

broke open the door and ran into a little room used as an office by Morton Quin, and saw a lot of flame all over a table and on the floor. He stamped out the flames on the floor and smothered those on the table. He found the place smelling strongly of kerosene, and a number of papers about the place saturated with kerosene. Morton Quin was a Forester, and was secretary or treasurer. That night he should have brought up a report on financial matters to a meeting of the combined lodges of the North Island, but he did not turn up; and next day, about 12 or 1 o'clock, he was found by Detective Farrell and Sergeant Smith in bed at the Melbourne Hotel. His shirt and wrists were smelling strongly of kerosene, and he made statements entirely different from those made by his sister as to where he had been the previous night, but I cannot now recollect what the discrepancies were. I know one said he was in the house at the time, and the other said he was not.

522. No further action was taken?—No. This man should have submitted his accounts to the Foresters this night, but he did not, and never has done yet; in fact, it is said that the auditors found deficiencies, and that some one had to cash up the deficiency. My theory is, that Quin set fire to the place so that the papers connected with the Foresters' business should be destroyed, so that it should not be found whether there were any defalcations or not. He had previously been convicted of embezzlement, but the conviction was upset in the Court of Appeal on some technical ground.

523. Do you know where he is now?—He is in Wellington. There is another point connected with the matter to which I would like to refer. When I could not get the police to move in the matter, I tried to get the Coroner to hold an inquest, but it appears there is some defect in the Coroners Act. It simply says that a Coroner can hold an inquest on ships, buildings, or property destroyed or damaged; and the Coroner would not hold an inquiry into this matter because the house was not destroyed or materially damaged. I could get nothing done in the matter, and I had just to shut up.

524. *Mr. Barton.*] Whom was the £40 to be divided amongst? Do you remember the names of the police?—Connor (who arrested Heggarty), Byrne, and Farrell, perhaps, but I do not know. I think it was left to the discretion of Inspector Atchison to divide the money amongst the people who were best entitled to it, but it was not intended he should keep it all. Still I think something was said by Mr. Wallace to the effect that he should give what he thought fit to these men and keep the rest himself.

525. *The Chairman.*] Who said that?—Mr. Wallace.

526. He was the agent who corresponded with the police?—Yes.

527. *Mr. Barton.*] The trial was in October?—Yes.

528. How long after the trial was it when the money was given?—I suppose about a fortnight or three weeks.

529. Then you say that about four months afterwards, when you asked Atchison about distributing the money, he said he was inquiring who was the best entitled to it?—Yes.

530. In Quin's case, you spoke to Atchison about it yourself?—Oh! a dozen times.

531. What was it you said to him?—I asked him in the first place if he had read the report. He said No, he had not had time.

532. *The Chairman.*] When was it you asked him that?—A day or two after his return from Wanganui, after he might have seen the report.

533. *Mr. Barton.*] Did you ever speak to him again about that report?—Yes; and again he said he had not had time.

534. How long after was that?—Two or three days after. He then promised to take it home on Sunday and read it. I saw him on the following Monday, and he said he had not read it.

535. How long was it before you wrote to the Minister of Justice?—I wrote to him on the 18th February this year.

536. *The Chairman.*] In the meantime did Atchison ever tell you he had read the report?—Well, I got so sick of the affair that I gave it up in disgust.

537. *Mr. Barton.*] And four months after that you wrote to the Minister of Justice?—About four and a half months after.

538. You never got any reply to that?—No. How I came to write to Mr. Sheehan was this way. One day I came down in the coach with Mr. Sheehan and Sir George Grey from Greytown, and I spoke to him about the way I had been treated. He then asked me to send him a copy of the report in a letter, which I did next morning, but I never got a reply.

539. About that case of the Railway Hotel, on which Pestridge was arrested, did you ever have any conversation with Inspector Atchison on the subject?—No; I only know what was told me. Mr. Wallace told me that Farrell was determined to push the thing on in spite of Inspector Atchison. He ran Pestridge in, and Atchison rebuked him for doing so.

540. Mr. Wallace told you that?—Yes; he said Farrell had got into a scrape for arresting Pestridge, either against or without Atchison's authority.

541. Do you remember a boy being arrested on a charge of arson, it being supposed he had set fire to a building on Lambton Quay, next the Queen's Hotel?—I remember that a boy was arrested, but I may say I did not care to give the weight of my name to that matter. I only know the boy was arrested, and a paragraph appeared in the paper saying that his boots exactly fitted the footmarks in the ground around the building. I know also the case was never brought before the Magistrate.

542. *The Chairman.*] Do you know that the boy was arrested?—I saw it in the papers. The building was insured with me, but I would not take any steps because I knew it was no use unless the police got some money. I knew it was no use after Quin's affair.

FREDERICK CHARLES SMITH being duly sworn, was examined.

543. *The Chairman.*] You are Sergeant of Police, stationed at Wellington?—I am.

544. Do you remember the case of a fire on the premises of a man named Morton Quin?—I do.

Mr. Boardman.
—
26th Sept., 1878.

Sergeant Smith.
—
26th Sept., 1878.