

71. *The Chairman.*] You decline to give the names of those Returning Officers who sent you those papers?—Yes; but with regard to the Buckle Street paper, I would like to give an additional reason.

72. I think you have given us your reasons—that you had given a promise?—Yes; but with the consent of the man who brought me that paper I gave so much information—

73. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] I rise to a point of order. This Buckle Street paper is not in evidence at all now, because Mr. Isitt has already refused to divulge the name. The two matters are distinct altogether, and consequently I object to Mr. Isitt making a mixed statement?—I maintain that I was asked a question, and was about to reply.

74. You stated that I said in the railway-train that you ought to be prosecuted in connection with the transfer of the papers from the Returning Officers?—The Rev. Mr. Cocker reported to me that you said I was to be prosecuted because I had committed theft—that I was a thief, and that I had incited other men to thieve, and was to be prosecuted.

75. I said that you ought to be prosecuted, and I am still of the same opinion, because you are not so ignorant of the licensing law of this colony as not to know that you were corrupting these men—in fact, one of them wrote and told me so?—My reply is that a request was made to the office by the Rev. E. Walker that we should get samples of these papers, and that eleven requests had been sent out, including one to the Returning Officer of Wellington and one to the Returning Officer of Newtown, when replies came from the two named to the effect that it was not legal to forward these ballot-papers. The Act was then looked up, and no further applications were sent out. At that time I did not know the clause in the Act stating that unused ballot-papers were to be regarded as of any value whatever, or I should not have let my signature be attached to the circular asking for them. I did so because I believed the Rev. Mr. Walker knows more about the Licensing Act than any one in the colony, except the lawyers.

76. *Mr. E. G. Allen.*] You thought so?—Yes; and I think so still, but he did not know this one clause. I still think that, apart from the lawyers, he is the greatest expert in licensing law in the colony. I thought at the time I saw the circular that there was something doubtful or queer about it, but I had confidence in Mr. Walker.

77. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] Do you receive the replies to your correspondence?—When I am in the office I read all the correspondence, and when I am not there the letters are afterwards submitted to me.

78. Do you read your letters before signing them?—Yes; I glance over them, and read those that are important.

79. Did you read that letter to the Returning Officers before signing it?—Yes; if I did see it before it went I should glance over it before I signed it.

80. Did you receive the replies sent in answer to that letter?—This is the first time I have seen this one. [Letter handed to witness.] I had it quoted to me the other day by a member of the staff, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I had not seen one of these replies until after this inquiry began. I should say that had I known what would be the result, and noticed to whom they were being sent, the last two men to whom I would have allowed them to be sent would have been Mr. Thomson and Mr. Lyon; to Mr. Thomson, because I respect him far too highly to get him into trouble, and I would not in any case have sent the letter to Mr. Lyon for other reasons. Until yesterday I thought the only clause that dealt with the matter was in the Electoral Act, but this morning I found there was a clause in the 1895 Act referring to it. The Alliance executive has a correspondence committee, and a great deal of the correspondence that is done is hurriedly submitted to me.

81. Do you realise that you did wrong, whether in ignorance of the law or not, in asking for these ballot-papers?—I stated the first day of the inquiry that a grave error of judgment was made in the office, and I still believe so.

82. You did not have any wrong intention?—There was no intention in the matter except to oblige the Rev. Mr. Walker, formerly an agent of the Alliance, and still a close associate.

83. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] Were you personally acquainted with any of the Returning Officers that these letters were sent to? Take Nelson for instance, were you personally acquainted with the Returning Officer there?—At the time the letters went out I did not know where any one of them had been sent. I have since found out that they were intended to go right round the colony, but the answers received from Mr. Lyon and Mr. Thomson checked their circulation.

84. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] There is a letter addressed to the Returning Officer at Nelson, and the envelope is addressed to the Returning Officer at Motueka?—I am quite sure that no envelope was addressed by me.

85. Do you dispute the papers?—No; but I think it is exceedingly probable that in the rush of business in our office—we were working early and late at that time—a paper might have been put into a wrongly addressed envelope.

86. Did you sign these letters [produced] asking for ballot-papers?—They were signed either by me or for me.

87. The word "Nelson" is written in either by yourself or by somebody else?—This is a boy's writing. In sending out circulars they are sometimes signed for me, and often with a rubber stamp.

88. *Mr. Commissioner Dinnie.*] Mr. Isitt seems to have a record, and has ascertained how many of those notices have been sent out asking for ballot-papers, if that is so he must have in his office the answers filed away with the records, and we should like to have those answers?—I think in most instances no notice has been taken of these matters. I do not think there is any record, and it is a matter of memory on the part of one of the clerks to say that there were eleven sent out, and that replies came from Wellington and Newtown.