

S. R. 21/P

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# '\$9,500 graft a month'

Police sub-divisional inspectors based in Tsimshatsui between January 1970 and last October could earn up to \$9,500 a month in protection money, Judge Addison was told in Victoria District Court yesterday.

Crown Counsel John Conway, outlining the case in which 20 policemen and two merchants are charged with conspiracy, said a former Tsimshatsui barracks sergeant would describe how money received from illegal gambling establishments and owners of other illegal businesses was distributed among Tsimshatsui officers and men during a period in 1972.

The barracks sergeants held a central role in the alleged Tsimshatsui syndicate collecting and distributing the money.

Mr Conway said the former barracks sergeant, Hoi Sum, would state that during the period in 1972, the then sub-divisional inspector, James Godfrey Hurst (36), at the time a senior inspector, received \$9,500 a month, the assistant SDI, Sit Kwok-kit, a minimum of \$7,500 a month, and station sergeants a total of \$6,000 between them and the 8 sergeants \$7,000.

Constables at this time did not receive a share of the monies but later did, Mr Conway said.

The two men who succeeded Hurst as SDI in Tsimshatsui, firstly, Patrick Michael Miller Field (39), and subsequently John Leslie Sheppard (29), were paid similar sums during their

service in Tsimshatsui, Mr Conway said.

Hurst was based in Tsimshatsui from August 1970 to September 1, 1972, Field from September 26, 1972 to April 8, 1974 and Sheppard from May 13, 1974 to October last year.

On trial with the three and Sit (47) are Senior Inspector Or Yin-keung (31), Station Sergeants Cheung Chiu-tai (50), Leung Chi-ko (45), Chung Tat-yin (48), Leung Chi-ming (49), Li Por (45) (retired), Li Chi-kin (43), Kwan Wing-hong (39), Cheung Chi (40), Lam Tong (42) (retired), Ng Kwok-kwong (47) (retired), Kong Chi-cheong (43), Lung Fai (49) (retired), Sit Pak-po (42) (retired), Sergeant Lee On-chuen (36), Constable Lam Kwai-wa (31), and Kwan Kam (59) and Wen Chi (44), both merchants.

Counsel said the establishments from which money was collected weekly comprised apartment houses, bath houses, massage parlours, gambling stalls, tse fa stalls, off-course betting dens, indecent film centres and bookstalls selling indecent books.

In return for the payments which the owners and managers of these establishments made they derived considerable benefits.

Some of them received total immunity from police raids with the result that they were able to carry on their illegal and highly profitable activities without fear of hindrance.

Some were warned in  
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# Court told of \$9,500 graft a month

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advance of intended police raids so that they were able to "arrange matters."

Others were raided from time to time but - provided they were keeping up their regular payments - suffered no real setback or inconvenience, let alone prosecution, since these exercises were only token raids designed solely to give the impression that the Tsimshatsui officers and men were carrying on their normal duties, the judge was told.

Central to this extensive and carefully devised scheme was a succession of barracks sergeants whose function was to ensure its smooth running and unbroken operation.

The barracks sergeant was appointed by the SDI - and his dismissal also lay in this officer's discretion.

Mr Conway said the evidence would show that a

basic feature of the scheme was the engaging of civilian collectors by the barracks sergeants.

The function of these collectors was to approach the illegal establishments in the district to solicit and negotiate the payment of money.

Payments once agreed and made were continued on a regular basis.

Establishments such as gambling stalls made weekly payments while others such as apartment houses and bath houses effected their payments monthly.

On occasions collections were made from establishments such as indecent film centres on a daily basis.

Mr Conway said that at no time was the collection network abandoned during the seven-year period.

However, at certain times it had to be suspended for a brief period because of persistent raiding by other police units based outside the Tsimshatsui sub-division.

These raids resulted in some establishments being closed down and others refusing to continue payments in the face of the pressure they were under.

After each period of

suspension efforts were made to regroup the participants, always around the barracks sergeant. Collectors were sent out again and payments renegotiated.

Mr Conway said the civilian collectors would usually deduct an agreed percentage of between 10 and 15 per cent for themselves before passing on the money to the barracks sergeant.

He said it was no part of the Crown's case that all the accused met to concoct this scheme, nor did the Crown say that they all originated it.

It was contended that the scheme was in existence and well-established before any of the accused joined it, and that as time passed all the accused at one time or another during the seven-year period became a part of it and in many cases dropped out again.

"It is not even alleged that all the accuse knew each other," Mr Conway said.

"Indeed it is accepted that some of them might well never have met.

"What is alleged, however, is that each and everyone of the accused knew there was a scheme in existence and that other persons were parties to it."

(Court reports on Pages 8 and 9)