

24. But you would not from your position treat anonymous letters seriously?—I would, and often did, and got valuable information from anonymous letters.

25. But would you not think that a person sending anonymous letters was a bit of a coward?—That may be so; but there may be good reason for it. I have received dozens and dozens of anonymous letters in my time, some entirely untrue and some perfectly true.

26. Could you tell us whether you got more truth than lies from the anonymous letters?—It would be very hard to say. I would not go by an anonymous letter unless it was somewhat verified on inquiry.

27. You think that anonymous letters should receive some attention—so much so that inquiry should be made?—Undoubtedly.

28. But you would not act upon an anonymous letter?—No, certainly not.

*Commissioner Tunbridge:* I think the anonymous letter referred to is mentioned on page 73.

29. *The Chairman.*] Do you know that the whole of the statements in this anonymous letter have been contradicted?—I would expect that the letter would be pretty well contradicted.

30. It has been proved that the whole of it is untrue?—I am not aware of that. To contradict a statement is a different thing from proving it to be untrue. It may be so for all I know, but I have good reason to believe the contrary, if I believe people who were not at all willing to give evidence in the matter.

31. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] You received the anonymous letter?—Yes.

32. The Committee has not the advantage of having the whole of the evidence before it: what was the subject of that anonymous letter?—It was in reference to a young woman who was supposed to have got into trouble with one of the constables.

33. Did you make inquiry into the case?—I could not go to Nelson myself, but I sent the information to Sergeant Mackay confidentially, asking him to inquire into it.

34. Certain statements were made concerning what had occurred to this girl?—Yes.

35. Did you while you were in Nelson have an opportunity of forming an opinion as to the credibility of the person who gave you the information?—Yes; I believe certain people, at any rate, who told me certain facts. I had no reason to doubt them, nor have I now.

36. Had you any reason at that time—never mind what has occurred since—to doubt the credibility of the person who gave the evidence regarding what occurred to Miss ———?—No.

37. You say you frequently received anonymous letters?—Yes.

38. That would be owing to the people not wanting to lay the information before you on account of having to come forward and be known?—Yes; that is the usual cause.

39. Do you act upon these anonymous letters without making further inquiry?—No.

40. Unless you have something substantiating any of the statements you take no action?—No, certainly not.

41. You say you were only in this district from February of last year?—I was in the district for a little over two years, but I was not aware of what was going on in Nelson until I went there.

42. When did you go to the Westland District?—Two years ago.

43. From where?—Wellington.

44. Where were you before you were in Wellington?—At Invercargill and Dunedin.

45. You had a good opportunity, I suppose, during those two years in the Westland District of judging of the men under your charge there?—Fairly good.

46. How many men had you under your charge at Nelson? You mentioned two names—Constables Williams and Bird: who were the others there?—Constables Burrell, Durbridge, Kemp, and Aldridge, and Sergeant Mackay; and Constable McGrath was also there.

47. What I want to get at now is the names of those constables who were not in any way implicated with Burrell and Durbridge: was Williams in any way implicated—when I say “implicated,” I mean was he in any way associated with them in any of the matters for which they were punished?—No, he was not implicated in these offences.

48. Was Bird?—No, not so far as I know.

49. Was Aldridge?—No, not so far as I know.

*Commissioner Tunbridge:* He has left the Force.

50. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] Was he in the Force at the time the circumstances referred to occurred?—Yes; it is since then that he left.

*Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones:* Well, Mr. Chairman, I would ask that he be called. His evidence would be important to the Committee.

*Commissioner Tunbridge:* I think that perhaps Inspector Macdonell's mind is at fault over Aldridge. He resigned before the inquiry was held, and prior to his resignation he had for some months been in charge of the Havelock Station. I interpose merely for the purpose of putting the Inspector right. He is speaking to the best of his recollection.

51. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones.*] What I want to get at is this: Was Aldridge in the Police Force at Nelson when these offences, or any of them, were said to have been committed by these two men?—Yes.

52. Do you know of the charges made against Burrell and Durbridge that were inquired into by the Commissioner?—Yes.

53. I may say that I have only the petition to go upon. I have no other information at all. I think a *précis* of the whole thing ought to have been supplied. One of the charges against Burrell is “improperly taking into the single men's mess-room at the Nelson Police-station, in company of Constable Durbridge, two females named ———, about midnight on the 18th July last”?—That was one of the charges.

54. How long have you been in the Police Force?—Twenty-six years and a half, nearly, and I was eight years before that in the Force in the Old Country—in fact, more than that.