

238. Yes; we will take that first?—We say it was impossible for those envelopes to have passed through the system of addressing, filling, and stamping that we had arranged, and to have passed through the post-office, with the Post Office Regulations as they are, with the envelope empty, in the number they did and in the way they did; and that there must therefore be some reason in the Post Office for intercepting those tickets. Let it be understood no one could obtain tickets for the Town Hall meeting unless they possessed one of those cards, and the possession of one of those cards supplied sufficient motive.

239. What do you suggest in regard to the non-delivery to two persons of letters: we are told two persons did not get their letters?—I suggest those letters were opened and the cards taken out for the purpose of obtaining tickets of admission to that meeting.

240. And the envelopes, of course, destroyed?—Yes.

241. And you suggest that somebody has been base enough to open those letters and steal their contents and use them?—Yes.

242. Based upon nothing more than your distorted view of what is going on in the Post Office. What do you suggest, Mr. Elliott, with regard to the late delivery to clergymen of your letters of invitation?—I suggest the letters were held up dishonestly.

243. For what purpose?—For preventing, probably, the announcing of that meeting in the Protestant churches of Auckland.

244. Held up by whom?—How do I know?

245. But you must have some idea or theory. You do not suggest Mr. Williamson gave orders for it to be done to gratify any little whim?—Generally, say, the Post Office.

246. Beginning where? Do you go back as far as the head, Mr. Morris?—Tell me who is at the back.

247. You have been told the Censor is the only person. We have it now that out of 2,500 circulars there is evidence of only nine having reached the recipients with empty envelopes?—There is evidence of an unlimited number.

248. Pardon me; we are dealing with evidence here. My friend has given me the names.

*Mr. Ostler:* We also have an admission of two postmen as to many on their rounds.

249. *Mr. Gray:* No. Do you suggest there was a base conspiracy somewhere to prevent nine individuals out of 2,500 invited from attending the meeting?—I do not suggest that; I suggest there was a conspiracy to secure tickets.

250. Do you suggest there was any design to prevent the meeting or withhold from certain persons the knowledge that there was to be a meeting?—The letters were evidently held up with the intention of helping the meeting.

251. Do you suggest there was any design to prevent people going to it?—I do suggest that the only possible motive for censoring the correspondence——

252. I am speaking of these circulars. Do you suggest there was a design to spoil your meeting and prevent people going to it?—I suggest that the cards were taken out for the purpose of getting tickets.

253. That is, swelling the audience. You do not suggest that people were being prevented from going to the meeting?—It was the only means of somebody obtaining entrance tickets.

254. Can you suggest why, if anybody in the Post-office was stealing these tickets, the envelopes should be delivered to the addressees?—I have not the faintest idea why they came through.

255. That does not look like the action of an intelligent postman?—There is method in that madness. It is suggested that they were sent empty after abstraction of the contents.

256. Do you think, then, that the postman was committing a fraud—the letter-carrier?—The letter-carrier simply delivered what was handed to him.

257. Do you admit that there is nothing to show that there was any dereliction of duty on the part of letter-carriers?—No; I do not admit that. I do not know whose dereliction of duty it was.

258. Then you are not prepared to admit that as far as you know or believe the postman delivered the letters as he got them?—As far as I know.

259. And you cannot go further and say you do not think the postmen themselves abstracted the contents?—No. They disappeared; I do not know where they disappeared.

260. You have made reference to an order as to the delivery of letters—I think your counsel did yesterday—but you made some reference to it to-day. You say that there was an order in the Post-office——

*Mr. Ostler* objected. This is information obtained solely for the purpose of this case, and it is absolutely privileged. My friend cannot ask questions about how, or where, or in what manner I got information to work up this case.

*Mr. Gray:* I submit on behalf of the Post Office this is an inquiry into allegations made by this gentleman against the Post Office, which involve serious charges of misconduct on the part of the Post Office officials. It is not only the allegation that the censorship has been established and exercised in the interests of the Roman Catholic Church, but that correspondence has been suppressed—that it has been corruptly and wilfully suppressed, opened, detained, and so on, by Post Office officials. It has been stated by my friend and by this witness that there is an order in the Post-office book directing the censoring of correspondence for this box, or something to that effect. I submit I am entitled to ask what he knows about that, and what is the source of his information. The inquiry, sir, so far as the Post Office is concerned, ought, not only in the interests of the Post Office but in the interests of the public, to be as thorough as possible. Serious allegations have been made against an institution in which the public is concerned, and they ought to be fully investigated.