

542. Those people, I presume, would come in casually?—Yes; and very seldom, with the exception of Captains Faulkner, Coleman, and perhaps Captain Anderson—they are in pretty frequently.

543. And Colonel Newall?—Yes, he comes in very often—daily, in fact.

544. And Sergeant-Major Finn?—Yes, he comes in occasionally.

545. Is Mr. Tegnér in the habit of coming in occasionally?—Yes.

546. Is he an officer of your department?—No; he is in the Public Works Department. He was at one time in the Defence Engineer's office. Of course, the messengers are always in and out, and sometimes between 1 and 2 o'clock, while we are away.

547. Who is the messenger to your office?—Asplin generally, I think.

548. Are you aware of any one outside your own staff who would be likely to have access or refer to the letter-book?—Outside my room and Mr. Royle's room, the Under-Secretary, Colonel Hume, would be the only one likely to have access.

549. Are any of Colonel Hume's letters pressed in the book?—Yes. He signs the letters as acting Under-Secretary—that is, relating to defence business—and they are pressed in our book. Nearly all the letters are signed by Colonel Hume. In fact, I may say, all of them.

550. We cannot say all of them, when Colonel Fox signed the letters in question?—No; but, of course, that was a letter from himself personally. It was a personal matter.

551. Are you aware of anything else that might throw any light on the matter?—No. I would be only too pleased to give information if I could. I feel positive, in my own mind, that the information did not come out of our office or through any of our staff.

MARSHALL JOHN DONNELLY sworn and examined.

552. *The Commissioner.*] What are you?—A clerk in the Defence Office.

553. Will you kindly tell me briefly anything you can remember in regard to the writing, press-copying, indexing, or despatch of the letters from Colonel Fox to the Hon. the Premier of 16th March last?—I know nothing whatever about the matter. I did not know what was in the letters until I saw a copy in the papers. I was on leave from 22nd March to 9th April.

554. Prior to your going on leave did you know anything about the letter?—I knew nothing whatever about it.

555. Did you hear of any hint of a conditional offer of retirement on the part of Colonel Fox?—No. It may seem strange, being in the office, but it is a fact, nevertheless.

556. Do you know any of the reporters on Wellington papers?—I know one slightly.

557. Who is he?—Mr. Gibbons, of the *Post*.

558. Do you ever see reporters about the office trying to get information?—No, they never trouble us. I have seen them in the Buildings, but only once or twice in the office, and on those occasions they were sent by some Minister for some particular thing.

559. Has any reporter, prior or subsequent to the publication of the letter, approached you on the subject?—No.

560. What other officers generally frequent your room, or are in the habit of going there on business?—There are none that I know of, except Colonel Fox and Colonel Hume, who come into my room.

561. What room are you in?—Mr. Royle's room.

562. Do not any other officers go there occasionally, on business?—Colonel Newall comes there now and again, also Sergeant-Major Finn.

563. Does Mr. Tegnér or any one like that outside the Department?—Mr. Tegnér has come in now and again for the use of the type-writer, but not on any other business that I am aware of.

564. Have you access to the press-copy book if you require the use of it on business?—Yes.

565. Did you ever hear of any instructions being issued to keep it carefully locked up?—I cannot say I have. They may have been given, but I did not hear them, as I am in a different room. I have since heard that such instructions had been given at the time.

566. You know where the book is kept?—Yes.

567. Have you a key of the cupboard?—No.

568. Have you anything else to say that might throw light on the subject? If anything strikes you as being remarkable, or curious, or that would in any way tend to enlighten the Commission, I should be glad to hear it?—No; I know of nothing. I would like to explain that it is over twelve months since I had any communication with Mr. Gibbons, of the *Post*, and that was in connection with some lodge socials of which I was secretary. He used to come to me for information as to the singers, &c.

LOUIS FERDINAND TEGNÉR sworn and examined.

569. *The Commissioner.*] What are you?—I am at present a clerk in the Public Works Department.

570. You might tell me briefly anything you happen to know in connection with the subject-matter of this inquiry—that is to say, the publication without authority of certain important documents relating to the defences of the colony. Do you know anything at all about the matter?—Absolutely nothing.

571. You have charge of certain plans in connection with the forts, &c.?—I have charge of the whole of the confidential plans of mine-fields, the forts, and of certain confidential records relating to the harbour-defences of the colony.

572. Did Colonel Fox's letters, or rough drafts of them, or copies, come before you in any way?—No.

573. Did you ever see a rough draft or a copy of the letter published in the *Evening Post* in any shape or form?—No.