

Sergeant FRASER, being duly sworn, was examined.

*Sergeant Fraser.*

957. *The Chairman.*] You are in charge of the station at Lambton Quay?—I am in charge of the office work.

1st Oct., 1878.

958. What books and papers are kept at the office?—A register of all cases tried, a diary, an occurrence-book, a cash-book, and several other small books.

959. The book which is a record of the persons locked up from day to day, with an account of their property?—That is called the watchhouse-book.

960. That is kept in your office?—No, in the watchhouse.

961. When those books become full what is done with them?—They ought to be returned to the office.

962. And are they returned?—Generally they are returned.

963. Is that book inspected regularly?—Not hitherto. All charges are entered in that book, and are then copied into what is called the registry-book.

964. There is a book kept in the lockup, in which the property found on prisoners is recorded?—Yes.

965. Witnesses sign that?—Yes.

966. That is the only record that there is of the property found on prisoners?—Yes.

967. What are the means for taking care of that book?—The book is left open in the watchhouse, and is there day and night.

968. When the book is completed and a new one is served out, what is then done with it?—It ought to be returned to the Inspector's office.

969. Is it returned?—Well, I have found that one book is missing.

970. Yes, and that happens to be exactly the one we want?—At the time of that book we did not have books with printed headings. It was simply a book which I made up for convenience sake, and was made of half-quires of foolscap—loose sheets of paper. It was not kept in a proper manner.

971. That was the Te Aro book?—Yes.

972. Who is responsible for that book?—The man in charge of the station. If it had been deposited in my office I should have been responsible.

973. Who has the custody of papers?—I have.

974. There is a report by Detective Farrell which cannot be found?—No.

975. How is that?—I cannot make it out. I have searched everywhere, and cannot find it.

976. I suppose the Inspector has had this paper in his possession?—Oh, yes; he has had it in his hands, and so have I had it in my hands.

977. Do you know anything, of your own knowledge, of the circumstances under which that report was written?—No. Farrell discovered the fire, and it is usual in such a case for the officer discovering it to furnish a report to the Inspector.

978. Do you know what investigation took place as to that fire after Farrell's report?—I do not know of anything more being done.

979. Nothing more passed through the office?—We were asked by the Commissioner, Colonel Moule, whether certain things had been done, and Mr. Atchison answered these questions.

980. What is this book you have brought up (produced)?—I was asked to produce books in the case of Richard Jones. Here is the entry.

981. Oh, yes; Mr. Baker showed us this. It is the Resident Magistrate's book?—Yes.

982. It is not your book?—Yes, it is.

983. Has the Court no record of its own, apart from this book?—No.

984. Does this same book pass from place to place—from the police to the Magistrate, and back again?—Yes; I enter all the charges in it from the watchhouse-book, and then lay it before the Magistrate.

985. Then the book partly belongs to the police and partly to the Magistrate?—Yes; it passes between our offices and the Resident Magistrate's Court. I enter the charges in the book, and the sergeant lays it before the Magistrate.

986. I understand there is a book in the watchhouse which is not very closely looked after, and which is left with the constable in charge for the time-being?—Yes.

987. This is a copy of some of the matters entered in that book, and it passes into the Resident Magistrate's Court, and is the only record. Having done duty there it is sent back again?—Yes.

988. *Major Atkinson.*] Do you keep any index of your records, or registry of your records?—No; I have a letter-book, that is all.

989. If you wanted to turn up a report, then, you have no record to refer to?—No; we receive a large number of these reports every week.

990. Are they not recorded?—Not in any book.

991. You have no means, then, of tracing a paper?—No.

992. Do you keep no record of what documents go out of the office? Suppose a document was sent to the Crown Prosecutor's office, would you have no record of where it had gone to, except your memory?—No.

993. *Mr. Barton.*] I understood you to say that this Te Aro book was merely half a quire of loose paper—that there were no printed headings, and it was only for some temporary use?—Yes; it was not a proper watchhouse-book.

994. It only contained a few entries, extending perhaps over a couple of months?—It would have contained more than that. I said half-quire to indicate the character of the book, not its size. It was pretty large, but was not a bound book.

995. Over what length of time do you think it extended?—I have no idea.

996. How long have you been clerk?—Thirteen years.

997. Is that the only book that is missing?—Yes.

998. If you looked at the last entry of the previous book and the first of the following book it would tell you what period this book covered?—Yes; I should think it covered a year.