

778. But apart from that, a question has been raised which I should like to ask you about. Is it, in your opinion, in any way part of the duty of a detective officer to be employed in that way?—No; it is not. *Superintendent Shearman.*

779. If that were done, should you consider, it was a degradation to the officer employed in doing it?—I should consider it was. *27th Sept., 1878.*

780. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Do you mean a degradation, or merely that it would impair his efficiency?—I should consider that a detective would feel much annoyed at being put to duty, which ought to be performed by an ordinary constable.

781. *Mr. Swanson.*] Would you say you would be justly annoyed?—It is not his duty.

GEORGE WEBB, Record Clerk in Office of Superintendent of Police, North Island, produced Record Book, and read extracts therefrom, and being duly sworn, was examined.

782. *Mr. Barton.*] Will you tell me if there are any entries in that book respecting the alleged ill-treatment of a man named John McVitty?—There are not any entries on that subject. *Mr. Webb.*

783. Nor any correspondence respecting the breaking of the ribs of a man of that name?—No; I should remember it, if anything of the sort had occurred. *27th Sept., 1878.*

784. How long have you been in the office?—Since the 3rd of January last.

785. Anything occurring in January or April, 1876, would be before your time?—Yes; the department was not established then.

Mr. E. W. MILLS, being duly sworn, was examined.

786. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Mills, do you remember the police taking charge of your offices or place of business at night, when the door was left open on one occasion?—No. I believe I remember the police coming up to my house with a key, which had been left in a door, or else, when my people went down in the morning, their finding the key in the door; something of that sort; but I do not exactly remember. *Mr. Mills.*

787. Did you give any reward on that occasion?—I did not.

788. You never paid anything to the police?—No.

789. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Did any one else on your behalf?—No; I should know if they did so.

790. Then there is no truth in the statement?—I have not yet heard what the statement is.

791. Well, the allegation is that your offices were left open on one occasion; that the police took charge of them during the night and remained there till morning, and that you gave a reward of £5, which has never reached the persons entitled?—It is totally untrue. I now remember that some time last session—I remember the time, because I had one of the members of the House spending the evening with me—a policeman came to the house about 6 or 7 o'clock, and said some one was breaking into my place. We went down town, and three policemen were put on to watch at different points, while my son and I went into the premises. Then we found that water was trickling down between my building and Kreeft's on to some tin or zinc, or something of that kind, which made a noise as if a person was breaking in.

792. You gave no reward?—No; except that I gave the men 3s. or 4s., all the silver I had in my pocket, with which to get a glass of grog.

793. You never gave any police officer money to distribute?—Certainly not, nor has any one in my employ.

RICHARD BRUCE WALLACE, being duly sworn, was examined.

794. *The Chairman.*] You are Agent for the National Insurance Company?—Yes.

795. We gather, from evidence given yesterday, that you acted as the chief business man between the police and three insurance companies about the detection of some cases of arson?—You refer to Heggarty's case. *Mr. Wallace.*

796. I understood there were two or three cases in which you were the agent who dealt with the police?—I think there were two cases.

797. Which were the two?—Heggarty's case, and the case of a man named Pestridge.

798. Would you be good enough to state what occurred in Pestridge's case?—Soon after the fire, Mr. Simpson, the Agent for the New Zealand Insurance Company, who was partially affected by the fire with myself, waited at the police station to see the Inspector, but we saw Sergeant Smith, and we asked him to make what inquiries he could, as we believed there was something wrong connected with the fire. Next morning he had a report in. We called at the police office, and saw what he had found out and reported. I fancy we then saw Inspector Atchison, and we talked the matter over, and decided to have Pestridge arrested if there was any case against him. We left the matter in the hands of Inspector Atchison, who went further into it, and the result was that he laid an information, on which Pestridge was arrested. I know we had a second meeting, at which a decision was come to that Pestridge should be arrested, and the information was then laid, and Pestridge was arrested the same afternoon, a constable having been sent to Kaitoke, where Pestridge was supposed to be.

799. Was there any conversation on that occasion as to a reward or payment to the police on account of their services, supposing Pestridge was arrested or convicted?—I could not say that there was any conversation. It is generally considered amongst insurance companies that if the police get a man convicted it is only right to give them some reward.

800. Is that done habitually?—No; but in some cases it is done. Of course it is a matter of grace.

801. Do you know any case in which payment has been made?—Oh, yes; in Heggarty's case there was some money given.

802. How much?—£40.

803. Was it stated what that money was given for?—Yes; I wrote the letter in connection with it. It was a stimulus to the police in consequence of their having arrested Heggarty, and got him convicted.