

a year; that Captain Breton, while acknowledging that he had performed his duties efficiently, proposed to dismiss him with a week's notice; that he considered that he could not be dismissed except by the authorities in Wellington, and not by them with less than a month's notice; and that he declined to accept a week's notice, and left at once. The Public Petitions Committee reported that he should have complained, in the first instance, through his superior officer. (Marine, 79/3,009.)

The case having been thus dealt with, I did not consider myself at liberty to investigate it; but I made a note of a brief statement by Captain Breton to the effect that Mr. Cleverly was deficient in the power of control, both over the subordinate officers and over the boys, and that he was negligent of the routine duties of the institution; and, further, that his appointment to the higher position and salary did not affect the condition of his original engagement which rendered him liable to be dismissed at a week's notice.

Mr. W. I. Speight was schoolmaster at the Naval Training School from November, 1874, to January, 1876, when he was dismissed, with sufficient reason. Mrs. Speight instructed the boys in sewing from May, 1875, to October, 1879. Mr. Speight was reappointed as schoolmaster in September, 1879, and resigned in October. On the 3rd of that month Captain Breton called Mr. Speight into his office and told him that he had noticed that the sub-manager's orders were not obeyed. In the conversation that ensued Captain Breton made some reference to the fact that, as his office was separated only by a partition from Mr. Speight's room, much of what was going on in one room could be heard in the other. Mr. Speight's statement is that Captain Breton accused him of listening. Mr. Speight gave a week's notice and left, and his wife also resigned. He wrote to the Minister for Customs in November, setting forth his case, enclosing a letter from the sub-manager exonerating him from the charge of neglect of orders, and suggested that Captain Breton should be dismissed. I enclose Mr. Speight's letter to the Minister, with the correspondence between Mr. Speight and Mr. Cleverly, and the minute written by Captain Breton, in December, when the matter was referred to him (Marine, 79/2,936).

Mr. Speight represented to me that, in offering evidence as to his own case and the state of the school, his object was the good of the school, "as well," he added, "as to have myself reinstated; but under another—an able and efficient—manager, who will be able to treat his officers with the respect that is due to their several ranks." His statement of the case, as shown in my notes (July 31, pp. 1-3), is rather fuller than the account given in his letter to the Minister, and he supports his statement by handing in an affidavit from Mr. Cleverly (attached to p. 2 of notes, July 31). Mr. Cleverly asserts that Mr. Speight never disobeyed his orders, and that Captain Breton did charge Mr. Speight with listening. This affidavit Captain Breton characterizes as altogether untrue, so far as it contradicts the statement made by him last December (Marine, 79/2,936). He reaffirms the minute accuracy of his own statement, and he says that Mr. Cleverly's complaints of Mr. Speight's insubordination were very frequent—complaints made sometimes almost with tears. The evidence is so conflicting that it is very difficult to say what the truth is. Mr. Speight and Mr. Cleverly say that Captain Breton accused Mr. Speight of listening to what was going on in the office. Captain Breton denies the assertion. I think it likely that the words Captain Breton used were spoken with one meaning and heard with another; that he referred to the slenderness of the partition, intending to intimate that he had ready means of knowing that Mr. Speight was in his private apartment at a time when his duty lay with the boys in the schoolroom, and that those who heard him thought that he wished to convey the idea that Mr. Speight was taking advantage of the thinness of the partition to listen to what occurred in the office. It is possible, also, that Mr. Cleverly, while he denies that he had any reason to complain of insubordination on Mr. Speight's part, would not deny that he had spoken to Captain Breton in terms of complaint against Mr. Speight. If this could be assumed, it would, taken with my supposition with regard to the slender partition, dispose of the apparent contradictions between the statements which have come under my notice, but it would of course imply a want of veracity on Mr. Cleverly's part, and therefore I cannot propose it as a definite solution of the difficulty. I can only put Captain Breton's assertion and that of Mr. Cleverly side by side, as I have done, and call attention to the discrepancy between them. Captain Breton says that Mr. Cleverly frequently complained of Mr. Speight's inattention to duty, "almost with tears." Mr. Cleverly says that Mr. Speight always did his duty. It must be remembered that the main question is not whether Mr. Speight always did his duty, because he is not simply seeking reinstatement. He aims at the removal of Captain Breton first, and at his own reappointment after Captain Breton's removal; and the question is whether or not Captain Breton has been guilty, in this case, of arbitrary conduct, of insulting behaviour to a subordinate, and of untruthfulness. I do not think the evidence is such as to justify an affirmative answer to the question.

My instructions refer particularly to the "frequent changes of subordinate officers." The subordinate officers are the sub-manager, the schoolmaster, the two seamen-instructors, the sewing-mistress, and the cook—six in all. The first appointments were made in November, 1874, and the total number of appointments from that date up to the time of this inquiry is 82. Ten of the appointments, however, were by way of promotion from one office to another, or of the reverse process, so that the number of appointments to the service of the institution is 72. The number of persons appointed is 68, one having joined the service three several times, and two having been each appointed twice. Deducting from 72 (the number of appointments made) the number of officers still in the service (6), the number of resignations and dismissals is seen to be 66; and, as the institution has been in existence 68 months, it follows that on an average one officer resigns or is dismissed in each month, or that the average period of an officer's service is six months. Mrs. Speight was four years and a half in the service; the present cook served one year and ten months under his first engagement; Mr. R. Watt remained about a year and nine months in the school, first as seaman-instructor, and afterwards as schoolmaster; Mr. Speight's first term of service was fourteen months; and Mr. R. Thompson's service under his first appointment extended to thirteen months. No other officer has ever remained a full year. There are fifty cases in which the service did not extend to six months; and in twenty-four of these cases it was less than one month. (Nominal return attached to Notes, July 31.)