

of extracts here, from the *Wairarapa Daily Times* and the Masterton correspondent of the *New Zealand Times*. The *Wairarapa Daily Times* of the 2nd September, 1895, has the following: "The Queen Street burglar is a humorist. Last night he selected for his scene of operations premises adjacent to the police-station. He evidently thought that if the police would not keep an eye on him he would keep a watch on them. The new night-duty is somewhat a fiasco. What is wanted is a thorough change in the police staff. The present members of the Force are well known to everybody, their little habits are familiar to all, and the well-informed burglar cannot be surprised by them. The town is not safe; it is simply at the mercy of certain night-prowlers, and the sooner this state of things is brought to an end the better."

117. Did the Inspector of the district send a report to the Commissioner?—No. The Inspector of the district, Mr. Thomson, got an explanation from the sergeant and filed it. The sergeant's reply is dated the 5th September, 1895.

118. Who first brought it under the notice of the Commissioner?—That part of the business never came under my notice.

119. When did the matter come under your notice?—When petitions were sent in to the Minister of Defence. One is dated the 17th September, 1895, as follows: "We, the undersigned residents of Masterton, respectfully approach you *re* the police organization of this district, having reason to believe that a petition is being forwarded to you complaining of their inability. The diminution of crime in this centre of the Wairarapa proves the police staff is efficient and fully alive to their duties. At the same time we are aware they have recently had occasion to prosecute certain persons whom they considered had been guilty of violating the law. We confidently leave this in your hands, knowing that justice will be done." This has 106 signatures. There is another petition in the same direction, which was forwarded by Mr. A. W. Hogg, M.H.R., on the 27th September, 1895, with the following letter: "Dear Sir,—The memorial enclosed from the ladies of Masterton has been forwarded to me, with a request that I should present it to yourself. It is signed by eighty-six residents, and is intended as an expression of confidence in the present police staff." The petition reads: "The Hon. the Minister of Defence, Wellington.—Sir,—We, the undersigned ladies of Masterton, having reason to believe that a petition is being circulated for presentation to the Defence Minister, with a view to reorganizing the Police Force in the township, would point out this injustice, and we would beg to further point out that the morality of our town at the present moment is entirely due to the strict attention that the police have taken to suppress this great vice. We do not consider there are any grounds for such a petition, for we have reason to know that the petition in question is being promoted by a few interested parties. Recognising how manifestly unfair it would be to perform such an act, which would be calculated to shake the confidence of sober, right-minded, and order-loving people, we humbly pray that you will attach no importance to the petition in question." Then, there is another petition in the opposite direction, which is forwarded by a gentleman named J. Payton, who, I think, is editor of the *Wairarapa Daily Times*, and who writes on the 28th September, 1895: "The Commissioner of Police, Wellington.—Sir,—On behalf of a number of Masterton householders, I have the honour to enclose you a petition in favour of reorganizing the local police staff." The petition referred to reads: "To Lieut.-Colonel Hume, Commissioner of Police, Wellington.—The undersigned householders of Masterton respectfully request that the police staff of the town be reorganized, it being inefficient as at present constituted." This has eighty signatures. I minuted on this: "The Hon. the Defence Minister.—These two petitions are forwarded for your information. One is from eighty male residents at Masterton, asking that the police be reorganized in Masterton, it being inefficient as at present constituted—a very bald and general statement, giving no particulars. The other petition is signed by eighty-six female residents of Masterton, asking that the police at Masterton as at present constituted be not interfered with, as they are giving general satisfaction. I recommend that the male petitioners be asked for particulars as to how the Masterton police are inefficient, and that I visit Masterton at an early date and make personal inquiries into these matters." The Minister said, "Accordingly."

120. Did you go to Masterton in connection with these matters?—Yes. Then, on the 3rd March, 1896, Inspector Pender sends up to Sergeant McArdle the following memorandum:—

I FORWARD herewith a newspaper report of a case, *Police v. Urquhart and Fitzsimmons*, fruit-stealing, heard at the Magistrate's Court, Masterton, on the 28th February last, and trust you will be able to give some satisfactory explanation of the very serious imputations made against yourself and the Police Force at Masterton in connection with the case. From the report of the proceedings it would appear as if the police and Mr. Tucker, the hotelkeeper, got up a case against the defendants, who a short time previously gave evidence against Mr. Tucker when charged with a breach of the Licensing Act.

P. PENDER, Inspector.

Sergeant McArdle reports as follows:—

Police-station, Masterton, 4th March, 1896.

I RESPECTFULLY report that this is one of the most extraordinary imputations that has ever been attributed in the hearing of a Court of Justice to any members of the Police Force that any one possibly could conceive. Some complaints of orchard robbery have been made to me of late, but on Sunday, the 23rd instant, I had information given to me that further robberies would likely take place within the next couple of nights. This I determined to counteract and detect if possible, and accordingly myself, Constables May and Lawler, scattered ourselves through the various streets in order to watch and detect such practices as orchard-robbing. Soon before or about 12 o'clock on the night of the 24th ultimo, being calm and mild, we heard a loud sing-out of "Thieves! thieves!" and "Police!" We all made in the direction from whence the cries came, and found them to emanate from the back of Tucker's Prince of Wales Hotel, each of us having come from different streets. After some difficulty in getting over fences, we got in the garden—only myself and Constable Lawler—where we found Fitzsimmons. Constable May, coming running along a back street, saw a man crash over a thorn-fence out of Tucker's orchard, to whom he gave chase, and arrested him. This man turned out to be a young man named Hector Urquhart. They were both locked up and charged separately on two charges—first, under "The Police Offences Act, 1884," section 28, subsection (9); and, secondly, under "The Indictable Offences Summary Jurisdiction Act, 1894," section 44, subsection (1), Part C. I may here add that both prisoners, when at the watchhouse, were asked by myself and Constable May if there was any other person with them in the garden and assisting them in any way to rob the orchard. They declared there was not (see their evidence). When brought before the Court on the 25th the first person called was Urquhart. The charge was