

414. You have already stated that the two young men in question are good samples of the ordinary policemen at the present time in the Police Force?—Yes; they were very good constables, and behaved themselves all the time. I have no fault to find with them whatever.

415. *The Chairman.*] Is it not a fact that in any town larrikins will always take advantage of an old man—will take greater liberties with an old man than with a young man?—Yes, the larrikin element always will.

416. Therefore the constables in Nelson being old the larrikins took greater liberties with them than they did when the young men came there?—Yes, I would say so.

Inspector MACDONELL examined. (No. 16A.)

417. *Mr. Graham.*] I have been asked to ask one question of Inspector Macdonell, while the witness is here, in reference to a point referred to in the Inspector's report to the Commissioner. It is of very great importance to the character of the wife of one of these men. The Inspector says, "I think, if gone about carefully, admissions might be got from the girls themselves. Constable Durbridge has been keeping company with ———. She has disappeared, and it is suspected she is away to get rid of a trouble similar to ———. Whether this is so or not I cannot say, but the fact that her married sister will not tell where she is is suspicious." That is on page 44 of the printed matter. I want to ask the Inspector whether he knows that the woman who was then Miss ——— has a married sister?—I was told so, and I had no reason to doubt it.

418. Did you believe it?—I had not the slightest reason to doubt it.

419. Who informed you that her married sister would not tell where she was?—I decline to answer that here.

[The Chairman intimated that the witness must answer.]

Witness: With all due respect I do not see how this can possibly bear in the case. It may lead to ill feeling between families there, and cannot help the Committee.

[The Chairman repeated that the witness must answer the question.]

420. *Mr. Graham.*] My question is, who informed you that she had a married sister?—Mr. Canning.

421. James Canning, livery-stable keeper, of Nelson?—Yes.

422. You say distinctly that Mr. Canning was your informant?—He informed me, I am almost certain.

423. Did you make any other inquiry to find out whether the person in question had a married sister?—I stated here before that I sent to the married sister—the sister whom I understood to be married—twice.

424. By what means did you send to the sister? Did you find out the address of the sister?—No.

425. Did you know where she was?—No.

426. By whom did you send to her? Who did you send to Miss ———'s sister to ask her where Miss ——— was?—I cannot tell you the man's name, but I understand he is a relation of the woman. Mr. Canning could tell. He sent the man for me twice.

427. This was all done on the statement of Mr. Canning? You say that he was your informant, and was asked to ascertain from the sister where Miss ——— was?—I heard from others, too, that she had a sister.

428. Who were the others?—I think Constable Williams was one.

429. You think—you would not swear?—I am pretty well sure. I have no doubt about it.

430. Have you no doubt that Miss ——— has a sister?—I have no reason to doubt it. If I had I would say so.

431. The ground upon which you have no reason to doubt is that Mr. Canning and Constable Williams told you that Miss ——— had a sister? That is your only ground for making the statement in this report, "Whether this is so or not I cannot say, but the fact that her married sister will not tell where she is is suspicious." Did you not think it your duty to try to find that married sister and see whether she could tell?—I did what I considered was my duty.

432. You are quite sure that Miss ——— has a sister?—I am nothing of the kind. Why do you assume that? I said that I was informed she had a married sister.

433. The extract from your report that I read out a few minutes ago is an absolute statement; it is not a belief. You are asserting it as a positive fact that she has a married sister. I suppose you will admit that if Miss ——— had a sister she would be likely to know it?—She would under ordinary circumstances.

434. You think she would be more likely to know whether she had a sister or not than you would?—Yes.

435. And whether she had either a married sister or a single sister?—I would imagine that, under ordinary circumstances.

436. If I told you that I had it positively that Miss ——— has not got and never had a sister, either single or married, would you believe it?—I would need to have proof. I believe that you are so informed, but if it is by the parties concerned—

437. If I told you that Miss ——— has not got and never had a sister or a half-sister, will you take that in preference to the word of Mr. Canning and Constable Williams?—She may be a sister-in-law, or something like that. I do not know. I am satisfied there is some near relationship there.

*Mr. Graham:* Well, I can only say that this woman has not got a sister, married or single.

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