

Inspector's Office, Christchurch, 6th July, 1891.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that, at the annual licensing meeting held at Akaroa on the 25th ultimo, Sergeant E. Wilson, who is in charge of the station, objected to the renewal of the license held by Robert Bayley on the grounds that he had been three times convicted of breaches of the Licensing Act during the year. Mr. Potts, who appeared as solicitor for Mr. Bayley, called Mounted Constable Whitty, stationed at Akaroa, who stated that the house was well conducted. Sergeant Wilson, in his report of the 26th ultimo, brought the constable's action under my notice, and I instructed the sergeant to obtain an explanation from Constable Whitty, which is attached hereto, together with Sergeant Wilson's report thereon, dated the 2nd instant. Constable Whitty was in charge of stations in this district for several years prior to his removal to Akaroa, which was at his own request for the benefit of his health. I have always entertained a very high opinion of his character, and am much surprised at the tone of his report and the position he assumes towards his superior officer at Akaroa. It is evident that there must be a change, and I beg to recommend the constable's transfer to some other station in this district.—I have, &c., P. PENDER.

I minuted on that: "I think both sergeant and constable should be moved from Akaroa. I have a constable in Christchurch who is waiting to be mounted, who would do for Akaroa. The sergeant might remain till he can be conveniently removed." "Removal approved. Exchange with mounted man.—R. J. S." The sergeant was removed soon afterwards to Christchurch, and he is now in charge of Palmerston North. He is a very good man.

615. *The Chairman.*] What were the charges made against the sergeant?—The constable said the house was well conducted, and the sergeant said the house was badly conducted.

616. *Mr. Taylor.*] But Whitty made some charges?—Constable Whitty reports: "About December last he (Sergeant Wilson) issued a requisition on Mr. Chappell, a resident here, for ten bushels of oats, and forwarded a voucher as having received this quantity from Chappell, whereas he only received one bag, about 180 lb., and made up the remaining weight (220 lb.) out of his own private stock which he had in hand." Then, he makes a charge with regard to the shoeing of the troop-horse, and wrongly charging for horse-hire when he used his own horse. Then, Inspector Pender reports to Sergeant Wilson: "I think it would be well to forward a reply to the charges made by the constable as soon as possible. If there is nothing in them, and that you can prove this, an investigation will be unnecessary."

617. *Mr. Poynton.*] Was the charge made by Whitty against Sergeant Wilson after the report about the license?—Yes; and the result was Inspector Pender recommended both to be removed, and they were removed.

618. *Mr. Taylor.*] What was the result of the charge?—It was not proved. The sergeant says, in forwarding this complaint: "I beg to state I can give a complete answer to every one of them, in writing if necessary, proving I have not had any benefit as the constable suggests; but, as the constable has thought it to be his duty to go round to the inhabitants of this place and get statements in writing, which I would point out are not evidence, and has threatened another who would not make statements to suit him, I respectfully submit only an investigation will settle the matter; and it is my wish the fullest inquiry be made, so that the truth can be established, and I may have an opportunity of proving the falsehood of the reckless statements the constable has made in this and a former report. In the face of this, and what has already transpired, I think the Inspector will see the malice by which the constable is actuated, and that if he had any serious charge he would be only too happy to bring it. I think I may say with regard to these charges that they have been so grossly exaggerated that they appear serious, whereas in truth there is nothing in them."

619. *The Chairman.*] What was the ground for removing the sergeant when the complaint which had been made was not proved?—Well, it was evidently a row between the two. One seemed to be as bad as the other.

620. *Mr. Taylor.*] Was not the charge against Sergeant Wilson dismissed with a caution?—I do not think so—unless I can see his defaulter's sheet. I do not see anything about it here. He says, "I feel I have been censured by being removed."

621. Did not Whitty resign?—I do not know what became of him. There is nothing about his resignation here. At the end the Inspector says, "I respectfully recommend that the sergeant and constable be removed at once. Please see my letter of the 6th July last." His recommendation was carried out.

*Colonel Hume:* I might here state that the number of prisoners in Oamaru last year was seventy-three.

622. *Mr. Taylor.*] Is that after conviction, or does it include awaiting trial?—Everything, after conviction and waiting trial.

623. Do you know Constable Bennett, of Hokitika?—Yes.

624. Has any serious offence against the Police Regulations been reported to you in connection with him?—Not that I remember. Recently, do you mean?

625. Within recent dates?—He has a clean defaulter's sheet.

625a. I want to know what report, dated the 18th April, 1893, was made in connection with this man by the sergeant in charge of the district?—On the 18th April, 1893, report of Sergeant Fraser, relative to breach of clause 52:—

Police Station, Hokitika, 18th April, 1893.

REPORT of Sergeant Fraser relative to a breach of clause 52 of the Police Regulations by Constable Bennett.—I respectfully beg to report that Constable Bennett of this station has recently been adjudged to be the putative father of an illegitimate child, of which child ——— is the mother. At the hearing of the case the Bench made an order for maintenance—viz., 4s. per week. Application was thereupon made by Constable Bennett to the presiding Magistrate to fix a sum of money to be paid in lieu and in satisfaction of the weekly payment, and the sum of £50 was ordered to be paid. This sum, I understand, has since been paid.—CHAS. FRASER.

The Inspector says: "Submitted for the Commissioner's information. Bennett is an excellent policeman, and I am truly sorry he has got into the trouble herein referred to. With costs of Court he has had to pay some £55, so that with the domestic trouble the matter has caused him, I submit he is sufficiently punished for his misdeeds.—FRANCIS MCGOVERN."

626. Has any other serious charge been made against this man?—No, that is the only thing I can see.