strife or religious discord. After all, one's religion is usually a matter of birth, whether Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, or any other religion. A man's religious beliefs are usually those of his father, and it is not till he has attained years of discretion that he makes any change, if he ever does make a change; and the occasions upon which changes are made are comparatively limited in number; so that when a man professes to be a follower of any denomination it is usually because he has been brought up in that particular faith, and not because he had any choice in the matter. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that there should be religious tolerance, so that all may be free to exercise their religious beliefs, particularly as one knows that the beating of the "drum ecclesiastical" creates great stir. We know that from time to time there is a recurrence of this trouble amongst sects, and the world goes on as it always did; and until the end of time that, I suppose, will always happen. So long as they do not stir up private animosity no great harm is done, but when they do, the matter is one for very great regret. Such occasions are regrettable in times of peace, but they are much more so in times of war; and one would have thought that it would have been seen that the duty of every man was to do his best towards the successful prosecution of the war with a view to bringing about its termination as early as possible in the way in which we hope and desire that it will end, and to avoid anything which might tend to divide the community at this particular time. Yet it is this particular division that Mr. Elliott and his associates are endeavouring to make; and I have no doubt that if such people as Mr. Elliott and his friends could have their way statements such as those we saw recently in the cablegrams, that the Ulstermen and the Catholics were fighting side by side, would not be possible. He has no doubt persuaded himself and many others that he has some high and holy mission to counteract some political activity of the Roman Catholic Church and its organization. One would have thought that he could have embarked upon his self-imposed duty without attacking religious beliefs which must be as dear to the followers of that religion as his own beliefs are to him. He has not confined himself to pointing out alleged offences which are subversive of good order. He has made base allegations against the private lives of leaders and teachers in the Roman Catholic community, and created prejudice and ill will.

*Mr. Ostler:* Where?

*Mr. Gray:* We have only to call attention to the remarks he has made at gatherings of the public, and also to the letters concocted, as he has admitted, for the purpose of trapping the Post Office officials. I suggest that any person who can do this is devoid of all sense of what is due to the persons whom he seeks to attack. And I am not at all sure that, although your Worship ruled that those letters were not to be read, it would not have been better in the public interests that they should have been read and published, so that the public might judge for themselves as to the nature of the efforts of himself and those assisting him. What has been the result of these efforts? Apparently an outburst of protest in the public Press against the utterances he has made in public. I have read here a statement in the *Auckland Star* which, if I may say so, expresses itself admirably, and voices a regret that an attempt should have been made to stir up religious strife in this way. The comments made clearly show that, whatever his objects may have been, the result of his work has been to create feelings of anger, bitterness, and resentment amongst a large section of the community. I am not sure that he has not contravened the War Regulations, one of which makes it an offence to publish anything calculated to incite such feelings of hostility and ill will as may endanger the public safety during the war. Mr. Elliott has not hesitated to say that persons of the Roman Catholic faith, which seems to him as a red rag to a bull, and excites the same feelings in his mind, are not taking their proper part in the war. We know—it is a matter of common knowledge—that a large number of Roman Catholics are fighting with the Forces from the Old Country, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, if not from other countries, and that a very large proportion of the soldiers of France and Belgium are Roman Catholics. I cannot imagine any members of that faith listening to such condemnation and to expressions so insulting to the teachers of their religion without feeling anger, bitterness, and resentment. It is unavoidable that the result of remarks such as he made must be to bring him within the spirit of the War Regulations. I have said that it seems to me that his complaints against the Post Office were made not so much for the purpose of finding out whether there was any dereliction of duty on the part of the Post Office officials as for the purpose of attacking the censorship. We know from what has appeared in the Press from time to time how well the censorship has worked in other countries, and how great and beneficial have been the results of the censorship established during the war. In this country we also have a censorship, and we can suppose that it has been beneficial alike to the operations of our military commanders and to the Government in dealing with persons who trade with the enemy and commit unpatriotic acts of that kind. In this case it has been proved that a censorship over the correspondence of box 912, used by Mr. Elliott and his association, was established because of the distribution by him and his association of that pamphlet intitled "Rome's Hideous Guilt in the European Carnage," a copy of which has been handed in. As to the sentiments expressed in that pamphlet I do not desire to say anything, except that they are obviously aimed at the Roman Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Federation. The Auckland Vigilance Committee, of which Mr. Elliott and Mr. Seabrook are members, have taken it upon themselves to distribute some twenty thousand to twenty-five thousand copies of this publication, and have added new matter of their own in which they make references to Roman Catholics which, in the