

520. Have you the report dealing with the reason for his removal from Helensville—any correspondence bearing on the cause of his removal?—Yes, I have got it all here. Sergeant Gamble was sent up from Auckland to see what the delay was in not getting answers to documents from Helensville, and his report reads:—

Police Station, Auckland, 17th February, 1895.

REPORT of Sergeant Richard Gamble, *re* proceeding to Helensville on the 15th instant *re* the case of Brennan assaulting Hackett.—I beg to report that on Friday, the 15th instant, I left Auckland at 4 p.m. and arrived at Helensville about 7 p.m. Constable O'Brien was on the railway platform and was sober. I told him I came up to see what was the matter with him, as we could get no answer from him to telegrams sent by the Inspector. He said he could not attend to it, having been called away so often. I asked him if he had served all the witnesses in the Brennan-Hackett case. He said he had not served any of them, that he did not know the date the case would be heard. I told him we sent the subpoenas to him on Tuesday and he should get them on Wednesday morning. He said he did not get them. I told him to inquire at the post-office and at his own house. He came to me afterwards and told me he found them at his own house, having mislaid them. We then interviewed Mr. Smith, publican, and his barman, Olive, and served them with subpoenas. I sent Constable O'Brien next morning to Waingungu to serve a witness named Jago. Another witness named Bell is in Auckland.

R. GAMBLE, Sergeant.

521. *Mr. Taylor.*] Is there no record bearing on the question of the man's sobriety?—It may be on the defaulter's sheet. On the 8th June, 1897, there is an entry of his being in an hotel drinking, in uniform, for which he was fined £1.

522. Where was he then?—In Auckland, after his removal.

523. Had he any sick-leave?—There is nothing before that.

524. He was fined 10s. for dereliction of duty in February, 1895, after Gamble's report?—Yes.

525. And then he was promoted on the 1st February, 1897, to first-class constable?—Yes.

526. And on the 8th June, 1897, he was fined £1 for drinking in an hotel in uniform?—Yes. He had been in the Force since the 16th August, 1877, and he had only two entries against him at the time he was promoted. The first was in February, 1895, for neglecting to furnish particulars of evidence, *Regina v. Brennan*—10s. fine, and to be removed as soon as a suitable place could be found. On the 24th May, 1895, for neglecting to keep his station books posted up—fined 5s. (not 10s., I made a mistake) and deprived of station. That was when he was brought into Auckland. Then he was promoted in February, 1897. He had been a second-class constable since July, 1883. He was promoted in due course on account of seniority—that is to say, he was at the top of the list. I may state there are two entries in his merit-sheet—detecting a breach of the Beer Duty Act; rewarded £1 by the Customs. That was at Helensville in 1892. In 1894, arresting a deserter from H.M.S. "Wallaroo," £8. I think I explained to the Commissioners that he gets £3 from the colony and £5 from the ship.

527. *Mr. Taylor.*] Did he ever form the subject of special consultation with the Minister of Defence?—I do not remember.

[Colonel Hume here handed in a return of the religion of members of the Force on the 1st July, 1890, and the 1st January, 1898.]

528. *Mr. Taylor.*] Can you tell me what were the religions of members of the Force at Oamaru on the 12th July last year. I think you will find there were seven Catholics and one Protestant there on that date?—On the 30th June, 1897, there were five Roman Catholics and three Protestants at Oamaru.

529. Do you know whether the single constables at Oamaru are housed in the barracks?—Yes.

530. Do they not, as a matter of fact, lodge at the hotels?—No.

531. Do you not know that some of them lodge at hotels because there is no cooking apparatus at the barracks?—No, I do not. Instructions have been sent some time ago to the Inspectors to say that wherever there were respectable boarding-houses they were to recommend constables at places where there was no mess to feed there in preference to going to hotels.

531A. *The Chairman.*] There is no mess at Oamaru?—No.

532. *Mr. Taylor.*] Is there a gaoler there?—Yes.

533. Is it not his duty to see that there is a mess for the single men?—No.

534. Do you think that the necessities of a population such as Oamaru has required the presence of eight police-officers of all ranks in that town?—Yes, or they would not be kept there.

535. Do you know what the population of Oamaru is?—No, not straight off. I may point out I do not go by population. You cannot go by population at all. I think Timaru and Oamaru are about the same size.

536. *Mr. Taylor.*] The census of 1896 shows the population of Oamaru as 9,225. Do you know what number of police-officers there are at Sydenham?—Two, I think.

537. With a population of between ten and eleven thousand?—Yes; that exactly bears out my argument, that you cannot go by population. At Sydenham there are about eleven thousand people, but they can telephone to the police-station at Christchurch and get twenty men in a very short time.

538. Will you tell us how many people were in the gaol at Oamaru in one year?—No, but I can this afternoon.

539. Will you tell us whether sometimes for a period of three weeks there has not been a single inmate of that gaol except the gaoler and his wife?—That may or may not be true. I think it is unlikely that Oamaru would be so long as that without a prisoner; but it is no extra cost to the colony at all, because when there are no prisoners the gaoler goes off to police work.

540. *The Chairman.*] Are the duties of these eight men at Oamaru confined to the town?—Oh, no. They have to go over the suburbs, and they have a great deal of escort duty to do—prisoners coming from Christchurch, Dunedin, and so on. Of course, I have only got to go on the opinion of the Inspector. He says he cannot do with less.