

61. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Could not this official stamp be imitated?—I suppose it could; but they do not know what it is at the time. Every booth has a different stamp—no two booths have a similar stamp.

62. But if they got one of the ballot-papers and knew the official stamp they could use the papers to work that booth with?—They would have to get the stamp made. They could do it if they got a genuine ballot-paper and had it copied, but they do not get the ballot-paper in time to do that beforehand, and even then the total number of papers in the box at the close would show if there were any bogus papers there.

63. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] Were you satisfied that it was a genuine ballot-paper?—I did not see it until a few days afterwards. I told every Deputy Returning Officer that the count at the finish would be a guide to them as to whether any bogus papers had been put in the boxes, and that if they found in making up the total that they had more papers than had been given to them there would be bogus papers amongst them.

64. If they found that 500 had voted, and that 550 papers were there, they would know that there was something wrong?—Yes. If 550 voted they would have 150 left out of 700, but if they had 200 left they would know that 50 ballot-papers in the ballot-box would be wrong.

65. Then you would have the number checked on the roll?—Those are never counted.

66. But you found afterwards that it was a genuine paper that had been complained of?—Yes; but Mr. Isitt could not produce it at the time. He had not got it in his possession at the time, but promised to get it for me so that I might see it as soon as possible. It came to me in an envelope a day or two afterwards—I cannot quite remember how long—and I at once took the paper along to Mr. Ferguson, the printer. I had seen Mr. Ferguson about it before.

67. Was there any accompanying letter?—No.

68. Just the paper itself?—Yes.

69. What did you do with it?—I took it to Mr. Ferguson and we examined it together, and he pointed out the break in the line on the printed form, which satisfied him that the paper was printed from his type.

70. What happened to this paper?—I had it until I sent it to the Commissioner of Police.

71. When did you communicate with the police about it?—I had several discussions with Inspector Ellison.

72. When did you bring it before him?—I was confident that I had shown it to him, but last night he told me that he had never seen the genuine paper, that all he saw was a sort of copy of it that had been made by Sergeant Twomey. I showed it to several, I know, and I thought I had shown it to him, but he says that I did not. At the time he was making inquiries about it not only at my request, but in consequence of what had been said to him by Mr. Isitt. I was anxious to have the matter cleared up, not because I thought it was a very serious matter so far as the election was concerned, but for Mr. Ferguson's sake. I felt that his office was under a certain stigma, and I wanted to get the matter cleared up on his account.

73. Did you have any formal communication from the Police Department in connection with this matter?—The only letter I sent was some time afterwards, when I was informed by Mr. Isitt himself that the paper had been obtained from the Buckle Street booth, and that people at the barracks—men in the Permanent Artillery—knew something about it. I at once wrote to Inspector Ellison giving him this information, and asking him to have further inquiry made. He had an inquiry made, and his report was left for me about three months afterwards, but it could not afterwards be found.

74. That was official correspondence, was it not?—Yes, I suppose it was.

75. It is not usual to destroy official correspondence, is it?—No; but it had not been recorded.

76. But it related to a public matter?—Yes.

77. Has due search been made for these papers?—Yes; the clerks in Wellington have searched all the ballot-papers and official papers. I do not remember destroying the papers, but it is possible that when I was clearing out a lot of my papers before leaving Wellington I may have destroyed that report amongst other papers.

78. What was on this missing file?—Simply the report of the police.

79. Just the one paper?—Just the one report.

80. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Which officer was it?—I do not remember the officer who made the report.

81. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] Here is a letter from Mr. Isitt to the Returning Officer at Nelson and to the Returning Officer at Newtown: "Dear Sir,—I am anxious to obtain samples of the local-option ballot-papers used in various electorates, and shall be glad if you will kindly send me two of those used in your electorate." That is dated the 29th December, some time after the local-option poll. Did you have any similar application from Mr. Isitt?—I had a communication from some one to that effect, asking me to supply copies of the ballot-papers used.

82. Did you supply them with any?—No; I said I could not.

83. *Mr. Taylor.*] What becomes of the unused ballot-papers that come back to you from your deputies?—They come to me sealed and are put away with the used ballot-papers.

84. Are they put away with the used ballot-papers?—Yes.

85. And if any Returning Officers in reply to that note of Mr. Isitt's supplied any unused ballot-papers they must have taken them?—They could not have taken them from the sealed ones returned by the deputies, but they might send them from the surplus which the Returning Officer always has.

86. What becomes of the surplus papers?—They are made up into a parcel by the Returning Officer and sealed up. They are all kept together.

87. Now, if you received a note from some one asking for sample papers would you think that that meant papers used at the poll?—No, I should think he would mean just a form, and that I should supply him out of the surplus papers I had.