

213. Then, would not the natural inference be that if the sergeant was implicated the rest of the police there would be demoralised?—I would say that I would not expect the others to attend to their duties as they ought to do.

214. Seeing that the sergeant of police was implicated, if the young men committed any indiscretions, would you not exonerate them to a certain extent on that ground?—Well, hardly; I could not altogether. If you wish to get my opinion—I do not want to volunteer it, but I offer the opinion that, if the sergeant had done his duty strictly with the men, the sort of thing that they were guilty of would not have occurred; at any rate, not to such an extent.

215. *The Chairman.*] Have you known, during your long experience in the Force, of people being assaulted by policemen wholesale and no case being brought before the Court?—No, not before this.

216. But these cases were not brought before the Court?—No.

217. Do you not think it was rather an unusual thing that people should be continually assaulted by these policemen and yet not bring cases before the Court?—I think it was very unusual indeed.

218. Of course, people who are assaulted have their remedy?—They have.

219. Were there any of the cases mentioned brought before the Court?—Not so far as I know.

220. Do you know Stapp, Blincoe, Remnant, and Reed?—Yes.

221. You have seen these people?—I have seen Stapp and Blincoe, but only once, and then I spoke to them for a few minutes only.

222. Would you say there was anything of the larrikin class about them?—I am not aware that there is—I mean with regard to Stapp and Blincoe.

223. You would not take their word as against the constables' would you?—Under certain circumstances. I know that, as a rule, if constables misbehave themselves they deny it. That is my experience.

224. Was Durbridge charged at the inquiry with being the cause of the downfall of Miss——?—No.

225. It was only reported upon by you to your superior officer?—That is all.

*Commissioner Tunbridge:* I might explain that when the reports came to me I directed Inspector Pender here to have the matter investigated, in order to see how far we could corroborate or disprove the statements contained in the Inspector's reports. The Chief Detective here inquired into them, with the result that there was found to be absolutely no evidence whatever to support the suggestion that abortion had been procured. The doctor was seen, and the girl herself, and the proprietor of the hotel where she was staying. Their statements were taken, and went to prove that the girl herself had made no secret of her condition. She was making preparations for a woman to take charge of the child when it was born, and everything was perfectly fair and above-board. The doctor who attended her said there was no sign whatever of abortion having been procured. Consequently there was no evidence to tender against the constable, so he was not charged. The girl herself denied to the Chief Detective that Durbridge was the father of her child, and, of course, she has repeated that statement here.

226. *The Chairman.*] You have told the Committee that Nelson is notorious for supposed cases of abortion?—Yes, it has been.

227. You say the police have inquired into such cases and tried to get convictions, but they have never been able to establish a case?—Parties were tried, but the juries acquitted them.

228. Cases were tried before the Court, but no convictions were obtained?—There was a number of cases—either four or five—one after the other.

229. And in each case the accused persons were acquitted?—Yes.

230. That is to say, the cases could not be established?—The juries would not find them guilty.

231. You have already said that a worse state of affairs existed in the Force in Nelson than you have known in any other part of the colony during your experience?—That is so.

232. Can you account for that? Is it that the police there were all young men, or was the discipline very lax in connection with the Force?—I think the discipline was lax, and I think some of the men were very apt to quarrel with or assault people. One of them in particular, I think, was a bit of a fighting-man, and consequently was anxious to show off his ability.

233. That is a part of the training in the Force, is it not?—No.

234. Do you not train the men to box?—No. A few of them box, but they are not supposed to practise on private citizens.

235. But is it not a part of the training at the depot?—No.

236. Are they not taught to wrestle either?—No, not that I am aware of. Three years ago I urged that they should be. At any rate, I suggested that such should be the case.

237. *Mr. R. McKenzie.*] For how long were you in charge of the Nelson District?—A little over two years.

238. Do you know the City of Nelson?—Fairly well.

239. How does it compare with other towns of similar size and population in the colony in the way of bad behaviour?—I consider it about the quietest place I ever saw of its size, and I gave as a reason for that that they have no public works of any consequence there—no coal-mining, gold-mining, or timber trade, or anything of that sort.

240. How many constables are there in the City of Nelson?—Six, I think.

241. Is that outside of the sergeant?—Yes.

242. What is the criminal record of Nelson?—I could not tell you. It is not great.

243. Comparing Nelson with other portions of the colony, is the criminal record large, or small, or comparatively small?—I should say that it would be comparatively small.

244. What are the duties of seven policemen there?—They are continually relieving one another on their beats. Two are on at night.