

I replied, "Reed, sir." He said, "You are one of the notorious Reeds," and at the same time bashed me across the face with his hand. I said nothing; I simply walked away. Pat Callaghan said, "Good-night, Bill," and I said, "Good-night, Paddy." I gave them no provocation whatever. I have told you all that took place. I was afraid to remonstrate, that I would be roughly handled and locked up. It was pretty late at night. On arrival at the Port I reported the matter to Constable Jeffries. I think it was Constable Kemp struck me, and that it was Burrell standing by. Next day I was in the train with Constable Burrell. I spoke to him about the manner in which I was treated. He declared he was not there, saying, "If I was there it would not have happened."—W. REED.' Do you remember being in a railway-train with this man Reed?—I never rode with him in a railway-train in my life.

64. There is no report from Constable Jeffries, I see. Very well. What does this mean? Here are two men making statements which you contradict, which you say are absolutely false?—Absolutely false. Reed was fined for using obscene language a short time ago, I know.

65. You know that?—Yes.

66. Those are the charges which have been preferred against you outside of the charges which Mr. Commissioner Tunbridge inquired into in Nelson, and you have stated that those charges are absolutely false?—Absolutely false.

67. You understand and appreciate fully the position you are in—that you are now as if you were on your oath in a Court of law?—Yes.

68. You still say those statements are false?—Absolutely false.

69. *Mr. Colvin.*] Who was the landlord of the Postboy Hotel at the time the occurrence referred to in connection with Remnant took place?—Mr. Wemyss, I think, to the best of my recollection. A change took place at about that time, a man named Coogan going into the hotel.

70. Was the Postboy Hotel looked upon as an inferior house, or with suspicion, by the police when Wemyss kept it?—Never. The only thing was that Wemyss used to drink a bit.

71. Did Wilson sign the statement that has been read, in your presence?—No, he did not; he cannot write. His son signed it.

72. It was in his presence that you spoke to the boys and pushed them away?—Yes.

73. Did you lay the charge against Reed for using obscene language, or was it one of the other constables?—It was Constable Jeffries.

74. Is Constable Kemp still in the Force?—Yes; he is stationed at Wellington.

75. *Commissioner Tunbridge.*] Perhaps I might be permitted to ask one or two questions. I am not quite sure of my position here before the Committee. I do not quite know where I am, but perhaps my action may be taken into consideration by the Committee in dealing with this matter. They might think—I am only putting this as a possible matter, with my words in the minds of the members of the Committee—that, these eight complaints having been made against these police officers, I ought to have inquired into them at the same time as I inquired into the others. I wish to explain my position in this way. As Mr. Maginnity has said, the regulations give the Commissioner and the Inspector the option of either inquiring into cases of this kind, or of having the men brought before a Magistrate and dealt with by a Court. At a departmental inquiry such as I can hold the evidence cannot be taken on oath. I have no power to administer the oath. Therefore any person can come before an inquiry that I may hold and can say anything without any fear whatever of the consequences. As a consequence of that, I have taken up this stand since I have had the honour to hold my present position: that where a statutory offence is alleged against a member of the Police Force, evidence can properly only be inquired into before a properly constituted tribunal, where it can be taken on oath. If a complaint is made promptly, and it appears to be a serious one, made in a *bona fide* manner, I instruct the police officer of the district to himself lay an information against the offending member of the Force. I have done so in some instances, but in cases such as these, where the complainants made no complaint for a long time after the alleged occurrences, and then only when approached by an individual and asked to make the complaints, I should not be acting fairly towards the members of the Force, and really the public generally, if I undertook to investigate a matter of that kind where, as I said before, the evidence could not be taken on oath. Therefore I decided, as my written decisions will show, not to attempt to investigate those cases in the unsatisfactory manner that I should have been called upon to follow, but to let all the parties go before a Magistrate and have the evidence taken on oath. That is the attitude I took up in these cases; it is the course that I have followed ever since I have been in New Zealand, and the course I shall continue to follow so long as I remain here in my present position. I know from thirty years' experience of police work that there is no difficulty in getting people who think they have a grudge against the police, and who have perhaps been brought before a Court and punished at the instance of the police—there is no difficulty in getting such persons to make statements, if you invite them to do it, especially when they know they run no risk in making such statements, about the police. The man Remnant says, "Something over a year ago a certain occurrence took place." Another man says, "I was knocked down and kicked, but I did not make a complaint, because I might be treated worse later on, and did not think it was any use." Well, gentlemen, even in England, where democracy does not rule quite so supremely as it does in New Zealand, people do not put up with such treatment as that at the hands of the police, and I am perfectly certain they would not in democratic New Zealand. And when a man seeking to make charges against members of the Force puts down in writing or tells me of such things I look upon his statement with very considerable suspicion, and certainly do not, and would not, go away from the course that I have laid down in dealing with matters of the kind to oblige that individual. After that little explanation I should like to put a question or two to the ex-constable. You say that the men who laid the charges against you, Neave and others, are young larrikins?—Yes.

76. Do you know that while you were in Nelson under Sergeant Mackay larrikinism was somewhat rife?—Yes.