

89. *The Chairman.*] Of course letters came in in reply from those who sent you the ballot-papers?—No, I do not think that was so. I believe that in two of the three cases the papers were simply sent.

90. They were headed to different licensing districts?—Yes; and directly I found that the Returning Officers had been asked to do a thing that we should not have asked them to do, my instinct would have been to tear them up. Directly I found that we had asked them to do a thing that they ought not to do, I should wish to shield them.

91. You admit that you asked them to do it, and practically you asked them to commit a wrong?—Yes; that the request to do an illegal thing went from our office.

92. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Did the Alliance petition to have any of the elections in the colony upset?—No; we had no wish to upset any.

93. Had you anything to do with upsetting the local-option poll in Newtown?—No; we fought hard against it being upset.

94. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] You had no object in getting it upset?—No.

95. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Did the Alliance, or any one on behalf of the Alliance, petition to have a recount of the votes in any election in the colony?—Yes; speaking from memory, I think the Alliance did in regard to Newtown, but in that case it would be at the request of the district. I think we were directly responsible for the petition in Newtown, and that we advised it in several other districts.

96. Can you tell the Committee of any other districts you advised?—Not positively, but I should say that everything of that kind that was done in Otago was largely done in consultation with our Alliance. I was constantly in correspondence, and for some time in personal intercourse with Mr. A. S. Adams, who is president of the Alliance.

97. Do you admit receiving these ballot-papers from the Returning Officers?—Yes.

98. Did you have any ballot-papers from any district except those in which the Alliance petitioned to have a recount?—Yes.

99. Was the receipt of these ballot-papers given as a ground for upsetting the election?—No. The application made by our office for them was dated the 29th December. The Mataura case had been opened a fortnight before that, and the others at about the same date.

100. Did the Returning Officer at Mataura send you any papers?—I cannot give an answer referring to any of the Returning Officers.

101. *The Chairman* (on behalf of Mr. A. D. Thomson, S.M.).] Were you in Mr. Thomson's office at any time immediately before the election?—I do not remember any personal interview with Mr. Thomson until the day of the licensing election. I thought the other day it was on that morning that I saw him; but afterwards, when I heard his evidence, I remembered that he was right in saying it was in the afternoon. I tried to see him immediately after receiving the ballot-paper. I rang him up, asking him to come and see the paper, not thinking that I had any right to take it down. He declined to come up, and I then went down in the afternoon. I do not remember seeing him again in the office, but I saw him in the street afterwards. To the best of my belief I was not in his office until the 25th March, when I received the ballot-paper. I have been in the Courthouse several times, but not in his office. As affecting this question of my interview with Mr. Thomson, I stated before that I gave the ballot-paper to him. I wish to say now that I sent it to him by a messenger.

102. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] You are not particular about what you say on your oath; you said you gave it to Mr. Thomson before?—My memory is very overburdened just now, and these events are long past, but I told Mr. Dinnie the true position when he came to see me.

Rev. E. WALKER further examined. (No. 9.)

103. *The Chairman.*] Have you anything further to say in regard to this matter?—I wish to say that the whole thing did not come to me again until this morning. It is quite new. What I have to say is in connection with the question of folding up the ballot-papers in the different booths. The Returning Officers in the district would necessarily get a greater quantity of voting-papers printed than would be likely to be used. A certain quantity has to be sent to every booth, and if there is an unexpected rush at any booth the Returning Officer must have more voting-papers in reserve to be prepared for it. When the poll is over there would be a number not sent to any booth, and therefore they would not be packed up in the parcels. They would not be papers that would be used or unused "at the poll," and it would be from such papers that I would expect the ballot-paper could be obtained.

104. You surely do not imagine that the Returning Officer would consider unused ballot-papers as so much waste paper? What would you say about this one that is under discussion—that is an unused paper?—Yes; it is possible it is a paper that never went into any booth, and was amongst the surplus stuff.

105. The ballot-papers are not the property of the Returning Officer—they are the property of the colony?—They do not come within the provisions of the Act as to sealing up.

106. They are sealed up just the same as the others?—I think it might be argued from the Act that they have not been in any booth to be sealed up.

107. But the ballot-papers are the property of the colony—they are not the Returning Officer's property?—Still, it occurred to me even after reading the clause in the Act—

108. The Returning Officer has no right to dispose of these ballot-papers without consulting his Minister, and I doubt whether the Minister could give authority—they belong to the colony—they are part of our property as colonists?—Supposing they are the property of the colony, they are property that has not actually entered into any polling-booth, and so could not be sealed up in any booth.

109. But they are sealed up by the Returning Officer, and he has to account for them?—Yes.