

388. In consequence of that you presumed you were justified in not making inquiries?—In holding back till he came himself and directed me then.

389. When did the mails come in as a rule from the Coast?—On Wednesday and Saturday nights.

390. The letter is dated the 24th December, 1901, and was received on the 22nd February, 1902, at 9 p.m. Can you account for that letter being two months on the way?—No, it was not. I had it locked up waiting for the Inspector to come down, as I understood he was coming down. Seeing that he had given such stringent instructions, I thought it better to wait till he came down and instructed me what he wanted done, so that I would not be blamed for anything leaking out.

391. You were of the opinion that the Inspector had received some information that you were not in possession of, and you thought it would be wiser to wait until the Inspector came and gave you a cue which would prevent anything leaking out?—That is true. It was the information he held and had not sent me that weighed with me.

392. At the end of the paragraph he says, "Still, do not risk anything in endeavouring to find out"?—Where he says that he heard something from another quarter led me to believe that he had more information than I had. I thought it was wiser to wait till he did come and give instructions as to what was to be done, rather than for me to go and start an inquiry when I thought he was coming.

393. *Mr. Lawry.*] It is stated in one of these reports, "The single constables in Nelson bear a bad name for immorality": did you ever hear of their being charged with immorality?—I never heard a word against any of the single men's characters.

394. If they, generally speaking, bore a bad name for immorality you must have heard of it?—I would think so.

395. "It is considered they have too little to do": do you think they had too little to do?—No. I found them very willing at all times to assist. Whether it was overtime or not they were willing to do it.

396. It goes on to say, "They . . . are not properly looked after": were they, in your opinion?—Yes; I was quite satisfied that they were well looked after.

397. Then, this person goes on to say, "I often hear of rows and assaults committed by them"—that is, the single constables. If such was the case it must have come to your knowledge?—I would think it must have come to my knowledge.

398. You referred to a mounted constable who was under you at Nelson, named Kelly. Was he in Nelson when you first took charge there?—Yes.

399. Did you know him before you met him there?—I cannot say that I did.

400. Was he the Mounted Constable Kelly that was in Auckland for many years?—No; a brother of his.

401. Was there any particular reason why this Constable Kelly should have been removed and Mounted Constable Aldridge take his place?—Well, I may say that Kelly was practically useless there.

402. Did Inspector Macdonell ever make any charges or complaints to you about your not maintaining discipline and discharging your duties before the complaints were made against the young men?—No, he never found fault with me in any way that I know of before then.

403. In no communication did he find fault with you or charge you with not doing your duty?—No.

404. There was no complaint, and everything went on harmoniously until the charges were made against the constables and yourself?—It was only since Inspector Macdonell came there that any trouble arose.

405. You are prepared to declare emphatically to this Committee that you never had any official fault to find with the two constables, Burrell and Durbridge?—That is so. I had no cause to complain of them.

406. *Mr. Hall.*] Do you acknowledge that there was more friction between the people and those young constables than there was between the people and the constables who preceded them?—I did not hear of any friction with the young constables.

407. But you have heard?—Only from these reports.

408. You know something of the reports and the evidence that has been put before us?—I was never complained to about it.

409. Is it your opinion that there was less friction, or as little friction?—I have not heard anything against the men who were there formerly further than this: I repeatedly heard it said that they were rather old for work. But I have not heard of any friction between the public and the young constables who came there.

410. Were any complaints made to you, previous to the young constables coming, that the constables were in the habit of insulting or assaulting people?—No; I did not hear that till these reports came along. That was the first I heard of it.

*Commissioner Tunbridge:* I might point out that this officer does not know anything about the charges of assault that appear in the printed papers. They never went before him. They were not inquired into at Nelson.

411. *Mr. Hall.*] You have stated here that the constables who preceded the young men were aged men, partly incapacitated?—Yes.

412. Is it your opinion that the larrikin element in any town would be likely to take advantage of a public officer who was incapacitated?—Yes; I have said that the larrikin element would.

413. Is it your opinion that the introduction of young and vigorous men would be likely to cause friction?—It would quiet the larrikin element, no doubt. They would be more frightened of the young men than the others.