

*The Menace*, a copy of which is before your Worship. It was suggested that the attempted suppression of that paper was due to some effort on the part of the Roman Catholic Federation to induce the Postmaster-General to prevent the paper from being circulated through the post. I confess, after having had a very casual glance at the contents of that paper, that the Roman Catholic Federation, or, indeed, any individual Roman Catholic, could not very well be blamed if it or he had attempted to induce the Postmaster-General to take that course, because the paper appears to be what might be called a red-hot exponent of views entirely opposed to Roman Catholics and their religion and ceremonial, and contains a very large number of advertisements, apart from reading-matter, which I suppose any Catholic would consider insulting and derogatory. But in point of fact, the ban put upon this journal was not due to any representations on the part of Roman Catholics as to its contents with respect to religious matters, but because the Postmaster-General, upon the advice of the Solicitor-General, his responsible legal adviser, deemed that the paper was objectionable on account of certain advertisements which appeared in it. The Postmaster-General made that perfectly clear in his letters to Mr. Seabrook, which are before your Worship. But when the censorship came to be applied a few years later to box 912, Mr. Elliott and his friends seem to have connected the former ban put upon *The Menace* with the acts of the Censor in relation to box 912. This censorship, however, as has been proved here, was brought upon themselves by the distribution of what was deemed to be, in the eyes of the gentleman who advised the Censor—namely, the Solicitor-General—literature having a mischievous tendency. It was unfortunate, perhaps, that the Loyal Orangemen and the Protestant Political Alliance all used the same box, and that correspondence intended for the Protestant Political Association, which has brought itself under the ban by this order as to censorship, was not the only correspondence affected by that order, but the Orangemen themselves necessarily had their correspondence interrupted by the Censor for the reason that they used the same box. Now, the orders as to censorship have been explained thus: In December the Chief Censor, on the advice of the Solicitor-General, directed that all literature emanating from this box should be submitted to the Censor. In March the order was renewed, probably in consequence of public attention having been directed to Mr. Howard Elliott's activities, especially at his meetings at Hamilton and elsewhere. The order thus repeated included, on the instructions of the Wellington Post-office, repeated through the Chief Postmaster at Auckland, all correspondence as well as literature. The addition of correspondence is justified by the Postal authorities from the fact that it was impossible to distinguish between literature and correspondence, and to say whether postal matter going through box 912 included literature or not, unless everything was submitted to the Censor. So that Mr. Elliott and his friends have no reason to complain. Nor have they any reason to complain because, owing to some lack of oversight on the part of some office sorters or others in the Post-office, who are required to remember really an enormous number of orders from time to time, the censorship over the correspondence was to a certain extent relaxed or omitted. So there again Mr. Elliott and his friends have no cause for complaint. They got the benefit of that oversight. And it appears that not until the 6th July was the attention of the officers again drawn to the fact that the correspondence of this box was the subject of an order for censorship. It appears now that none of these circulars which were posted during the first week of July were submitted to the Censor at all, and that was only through lack of oversight on the part of the sorters. No harm resulted from that omission in the slightest degree. All that was submitted to the Censor in connection with this meeting were the letters posted late on Friday night, and which were held up over the Sunday and delivered on Monday. The inquiry has conclusively proved, therefore, that as far as the censorship is concerned it was no more brought about by the Roman Catholics, and was no more established in the interests of the Roman Catholics, than by any other body or association, religious or otherwise, and that it was due solely and entirely to the judgment and discretion of the Solicitor-General, whose opinion upon the matter was based upon his own views of the tendency and effect of the literature which this body was distributing. It is clear also that that particular body and the persons using box 912 have not been subjected to any exceptional treatment. The Censor, who appears to be a young man of considerable discretion and soundness, so far as he was at liberty to disclose anything at all, has made it plain that the censorship is not applied unduly, but that it is extended to various persons and boxes that, in the opinion of the Chief Military Censor, require a certain amount of watching. Of that no one can complain. We are all, as I said before, in times like this subject to certain inconveniences, and no one in the community can complain if, for reasons which seem good to the chief authority, his correspondence should be the subject of review and inspection.

The results, therefore, I submit to your Worship with great confidence, come to this—and I say that no reasonable and unprejudiced person who has carefully followed the proceedings throughout, and has read the very fair reports of these proceedings which have appeared in the daily Press, can come to any other conclusion than this—that Mr. Elliott was never justified in the slightest degree in making the charges which he made against the Post-office or against the Censor; and that the honour and probity of the officers of the Post-office stand as high as ever they did, with the possible exception that I have alluded to before of the individual who has undoubtedly been giving some sort of information out of the Post-office to Mr. Elliott in breach of his duty and his obligation, and whom Mr. Elliott has not thought it beneath his dignity and position as a minister of the gospel to tamper with and corrupt in the performance of that officer's duty. With that sole exception I say that the character and integrity of the officers of the Post-office stand as high as ever they did, and I say that if the occasion should ever arise again for the public to be attracted by any such reckless, wild, and intemperate statements as Mr. Elliott has indulged in prior to these proceedings, persons who hear him can only be inclined to say, "That is only some more wild talk of the Reverend Howard Elliott, who was so utterly discredited