

356. Did you so inform the Inspector?—I did when he came.

357. How long after was it that he came?—On the 1st February, I think.

358. Then, this matter had been brought under your notice, a grave charge against some one had been hinted at, and yet from the 24th December till early in February you kept the letter in your possession?—So that it should not leak out.

359. And you took no steps to find out the smallest item of evidence that could be gleaned respecting it?—I could not hear of anything.

360. A policeman does not wait for things to come to him?—No. I did not make any inquiries about the matter, for the simple reason that if it had leaked out I would have been blamed for it. When the Inspector came down he could advise me, or else make inquiry himself, and then he could not blame me.

361. Was it not your duty as the sergeant in charge of the station, if you felt yourself in the position you have indicated, to have at once informed the Inspector of the fact?—I understood that he was coming down. I had a very good idea that he was coming down in Jubilee week.

362. You recognised the gravity of the charge?—Yes, and I reckoned it a delicate matter to handle, because I had nothing further than the letter to go upon.

363. The girl's name was mentioned?—Yes.

364. And that of a woman who could give an account was also mentioned?—Yes.

365. From your experience as a policeman did you not know of means of endeavouring to obtain information without going to either the girl—— or Mrs.——?—Not that I knew of. I knew of no one to approach on the subject.

366. And you made no attempt?—No; for the reason I have given. If the Inspector had told me to inquire of any particular person I certainly should have gone and inquired as directed, but there were no definite instructions given.

367. You were to make careful and cautious inquiry?—Who was I to approach?

368. Was it not your duty to say in reply to the Inspector's letter that you did not know who to inquire of, instead of allowing it to remain in your desk?—But I was expecting him to come to Nelson.

369. He told you that he could not come?—Not just then.

370. Do you usually leave grave matters of this nature over in this indefinite way?—A matter of that sort is usually passed on to the detectives, as far as I know.

371. You lived near the police-station, did you not?—I did at that time.

372. What distance was your house from the police-station?—I should say, about 10 yards. There would be about 3 yards between the two buildings, but walking round the front it would be about 10 yards.

373. Did you have any office at the house?—No.

374. Your business was done at the station?—Yes.

375. If Mr. Bannehr, sen., and Mr. Bannehr, jun., and another came to lay a complaint before you and they said so at the station to the constable there, what was his duty?—To knock me up, if it was anything serious; if it was not serious, to make a report to me in the morning.

376. Did you receive any report from the constable as to Mr. Bannehr having been at the station on the night in question?—No, I did not.

377. One of your replies I am not quite clear about. A question was put by the Inspector as to your having played cards with single constables at an hotel?—Yes.

378. A sergeant of police playing cards at an hotel with a single constable is not an every-day event: it is a somewhat unusual thing, is it not?—I do not know. I have known it to be done.

379. I can scarcely imagine a sergeant who had done so forgetting it. Let me put the question again. Did you at any time while in Nelson play cards in an hotel with a single constable, or with any constable?—I really have no recollection of doing so.

380. You would not swear that you did not?—No, I will not, but I feel pretty sure that I did not.

381. In his report upon the inquiry which he held at Nelson the Commissioner states, "As regards Constables Durbridge, Kemp, and Burrell, I think it would be as well if these men were removed to other stations": have you any reason which would lead you to share this opinion?—No.

382. You differ from the Commissioner on that point?—I think the Commissioner has been misled by the reports that have been made to him.

383. That was written after he held the inquiry?—I myself never found anything to complain of with regard to the constables.

384. He goes on to say, "The two former appear to have become too familiar with certain sections of the community at Nelson": have you a different opinion from that?—I never saw anything that would make me think that.

385. Then the Commissioner goes on to say, "and Burrell and Durbridge have, I fear, been too ready with their hands": how would you construe that generally?—I could only account for it by somebody having made statements that something had been done.

386. This, mind you, was written by the Commissioner after holding the inquiry. Do you concur in that finding?—I do not know of them using their hands.

*Commissioner Tunbridge*: I think I ought to mention that this witness does not know anything about these charges of assault. The papers did not go before him, as far as I remember, and he knows nothing about the charges of assault which were not inquired into.

387. *Mr. Hardy*.] With regard to the letter from your superior officer, Inspector Macdonell, marked "Strictly confidential," the instructions were that you should make certain inquiries. Did you notice what he says, "I would be glad to know who the writer of the letter is; still, do not risk anything in endeavouring to find out"?—Yes.