

knowledge was at the beginning of December, 1916. A communication was received by the Hon. the Attorney-General—a private letter enclosing a copy of a circular or pamphlet published by this committee and called “Rome’s Hideous Guilt in the European Carnage.”

9. Is that pamphlet identical with the one now before His Worship?—That is the same pamphlet. I do not propose to mention the name of the informant of the Attorney-General, but in view of the nature of the suggestions made in this case I desire to say that he was not a Roman Catholic, and had no connection with the Roman Catholic Church.

10. May I ask, Mr. Salmond, whether, when the matter was referred to you by the Attorney-General, you received any particular instructions, or was the matter just referred to you?—It was referred for my consideration and action. I considered the matter, and I came to the conclusion that the pamphlet was a mischievous publication, and that the body responsible for it should not be allowed to have the use of a post-office box for the distribution of matter of that class. I accordingly, on the 13th December, 1916, sent a memorandum to the Chief of the General Staff, Colonel Gibbon, who has apparently the chief control of the censorship and with whom I always communicate in these matters. The communication which I sent to him was as follows [letter read].

11. Do you know, Mr. Salmond, that in consequence of that memorandum which you sent the Chief of the General Staff censorship was directed by him?—That is so.

12. Then it appears that the suggestion of censorship originated with yourself?—That is so.

13. You had no instruction by any Minister of the Crown or any one else to take this particular action, but you acted on your own discretion?—Yes.

14. For the reasons mentioned in the memorandum to the Chief of the General Staff?—For those reasons.

15. The suggestion has been made in these proceedings that the censorship was established in that instance in the interests of the Roman Catholic Church?—I desire to give that suggestion an emphatic denial. There was no thought in my mind, and I am sure there was no thought in the mind of the Chief of the General Staff, as to taking sides in any way in any religious controversy. It was not in the interests of the Roman Catholic Church that action was taken—it was in the interests of the public; and exactly the same action, as far as I am concerned, would have been taken if the Committee of Vigilance had themselves, or had Roman Catholics, made a similar attack upon the Protestant religion.

16. Did you consider, Mr. Salmond, that the circulation of literature such as that was calculated to create hostility and ill will?

*Mr. Ostler* raised the objection that this was a leading question, but His Worship ruled that that could hardly be so, as it was the Solicitor-General who was giving evidence.

*Mr. Gray*: That is so, sir. Mr. Salmond has already shortly stated his reasons in the memorandum.

*Witness*: The reason why I recommended that action should be taken was that literature of that class seemed to be an attempt to stir up religious strife and bigotry in a time of war; it could serve no useful purpose, and was bound, I thought, to excite public discord and want of harmony and religious antagonism at a time when harmony and efficiency were absolutely necessary to the conduct of this war. I came to the conclusion, rightly or wrongly—and I adhere to it—that the circulation of that sort of thing was a public mischief and a public evil, and that the Post Office should not be used as the instrument of it.

17. *Mr. Gray*.] Did you consider, Mr. Salmond, that the effect of the circulation of this pamphlet might have any effect upon military operations in New Zealand?

*Mr. Ostler* objected that this was another leading question.

*His Worship* ruled that the Solicitor-General could take care of himself in such a matter.

*Witness*: It would have no effect upon military operations, but I thought it would have a very appreciable effect upon the recruiting of Roman Catholics and in the want of hearty co-operation and assistance of Roman Catholics in the conduct of the war. This pamphlet is not really an attack on the Roman Catholic religion—it is an attack upon Roman Catholics in specific relation to the war.

18. *Mr. Gray*.] When I said “operations” I meant conduct of matters connected with the war?—I said that in my opinion it would interfere with the full assistance desired by the Government being obtained from the Roman Catholic community in connection with the war.

19. I had recruiting in my mind when I asked the question, but I did not like to suggest it to you. About the source of this pamphlet?—One of the witnesses said this pamphlet was merely a reprint from an English newspaper, with the exception of some words at the end of it. I desire to point out that the first part of the pamphlet is not a reprint at all. It is a publication by the Committee of Vigilance in these words:—

“*Rome’s Hideous Guilt in the European Carnage.*

(From the *Churchman’s Magazine*.)

“FELLOW CITIZENS,—

“It is impossible to get the daily Press to publish the great underlying facts of the cause of this present terrible war. Germany is being made the scapegoat to hide an equally guilty party—Rome. Austria is the chief of Rome’s representatives. The Papacy has two great objects at the present time—viz., the restoration of the temporal power of the Pope and the destruction of Protestantism. England has stood in the way of the achievement of these objects. Rome’s aim is to crush England, as also is Germany’s. The following will give you some startling and accurate information. There is much more to know, but this will enlighten you.

“THE COMMITTEE OF VIGILANCE.”