

cloaking the police, especially a person who had left the force. I should think he was the best person to go to for evidence.

*Superintendent
Shearman.*

25th Sept., 1878.

315. You did not imagine that the Inspector of Police was the accused party?—Certainly not.

316. *The Chairman.*] Did you not consider, on the charges being sent to you, that the discipline of the Wellington Police was on its trial?—No; I did not. I thought the person who had left the force was the person who was supposed to have committed the offence.

317. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] I will put a somewhat analogous case. Suppose there was a complaint lodged by one of the public against a private in the army, and you had to investigate it and report, would you not, first of all, apply for information to the officer in command of the company, and get him to make inquiry? Would not that be the proper course?—That would be the proper course.

318. And further inquiry outside might follow?—Yes.

319. On that principle, you went to Mr. Atchison?—Yes.

320. *Mr. Swanson.*] Put it another way. Suppose a private on a foraging expedition at the Hutt had committed great cruelties there, and you had to inquire into it, would you not go out to the place where the offence was committed, and endeavour to get information on the spot, instead of asking questions of the officers of the regiment here in Wellington. I apprehend you would be more likely to get information there?—I should think the proper course would be to go to the officer first. There was no person mentioned here as having committed the offence.

321. Would not going where you would be likely to get at the truth be the best way to prosecute an inquiry?—Of course; that is the object of an inquiry.

322. If you thought the officer knew most about it, would you not go to him; but if you thought you could get more from the witnesses on the spot, would you not go to them at once and direct?—It would depend upon circumstances.

323. *Mr. Tole.*] Mr. Swanson seems to regard the officers of the police here as the persons accused, which I do not take to be the case at all?—No; it was Policeman X against whom the complaints were made, and I asked Mr. Atchison who Policeman X was.

324. I suppose you went to Mr. Atchison to inquire who Policeman X was in consequence of instructions; but, had you been left to yourself to do what you thought right, would you have gone slap to Mr. Barton to have seen what evidence could have been produced, in order to sheet the charges home?—I should have gone to Mr. Barton afterwards, when I had found out the person who had committed the offence, and then asked Mr. Barton to produce his evidence, and entered into a proper investigation; but I never could get at the fact that anybody in the service had committed the offence.

325. Would not the proper course have been to have gone to Mr. Barton direct, instead of to the people who were charged?—That was not my view of the matter. I thought Mr. Atchison and the detective the best persons to tell me who Policeman X was.

326. Better than Mr. Barton, with his witnesses, who had actually got the kickings, and knew all about it? Do you not think the evidence of the persons assaulted better than anything Mr. Atchison could supply?—I stated I should have gone to Mr. Barton if I had been left to my own discretion.

327. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Also to Mr. Barton?—Yes.

328. *Mr. Tole.*] To whom first?—To the head of the district, so as to ascertain who the offender was.

329. *Mr. Swanson.*] And by this means the police would have been put on their guard?—They would have been put on their guard by Mr. Barton's speech, previous to my taking any steps in the matter.

330. Perhaps you would tell us what steps you took after you were communicated with on the subject?—Colonel Reader communicated with me first; then I went to Inspector Atchison and Detective Farrell; then I communicated with Colonel Reader. It was after my official communication with Colonel Reader that I had a conversation with him, I think; but I am not certain about it.

331. *Mr. Barton.*] You saw Farrell. Now, what did Inspector Atchison tell you that caused you to see Detective Farrell?—He did not tell me anything to cause me to see Farrell.

332. What inquiries did you make of Inspector Atchison?—I asked him who Policeman X was, and if he knew anything about the charges which were preferred in Mr. Barton's speech.

333. What did he say?—He said, that it was all nonsense—that Mr. Barton was a crotchety sort of person.

334. That was the substance of what he said?—There was some official communication. I think I referred the correspondence to him, but I am not sure.

335. That was after the verbal communication, in which he said he was under the impression there was nothing in the matter?—Yes; he said he thought there was no truth in it. He paraded the men, and asked if there was any truth in the matter, but discovered nothing.

336. You sent him an official communication, telling him to make inquiry?—Yes; after I received the correspondence from the Under Secretary I sent it to Inspector Atchison.

337. Now, the inquiry he made was to parade the men?—He made inquiries.

338. Did he parade the men?—I do not know.

339. He never told you?—I do not think he did; he might have done so.

340. Did you hear it from anybody else?—I saw it in the papers.

341. Did he never tell you what course he took?—He was to take the best course he could.

342. Assuming the course he took was to parade the men, I suppose when they came to parade he would call them to attention?—You may suppose that if you please; I do not know.

343. Well, what course would you have taken. Would you have paraded them all, and asked first one and then the other, or put the question to the whole of them together?—I do not think that is the course I should have taken had I made the inquiry.

344. Now, I want to get at this: Assuming that was the course taken, do you think there would have been the least chance of finding the matter out, supposing Policeman X was in the ranks at the time?—Policeman X could not be in the ranks, if the man supposed to have committed the offence was an ex-policeman.