

for the Permanent Militia. Donnelly would not have access to the book in the Volunteer branch unless he might be ordered, in the absence of the ordinary officers, to press a letter. But that is a case not often likely to occur.

475. Still, if he wished to have a look at the book in the other branch, he could do so, I suppose?—Yes, I suppose so; there is no rule against that. In fact, his business might occasionally take him there.

476. Or, if you were in a hurry you might ask him to press a letter into the book?—That might possibly happen, but I do not think it ever does.

477. You know several *Press* and *Post* reporters?—Casually, yes. I know Mr. Hoben, and I know Mr. Humphries slightly, if he may be called a *Press* reporter. I am not aware of any others, unless it be the men I meet during the session occasionally.

478. Do you know Mr. Gibbons?—Yes; very slightly. Just a bowing acquaintance.

479. Do you know Mr. Gillon?—No. I have never spoken to him in my life.

480. Prior to the publication of this letter on 4th April, had you a conversation of any kind with Mr. Hoben on any matter connected with Colonel Fox's resignation?—No.

481. He did not approach you, or ask you for any information, or seek to acquire information from you in any way?—No.

482. Nor any other reporter of the *Post* or other newspaper?—No.

483. Were any special instructions given to the gentlemen of your office to keep this matter particularly quiet?—No; but, as a matter of fact, everything in connection with Colonel Fox, since he wrote his report, has been taken care of in an almost exceptional manner. Of course, one's own common-sense would tell them these were not matters which should be allowed to become public.

484. You have no recollection of having inadvertently mentioned this matter to any one?—No.

485. Is the book locked up at night?—Yes; and at lunch-time.

486. In a safe or a drawer?—In a cupboard.

487. Who keeps the key?—Mr. McGoldrick.

488. Are there any other gentlemen of the Defence Department having access to that room?—Oh, yes! they all do.

488a. Do Colonel Newall or Sergeant-Major Finn ever have any business to transact?—Yes; but they merely come in, do their business, and go out again.

489. I should like you to tell me anything else you might know that might help to elucidate the mystery?—I am sorry to say I do not know of anything. It is really just as much a mystery to me as it is to you. I would only be too glad to know who was the man who gave the matter away.

490. I presume you have perfect trust in the gentlemen of your office?—Unbounded. I would trust any one of them with anything. I have proved them.

491. Is it customary for reporters of the *Evening Post* to come up and endeavour to acquire information?—No. They may have come about twice, and that was for some information concerning men at their death, and for particulars of their doings, their birth, and so on. When they want information, I presume they go to the head of the department for it.

492. You do not think it would be possible for any one to get in at night—any one connected with the department or not so connected?—I would not like to say Yea or Nay to that. It is impossible to say what happens after one has gone from the office. Telegraph-boys and messengers used in the past to have access to the rooms. I do not know whether they do now.

494. Do any of the officers go back to work at night?—I am the only one who goes back at night, and that is seldom.

495. From an examination of the copies of those letters, as appearing in the letter-book, who would you say indexed them?—Mr. McGoldrick.

496. Did he also press-copy them?—Yes.

WILLIAM MCGOLDRICK sworn and examined.

497. *The Commissioner.*] You are?—Clerk in the Defence Office.

498. Will you tell me briefly all you know in connection with the writing, press-copying, and indexing of the letters from Colonel Fox to the Premier of the 16th March last?—A little before 5 o'clock on that day Mr. Royle told me he would require some copying to be done, and shortly afterwards he brought me part of the letters written in his own handwriting, and the latter part written in Colonel Fox's handwriting. I copied them as usual, and while I was so doing Colonel Fox came in and asked me if they were being got ready, and he said, "You will see that they are posted." I said I would, and I took them down to the purser on board the mail-steamer. I told him (the purser) the letters were important, and gave them into his charge. As to the indexing, I subsequently indexed them in the usual way.

499. What steamer was it?—I am not quite sure, but I think it was the "Manapouri." She left at about 6 o'clock for Auckland.

500. Do you know the purser's name?—No; I just inquired for the purser, and was shown to his cabin. I told him the letters were important, and he replied that he would see to them, and that they would be all right. I thanked him and left.

501. Had you any idea previous to the receipt of those letters that it was the intention of Colonel Fox to resign?—No.

502. Have you official charge of the letter-book?—Yes.

503. You keep the key of the cupboard in which it is placed?—Yes.

504. And that is the book in which the documents were copied?—Yes.

505. Have you at any time been approached by any *Press* reporters endeavouring to get information?—No; in fact, I do not know them.

506. Had you any instructions from your superior officers to disclose any information in regard to them?—On the contrary, Mr. Royle told me to lock up the book while I was out of the office.