

SESS. II.—1897.
NEW ZEALAND.

CHARGES AGAINST DETECTIVE ALEXANDER HENDERSON

(REPORT OF RICHMOND BEETHAM, ESQ., STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATE, ON).

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by leave.

R. BEETHAM, Esq., S.M., to the UNDER-SECRETARY, Department of Justice.

Stipendiary Magistrate's Court, Christchurch,
10th December, 1897.

SIR,—

I have the honour to state that I have, in accordance with your instructions, inquired into the charges made by Miss Blanche Mohr against ex-Detective Henderson.

The inquiry extended over nearly three days, and the evidence, which was taken on oath, is attached to this report. I am satisfied that the charges made by Miss Blanche Mohr are entirely without foundation. She charges Henderson with having said that she and her sister were no better than a pair of "bloody whores," and she further states that Henderson was under the influence of liquor while in the hotel. It is quite clear that Henderson was not under the influence of liquor while he was at the hotel, and it is also clear that he did not make use of the language attributed to him. I am also satisfied that the boy, Courtney Mohr, was brought by his sisters to the office of Inspector Broham, and was instructed beforehand what to say. My impression of the two girls, Blanche and Ruby Mohr, is that they possess violent and vindictive tempers, and are utterly unreliable.

During the course of the investigation the habits of Henderson as regards taking intoxicating liquors, and his failing to report the disturbance at the hotel, were under consideration. These appear to be purely matters appertaining to police discipline. I may, however, draw your attention to the evidence of Inspector Broham and ex-Detective O'Connor on these points. Mr. Broham says, "It has not generally been the habit of detectives to report breaches of the Licensing Act"; and ex-Detective O'Connor says, "If a disturbance took place at Mohr's or any other hotel I would not report it, and not consider it a breach of duty," &c. Henderson appears to have looked upon it as merely a disturbance between Mohr and his wife, not involving a breach of the Licensing Act, and therefore did not consider it his duty to report it.

What may be termed the two main charges against Henderson—namely, (a) that he used improper language about the two girls, and (b) that he was under the influence of liquor at the time—are, in my opinion, absolutely disproved.

But there remains for the consideration of the Minister two other questions, being matters of police discipline—namely, (a) the failure of Henderson to report the disturbance at the hotel, and (b) the statement of Inspector Broham that Henderson was given to drinking, but that his drinking habits were not of such a character as to render it necessary that he should report him.

In connection with this, I desire to draw your attention to the last paragraph in the evidence attached: "Mr. Beetham (to Mr. Broham). Q. Why did you not report the drinking habits of Henderson?—A. I say he did his work, and I had no specific charge to prefer against him."

It would seem that the whole matter resolved itself into this question: Is the failure of Henderson to report the disturbance between Mohr and his wife at the hotel, one of the incidents of which was an attack upon himself by two girls with a hair-brush, a sufficient reason for the discharge of Henderson from his position in the Police Force. This is a question, I submit, entirely for the consideration of the Ministerial head of the department.

I have, &c.,

RICHMOND BEETHAM,
Stipendiary Magistrate.

The Under-Secretary, Department of Justice.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, nil; printing (1,250 copies), 15s.

By Authority: JOHN MACRAY, Government Printer, Wellington,—1898.