

The Department took legal advice on the question whether the advertisements under notice brought the advertisers within this section, and was advised that the advertisers could be treated as persons engaged in an immoral and unlawful business, and that the newspaper could be destroyed under section 30 of the Post and Telegraph Act as being of an immoral nature and likely to have an indecent or immoral effect. On this advice I decided to detain copies of the newspaper noticed in the mails.

As stated in an interview reported in the *Evening Post*, Wellington, on the 25th May last, I knew nothing whatever of the religious views held by the paper, nor did I read any of the ordinary letterpress, as nothing in the body of the newspaper was marked for my perusal. Certain advertisements to women were marked, which I read, and my attention was called to section 28 of the Post and Telegraph Act.

A copy of a subsequent issue of *The Menace* has since been submitted, and I do not see in it any advertisements of the nature of those referred to. Copies of the paper will not be detained unless they contain matter of a libellous, blasphemous, indecent, or immoral nature, or likely to have an indecent or immoral effect. Moreover, if the proprietors of the publication undertake that no more advertisements of the kind in question will be inserted the embargo will at once be removed.

Yours faithfully,

H. H. Seabrook, Esq., Grafton Road, Auckland.

R. HEATON RHODES.

Some of the papers coming addressed to box 912 came to be regarded as likely to have a mischievous tendency, and the box 912 being now under military censorship, *The Menace* suffered accordingly. Hence the association of ideas on the part of many loyal citizens who objected to the political activities of the Roman Catholic Church. It has aroused a most bitter sectarian feeling, which certainly is in no way lessened by the style of oratory indulged in by Mr. Elliott. To my mind it is most deplorable that at this particular time, when our Empire is at deadly grips with an unscrupulous enemy and our soldiers are doing their noble part to uphold our interests irrespective of creed or country, that a crusade—for it is nothing else—should be entered upon to attack a Church the members of which must be deeply pained at, and who will certainly resent, the language that is being hurled at them by such men as Mr. Elliott, who claims to represent a very numerous organization.

No better illustration of what I mean—and this, I think, is a subject of fair criticism—could be cited than the contents of certain letters which Mr. Elliott wrote or dictated and addressed to box 912. They were intended as a trap for the Post Office, but failed of their purpose. Copies of these letters were produced to me, and after perusing them I refused to allow them to be read in public, as I considered that their contents would cause deep pain and give serious offence to a great number of people belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. Mr. Elliott admitted that these letters were fabricated by himself, and that the names and addresses were bogus, but they were addressed to the Committee of Vigilance at box 912. I am fain to believe that there are few ministers of religion who would have thought of concocting such abominable and disgusting accusations against members of a Christian Church as are contained in three of the letters, unless he was so saturated with sectarian bitterness that he lost all sense of propriety. Mr. Elliott states that he is a Baptist minister of twenty years' standing. Where is his charity? In his cross-examination by Mr. Gray he seemed utterly unable to appreciate the invidious position in which he had placed himself in working, as he said, under the name of religion. To use his own words, "He did not feel called upon to consider the feelings of Roman Catholics." I attach herewith to this report the copies of the letters that I refer to, so that it may be judged as to whether my comments are not justified. They also throw a flood of light on to the foundation of the allegations made with respect to the influence of the Roman Catholic Church as regulating and influencing even the Military Censor. People who would believe such stuff as is contained in at least three of these letters would believe anything.

It was arranged between myself and Mr. Morris and Mr. Ostler, the counsel for Mr. Elliott, that any Postal officials that Mr. Ostler desired as witnesses for his side should be placed freely at his disposal if he would name at any stage those he required; and an assurance was given that no Postal officer would be penalized for any evidence he might give. This was a totally unnecessary assurance to ask for, but still it was freely given. However, as it turned out, Mr. Ostler did not avail himself of the offer, and contented him-