

*The Chairman* : It is not ready yet.

*Witness* : I did not suggest it.

1000. *Commissioner Tunbridge* (to witness).] If you said so in your evidence that is a mistake?—Yes; I did not.

1001. If that is in your evidence it is a mistake: you did not make any such suggestion to me?—Yes, that is so.

1002. Well, now, is it not a fact, Mr. Macdonell, that you have had ample time in Nelson to inquire into those matters yourself?—No.

1003. What prevented you from doing so?—I was engaged every day.

1004. What prevented you remaining another week in Nelson?—You telegraphed, if I remember correctly, to have the thing sent as soon as possible, and I replied that I had some documents in Greymouth, and that it would be necessary for me to go to Greymouth before I sent the report.

1005. Is it not a fact that you wired me saying that you proposed to leave for Greymouth on the 7th or 8th?—Yes.

1006. Did I not wire back to you to say, to save time make your report in Nelson and forward it from there?—Yes.

1007. There was nothing in my telegram to suggest that you should hurry away?—No.

1008. There was no reason why you should not have continued to work for another week if necessary?—Well, it might mean my detention in the district longer than I was supposed to stay.

1009. You were not due to leave the district before the 31st March, were you?—Yes, I left before that.

1010. At any rate, it was some time before the end of March?—I was supposed to be in Napier on the 24th.

1011. There was plenty of time between the 26th February and the 24th March for you to make these inquiries, was there not?—I did not wish to go into the matter. I left Nelson, and I arrived in Greymouth, and as soon as I arrived I received a telegram that the railway-station at Reefton had been broken into, and I left the same day for there, and was there over this business until I got accused parties into the lock-up. I went to the Supreme Court, and as soon as I came back I had a telegram to meet you in Nelson. I was rushing these reports whenever I could.

1012. Was there any necessity for you to have run away from Nelson before you completed this inquiry? Did anything from me indicate to you that you were to go away from there before you completed it?—Oh, no.

1013. If there was any failure to get the necessary evidence of corroboration, that failure was due to you leaving Nelson before you had exhausted the inquiry?—No, I do not think so. I was anxious somebody else should follow up the inquiry in Nelson. I wished to give you grounds to go on—all the reasons I could, to go upon or work on.

1014. Does not Regulation No. 2 practically throw the responsibility of inquiring into misconduct on the part of officers upon the Inspector?—I do not see that.

1015. What does it mean, then?—I expected this: either you would send another man, or to instruct me to go back and finish the inquiry one way or the other.

1016. Until I received your reports nothing had reached me to show that you had not inquired fully into the matter, had there?—I am not sure whether I indicated that or not.

1017. You will not say that there was?—No.

1018. If I say that there was not, then you will not contradict me?—No.

1019. If you had exhausted the inquiry when you were there would there would have been a very much greater probability of your getting the full facts than any officer would have been likely to have got who went through a fortnight later, would there not?—I do not know. The first thing I wished to get at was where these girls were, and that would take considerable care and caution. One of them, I believe, could be easily got, but the other, the sister, refused to say twice where she was. It would be necessary to use some stratagem to find it out.

1020. And that stratagem, you thought, would have been carried out a fortnight after you were there?—Not necessarily; but it could not hurt very much as long as they did not know.

1021. Did not nearly a fortnight elapse between the period when you caused these girls there to be seen and the time that I could possibly have sent a man from Wellington or elsewhere to inquire into the matter? How many days before you left Nelson was it that you sent this female to this sister?—I did not send a female at all.

1022. Well, a male, then?—I am not sure how many days; it was not long before I left.

1023. At any rate, it was some days?—I got the party to go twice, and the party was hopeful of getting the information.

1024. At any rate, it would be over a week before I could possibly get anything?—Yes.

1025. Now, you stated, in reply to the Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones, that all members of the Force are liable to dismissal for a breach of the regulations, I think?—Yes.

1026. Well, now, there are 320 of these regulations, are there not?—I believe so.

1027. Now, how many men do you think would be in the Force at the present day if that order were strictly carried out?—I do not know. There would be a good many out of it.

1028. Do you think you would be in it now, for one?—Well, I think I have stuck to it as close as most of them have.

1029. Do you think you would be in it now? As a matter of fact, do you not find it practically impossible to go along without breaking some of these regulations?—That is so; but I have no recollection of breaking any at present.

1030. Then, it comes to this: very few men would be in the Force to-day who are now serving if that were carried into force?—Yes, I believe that is right.