

versation being rapid and mixed, as Mr. Jellicoe was speaking of his legal business with the prisoner at the same time. Upon the conclusion of my interview with the prisoner the French Consul handed to Inspector Thomson a document to be given to Detective Walker, constituting him a French military warder, which document Inspector Thomson handed to Walker, when he at once took the prisoner on board the "Wakatipu." The prisoner being put on board, the French Consul and I left the side of the ship and walked home together, our conversation being of the most friendly character. He gave expression to no feeling of displeasure, and urged no objection or protest against the interview. On the contrary, he said he was glad I had spoken a few words to the prisoner, who, he said, "now seemed quieter, and less likely to give trouble on the voyage"—from which I inferred that the prisoner had been expected to give great trouble. My own recollection of the interview and its attendant circumstances is fresh and vivid, and it is very substantially confirmed by the statement of Mr. A. M. Smith, my private secretary (Enclosure No. 5). Mr. Smith's statement is clear upon the point that I spoke to the French Consul immediately upon arrival at the side of the "Wakatipu," and that I left the wharf with him immediately after the embarkation of the prisoner. This testimony goes to the point that the French Consul was not incensed or estranged by the fact of the interview having taken place.

All persons present at the interview—Inspector Thomson, Mr. Jellicoe, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Smith, and myself—agree that the French Consul made no objection to it, and entered no protest against it. Inspector Thomson is very emphatic upon the point (Enclosure No. 6). To him should have been made the objection, if objection were desired to be made.

It is singular, however, that no objection or inquiry regarding the interview is made until twenty-four days afterwards. The interview took place on the 11th August: on the 4th September, after the escape of Gasparini, and when it became necessary, I presume, to discover a reason of some kind to account for the escape, a mysterious letter finds its way to the Police Department at Wellington (Enclosure No. 7).

In answer to that letter a very accurate general description of the whole of the proceedings at the interview was furnished by Inspector Thomson (Enclosure No. 8).

The only inaccuracy in Inspector Thomson's report to which I deem it necessary to refer is the use of the word "accompanied" in the phrase, "Mr. Jellicoe, Gasparini's solicitor, accompanied by the Italian Consul (the Hon. Mr. Fisher)," &c. Inspector Thomson explains his use of the word (Enclosure No. 6).

Under ordinary circumstances I should not have called attention to the composition of this sentence, but the use of the word gains importance from the fact that it is part of the allegation contained in paragraph 15 that "the Minister of Education appeared at the wharf at the time of "Gasparini's embarkation, attended by his private secretary, his lawyer, and his interpreter." I was not "accompanied" by Mr. Jellicoe.

Clearly the impression intended to be conveyed by the use of this extravagant language is that I appeared on the scene in all the panoply of state, attended by a retinue of officials, and that the effect, as alleged in paragraph 10 of the letter, was to "neutralise the combined efforts of both the "colonial and the French authorities," and to "double the difficulties of the French Consul's "task."

The statements of Mr. Jellicoe and Mr. Smith, apart from my own, disprove this allegation very completely: they should with equal completeness remove the impression attempted to be created by the use of such language. Mr. Smith's statement shows that I was not "attended" by my private secretary. Mr. Jellicoe's statement shows that I was not "attended" by my lawyer. Mr. Robertson's letter shows that I was not "attended" by an interpreter. I went to the wharf in my capacity as Italian Consular Agent, not "attended" by any person, and without ostentation or display.

It is not undeserving of mention that the document constituting Detective Walker a French military warder was not put into his possession until after the conclusion of my interview with the prisoner. It is true Inspector Thomson says the document was handed to Walker during the interview, and near its termination (Enclosure No. 9). That statement would apply, strictly speaking, to the interview of Mr. Jellicoe, but not to my interview, for Mr. Jellicoe remained speaking to the prisoner on his legal business after I had concluded what I had to say; but, still, the whole was within the compass of five minutes. I saw the document handed by Inspector Thomson to Detective Walker after I had taken up a position away from the prisoner. I assumed throughout that I was speaking to Gasparini while he was yet in the custody of a New Zealand police official, and before he was taken possession of by the French authorities. I observed that the moment the French Consul came forward and handed the document to Inspector Thomson, the officer of police in charge, who in turn handed it to Detective Walker, every one present appeared to understand that the French authorities had taken over their prisoner. All then stood back, and the prisoner was put on board the "Wakatipu." However much he may condemn it in his letter of September 11 to His Excellency the Governor, the French Consul tacitly favoured the interview on August 11, for he delayed arming Detective Walker with his appointment as a French military warder, and he delayed asserting the right of the French authorities to the possession of their prisoner, until the interview was over.

16. The lawyer, by whom I presume is meant Mr. Jellicoe, who was not acting for me, has answered for himself. (Enclosure No. 4.) As relating to me, I treat the statement as pure assumption.

The French Consul, as was his undoubted right, made all arrangements on board the steamship "Wakatipu" for the transport of the warder and his prisoner. These were the arrangements: He provided for the French warder (Detective Walker) a saloon berth at one end of the ship, and he provided for the prisoner a steerage berth at the other end of the ship. These arrangements being made by the Consul, the police authorities had no power to interfere; but I cannot help thinking that a much more prudent course to have adopted, if the safe