

out properly. In this particular case, some envelopes were put into the Post-office without contents, with the view of seeing whether they would be passed without being noticed by the sorters. In point of fact they did pass. Mr. Linton, however, does not seem to think it was a fair test. The other person assisting him was subjected to the same test, with a similar result. Something was said about the delay—that the letters being posted on the 1st and an explanation not being asked for until the 7th, the interval of time was too great; and in the case of the other person, Comrie, who said he had no explanation and regretted the oversight, that his explanation was called for promptly. Mr. Williamson explained the reason for the delay, and there is really nothing Mr. Linton has any reasonable ground to complain about. The conclusion, then, in respect of that is, I confidently submit, that the nine envelopes which were received or said to have been received empty were handed to the addressees exactly in the state in which they were posted—that is to say, the circulars had never been put in at all.

As to the delay, I have already said that it was due to the operation of the censorship, and not to any act of the Post-office. With regard to that, I would merely mention this: it has been established beyond any question that the Censor on his own responsibility held up these 460 closed letters, presumably including the letters to the forty clergymen, from Saturday morning until Monday morning at 11 o'clock. In the ordinary course of post all those letters so held up should have been delivered on Saturday. It is alleged, however, that three gentlemen did not receive theirs until Tuesday morning. Now, in the case of the Rev. Mr. Garland, who said that he did not receive his letter until Tuesday morning, he frankly admitted that his letter-box, which is situated some considerable distance from his house, might not have been cleared on the Monday afternoon. In the case of the Rev. Mr. Murray, he admitted that both he and his wife were away the whole of Monday and that the letter was received by the maid, who may have received it on Monday afternoon; and the maid has not been called to say she did not receive it on Monday. In the case of the Rev. Reuben Bailey, who said he did not receive his letter until the Tuesday, the letter-carrier, who cannot remember the specific date, is quite certain all letters received by him for delivery on the Monday were delivered on the Monday not later than 2.20 p.m.; and it has been proved by the officer in charge of the particular department that no letters in the letter-carriers' cases for delivery were left after 2 o'clock. The inference, therefore, is that Mr. Bailey, who no doubt may be taken to have discussed this matter a good deal, or heard a good deal about it from other clergymen in like case, may have been under the impression that his letter did not reach him until Tuesday, having in mind the important fact that he was prevented from making his announcement on Sunday. It is difficult, of course, at this late stage to reduce these things to any degree of certainty. If complaint had been made within quite a reasonable time that Mr. Bailey's letter had been delayed, the carrier would have been asked at once, and his memory would have been quite fresh about the matter, and he might even have remembered the specific letter; but to ask a carrier on the 22nd August what time he delivered a letter or if he remembered the delivery of a specific letter on the 9th July is quite absurd.

*Mr. Ostler:* That is what you did in the case of Mr. Garland's letter.

*Mr. Gray:* As to the charges of non-delivery, three persons, and three persons only, say that they did not get letters delivered to them. One of these is Mr. Goldie, whose name appeared for the first time when he went into the box to give evidence. With regard to all those three persons, there is no proof of posting—that is, no satisfactory proof of posting. With regard to two of them, the Rev. Mr. MacDonald and the Rev. Mr. Thompson, there is no evidence except the fact that their names were included in the long list of clergymen who were to be invited to make the announcement—except that, I say, there is no evidence that the letters were ever posted at all; and in the case of Mr. Goldie, there is no evidence—other than the evidence of Mr. Bilby that he sent a letter—that it was properly and specifically addressed. If his letter bore the superscription "Box 912" and got into the Post-office, it would in due course have been delivered to the Censor on the morning of the 7th July—Saturday—and would have been amongst that batch released for delivery at 11 a.m. on Monday. There is no proof, and nothing from which your Worship can infer, that any letter-carrier neglected his duty or that any sorter neglected his. The sorting of Friday night's correspondence was completed in the early morning of Saturday, the 7th, and there is no room for suggesting that this gentleman's letter was tampered with or suppressed. A most unworthy attempt has been made on the part of Mr. Elliott, and persisted in at the inquiry, to say that the carriers had improper knowledge of the contents of these circulars, and it appears that he desires to connect their knowledge with his statement that persons in the Post-office were taking a particular interest in his meeting, and were doing their best to assist in stifling it. The knowledge on the part of the letter-carriers has been explained quite satisfactorily, I submit, by the statement of one of the carriers that he derived the information which enabled him to tell some lady what the circular was about, from the fact that one of the letter-carriers had himself in his private capacity received an invitation with a circular, and had mentioned the fact and disclosed the circular to some of the carriers sitting near him, one of whom was this carrier who mentioned the circumstances to the lady complaining. That, therefore, I think, disposes of the allegation that any officer in the Post-office had derived improper knowledge of the contents of the circulars.

Now, sir, as to the censorship, the idea seems to have got into the minds of Mr. Elliott and others that this censorship was the outcome of some machinations of the Roman Catholic Church, the arch-enemy of Mr. Elliott and his friends. The idea did not merely get into his mind, but he ventured to assert publicly that the censorship was the result of Roman Catholic machinations, and that it was established in the interests of the Roman Catholic Church. The idea originally began, apparently, with the supposed attempt at the suppression of that American journal called