

8. Of course, the explanation will be an entirely *ex parte* one, because I have not got the reports before me. It was a matter dealt with by the Inspector, Mr. Chairman, and whatever explanation he may make will be incomplete, inasmuch as the papers are not before the Committee.

*Witness*: I wish to state the circumstances. Every case must be judged on its merits. I hesitated even to inflict the punishment named—I mean, even to record it against him—on account of the circumstances of the case. I believe that it is not an unknown thing at all for men in plain clothes to go and play a game of billiards, even when on duty. In this case the constable was told to look after two suspicious characters who were supposed to be about the place. He went out in plain clothes, went from publichouse to publichouse, and while doing so—acting in the capacity of a detective in plain clothes—played billiards in the billiard-room of one hotel for twenty minutes. Those are the exact circumstances. The act was not done in prohibited hours.

9. *Commissioner Tunbridge*.] Now, do you consider insubordinate conduct or language on the part of a police officer to his superior a serious matter?—It depends on the nature of it.

10. Do you consider insubordinate conduct or language on the part of a subordinate officer to his superior a serious matter, or do you not?—I do, if it is of a serious nature. You know that the distinction between insubordination and otherwise is very fine in some cases.

11. Did you not in a Greymouth case when a constable came before you for insubordinate language towards his sergeant simply reprimand him?—That is so—simply because I considered the sergeant provoked the constable.

12. Then, why did you punish the constable at all if the sergeant was to blame?—I considered that the sergeant was to blame in the first instance, but the constable was not justified in what he said.

13. At any rate, you merely reprimanded the constable?—Yes.

14. How long have you been in charge of a district?—It will be three years in February next.

15. Are the two cases that I have mentioned the only two instances in which you have imposed punishment at all of any description since you have been in charge of a police district?—Very likely they are; I am not certain just now.

16. Well, you will not deny it?—No.

17. In one of those two cases you reprimanded a constable for insubordinate language towards his sergeant, and in the other you cautioned a constable for being inside an hotel and playing billiards for twenty minutes while on duty?—He was not exactly inside the publichouse.

18. Is not that the report?—Excuse me. The billiard-room is away from the publichouse altogether.

19. It is on licensed premises, is it not?—Yes, on the premises.

20. *The Chairman*.] That is splitting straws?—There was no drink in the billiard-room.

21. *Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones*.] The man was on detective-work?—Yes, at the time. I have often known detectives to play billiards.

22. *Mr. Hardy*.] Are they allowed to play billiards under the Police Regulations?—It depends on their duty. They may be watching suspicious characters in the place.

23. *Commissioner Tunbridge*.] If the man was on duty in the hotel playing billiards, why did you punish him at all?—I say that he was not justified in playing billiards at all, but I say that I believe it is a common thing for the detectives to do. The police officer who does not know that detectives often play billiards when on duty does not know much about the Police Force of New Zealand, in my opinion.

*Commissioner Tunbridge*: Mr. Chairman, I object to these statements of the Inspector appearing on the minutes of evidence. These minutes have to be printed, and I think these “asides” are altogether out of place. I submit that that last statement of the Inspector’s is altogether irrelevant, and I must ask that it be expunged from the minutes.

*The Chairman*: I will ask the witness to refrain from “asides,” because it is only prolonging the investigation. It does no good, and is only wasting time.

*Witness*: But the Commissioner puts it as if detectives playing billiards while on duty was a most unusual thing.

*The Chairman*: Will the Inspector allow me to finish speaking? I, as Chairman, must protest against it. We want to get this investigation finished at some time. I am perfectly certain that the Inspector, if he was examining a witness in Court, would not allow him to make any “asides,” but would say at once, “Confine yourself to answering questions.” Surely the Inspector can answer the questions put to him without making a speech on each one.

*Witness*: That depends on their nature, sir.

24. *The Chairman*.] I say that such a thing would not be tolerated in any inquiry. You would not allow a man to make “asides” in an inquiry that came before you?—That is not my experience.

*The Chairman*: It seems that it is simply keeping us here for “asides.”

*Hon. Mr. Hall-Jones*: I would suggest that it would have saved time if, in putting that question about the man playing billiards, the Commissioner had told the Committee that the man was acting as a detective at the time. That would have placed an entirely different complexion on the statement.

*Commissioner Tunbridge*: I can see from the way in which it has commenced that my cross-examination is likely to take up a good part of the morning. I think it would be as well if I reserved the remainder of my cross-examination and allowed Mr. Maginnity to go on with his. I understand that he is not able to come back again. Perhaps the Committee would permit of that course being taken. I am in Wellington at any time, and it is no inconvenience to me to come here.