

Police-station, Nelson.
Ward's : Received from the police-station, Nelson, 1 cwt. potatoes.

J. WARD.

Police-station, Nelson.
Noble : Received from the police, Nelson, one 50 lb. bag of flour.

JOHN A. CASS.

Police-station, Nelson.
Newport : Received from the police, Nelson, two pair gum-boots.

WILLIAM NEWPORT.

Police Department (Commissioner's Office), Wellington, 25th March, 1902.

Memorandum for the Right Hon. the Premier.

As directed in your two urgent memoranda, both bearing this date, I herewith beg to enclose the files bearing on the appointment of Constable Cullinane to Kumara Station, and result of inquiry into complaints against members of the Police Force at Nelson.

J. B. TUNBRIDGE, Commissioner.

Premier's Office.—For Cabinet.—25th March, 1902.

Police Department (Commissioner's Office, Wellington), 24th March, 1902.

Memorandum for the Hon. the Minister of Justice.

Complaints against Members of Nelson Police Force.

I HAVE the honour to submit to you herewith the evidence taken by me at Nelson during an inquiry I held there between the 13th and 18th instant into six charges against Sergeant Mackay, three against Constable Burrell, three against Constable Durbridge, two against Constable Kemp, and one against Constable McGrath, together with my findings thereon, and in doing so I make the following remarks:—

None of the proved charges against Sergeant Mackay are of a serious character, the most serious being Nos. 2 and 3, omitting to enter in the station diary or report to his Inspector the particulars of the occurrences referred to in those charges. The question is whether those cases of neglect or omission unfit the sergeant for charge of a station. He has been a sergeant since 1894, and has been in charge of Nelson since the 10th September, 1898. He has never before been punished for misconduct as a sergeant, the last complaint recorded against him being on the 22nd April, 1890, when he was reprimanded. On the other hand, he has eight records of merit on his sheet, two of these records being for saving persons from drowning in Auckland Harbour.

Under these circumstances I am of opinion that to remove this officer from charge of a station and place him on the streets in one of the large centres would be too great a punishment, and unless the charges against him are considered serious enough to warrant his removal from charge of a station there appears to be no reason why he should be removed from Nelson, as he would be equally as liable to repeat similar instances of neglect or omission at any other station as at Nelson.

For the foregoing reasons I have not recommended his transfer. If, however, it is decided to remove him, Palmerston North Station will soon be vacant owing to the impending retirement of Sergeant-Major Ramsay through having reached the age-limit, and he could be sent there. With respect, however, to the removal of this sergeant, I desire to bring under your notice the following, namely:—

The attached letter, dated 13th instant, received by me from the Mayor of Nelson, together with the fact that on 18th instant a deputation consisting of Mr. Baigent, J.P., Mayor of Nelson, Mr. W. T. Bond, J.P., Mr. G. G. Rout, J.P., and Dr. Gibb, waited on me at the Nelson Police-station while I was there engaged in holding the inquiry, to express their high appreciation of the manner in which the police-work of Nelson had been carried out since Sergeant Mackay has been in charge at Nelson, and they trusted the sergeant would not be removed unless the inquiry disclosed offences against him which justified his removal. They went on to state that they feared the sergeant might be removed under any circumstances, as it was well known that a certain young man, the son of a Nelson resident who was supposed to have great influence with "the powers that be," had boasted in the hotels about Nelson that he would get the sergeant removed from Nelson. They pointed out how impossible it would be for the police to do their duty if it became suspected even that they could be removed at the will of persons such as those indicated.

I gave the deputation no intimation as to what would be the probable outcome of the inquiry, and they did not seek to know. The deputation stated that they voiced a considerable section of the Nelson community, and I have reason to know that Mr. Graham, the member of the district, shares the opinion of the gentlemen forming the deputation.

As regards Constables Durbridge, Kemp, and Burrell, I think it would be as well if these men were removed to other stations. The two former appear to have become too familiar with certain sections of the community at Nelson, and Burrell and Durbridge have, I fear, been too ready with their hands. The complaints against them, however, of assaults were of somewhat remote date, and as the persons aggrieved had their proper remedy before a Court (the offence alleged being a statutory one), where the evidence could have been taken on oath, I did not consider it right to go into such matters at a departmental inquiry, where the evidence is not on oath, and where private persons can say what they choose without fear of the consequences. In all charges of a statutory