

6. Well, on the ground that you decline to give the Committee that information the Committee have come to the conclusion that you have no standing before them, and that there is nothing before them?—May I make a statement as a witness?

*The Chairman* : No; there is nothing before the Committee.

*Mr. Commissioner Dinnie* : Mr. Isitt has stated that he wrote for certain ballot-papers to Returning Officers, and I would like to know from whom he received them?

*Witness* : I can give a full explanation as to that matter with the aid of another witness. Those ballot-papers, though asked for by me technically, were asked for by the Rev. Mr. Walker.

7. *The Chairman.*] I thought it was the Alliance?—Yes; but the Alliance Executive consists of twenty-four persons, including the President and the Treasurer as an associate, and takes action on behalf of any representative men. When I was absent the Rev. Mr. Walker wanted these samples of ballot-papers, and he is here to make his own statement as to why he wanted them. Although I am technically responsible as signing the letter, that is my only connection with it.

8. *Mr. Hardy.*] You merely say that you were the instrument?—Yes. It occurred a fortnight after the Mataura election. The thought of the ballot-papers being of any value after the poll was over never entered my mind. Mr. Walker was very much interested in the matter, and Mr. Adams had given it as his opinion that there should be nothing on the voting-paper above the top voting-line.

*Mr. A. D. Thomson, S.M.* : I would like to make one addition to what I stated at the last meeting of the Committee, and would prefer that Mr. Isitt should be present. It is this: that it never crossed my mind until certain questions were asked me on Wednesday morning that it might be suggested that I had been conniving at this ballot-paper being put into the possession of some one who had no right to have it. I desire to emphasize, in the presence of Mr. Isitt and every one else, that I never, directly or indirectly, connived at any ballot-paper being put improperly into the possession of anybody.

*Mr. E. G. Allen* : That never suggested itself to the Committee, taking into consideration the position you hold.

*Mr. Thomson* : That may be so, but I thought from two of the questions that were put to me that it was implied. One question was whether I gave the paper to Mr. Isitt, and the next was did I put it on the table in order that it might be obtained.

Rev. E. WALKER made an affirmation and was examined. (No. 6.)

9. *The Chairman.*] I understand from Mr. Isitt that you wish to give evidence before this Committee in connection with certain ballot-papers?—Yes.

10. After the licensing elections, it has been stated before this Committee, Mr. Isitt applied to Returning Officers for certain ballot-papers, and he said that it was at your instigation: is that so?—Yes, that is so; and the explanation of it is this: I was not remembering at the time that those unused voting-papers after the poll had to be packed up and sent with the used papers to the place where they were kept in custody. I understood that they were regarded as so much waste paper.

11. I suppose you had read the Act?—I had read the Act, but I was under the impression that they were so much waste paper after the poll was over, and I suggested to Mr. Isitt, from what I knew in regard to the various printed headings that had been put on these papers, that if he could get samples the matter might be brought under the notice of the Minister, or whoever it concerned, to show that there was no uniformity in the voting-papers over the colony.

12. Did it not occur to you that it would have been better to go to the proper source—the Minister himself—to ask for that information?—That might have occurred to Mr. Isitt, but I am not an official in the matter. I am simply a private person doing what I do in the temperance movement in an honorary capacity. He was the official person, and I made the suggestion to him.

13. He says that he was only the instrument to carry out your wish?—Well, if I thought it was necessary for anything to be done I would generally express a wish that the matter should be taken in hand.

14. You would hardly be the instrument—you would have some authority in such a case?—I have no authority to say what should be done. I am interested in seeing that right is done all over the colony, and I know that things are printed at the head of voting-papers that ought not to be there.

15. Then, you would not consider it right to ask any one to commit a wrong?—Certainly not. If I had had the slightest idea at the time that those voting-papers were anything more than waste paper after the poll, and had to be left in the possession of the Returning Officer, I would never have made such a suggestion.

16. And you say that it was only for the purpose of seeing the various printed headings to those papers that you wanted them?—That is all. Numbers of persons were invited to strike out the top line, and the top line in these papers had no lawful right to be there.

17. But would not one paper have been sufficient for your purpose?—Yes; it would have been sufficient to show us in one instance what had been done, but it was almost universally done.

18. Why did you ask for two papers in each case?—That might have been Mr. Isitt's own suggestion, in order that he might have one to keep in his possession.

19. When was the election held?—Last year.

20. You are quite sure the idea never entered your mind at the time you asked for these ballot-papers that there might be just the possibility of your upsetting some of the late elections?—It was not in my thoughts in the slightest degree.

21. It has been suggested that that was the reason?—One thing that strongly influenced me in making the suggestion was that I had heard that at the recount in Selwyn the Magistrate had said that there were a considerable number of papers on which the local descriptive line at the