

now seems to be no other alternative but for the acting-sergeant to take up his quarters at the hotel until Mrs. O'Rourke is fit to move." Of course, Sergeant Hannan was in charge all this time.

214. As a matter of fact, did not Constable O'Rourke refuse to give up possession on some excuse, and Sergeant Hannan never secured possession of the police premises?—Apparently, the unfortunate woman could not be taken out. I will read this report:—

For the information of the Commissioner.

Police Department, District Office, Wellington, 7th February, 1891.

In accordance with the instructions contained in the attached memorandum, I have the honour to state that I proceeded to Otaki on the 5th instant, and saw Mrs. O'Rourke on the subject of her removal from the police quarters there. As her sister-in-law informed me that Mrs. O'Rourke was in bed, and unable to see me in another room, the interview had to take place in her bedroom, where I found her apparently ill and in a nervous excited state, owing to the anxiety caused by her approaching confinement and the illness of one of her children, whose leg was some short time since seriously injured, and the doctors decided to amputate it. They however eventually saved the leg, but it had now broken out again. She declared to me she would be quite unable to move out of the quarters until her confinement was over, owing to her illness and helpless state. I subsequently called upon the nurse who is to attend her, and she warned me most emphatically that any attempt to move Mrs. O'Rourke and her furniture now would probably bring on premature labour, and with the attendant worry and anxiety, increased of course by her husband's unavoidable absence, might possibly cause her death. The nurse is of opinion that the confinement is close at hand. Under these circumstances I am glad to be able to state that I have secured for the temporary use of Acting-sergeant Hannan and his family, at a rental of 9s. per week, a six-roomed cottage, which has just been put into thorough repair, and which is only a moderate distance from the police-station and Courthouse.

J. BELL THOMSON, Inspector.

On that I wrote, in reference to the cottage at 9s. per week, "Approved."

215. Did Constable O'Rourke make application to be sent down to Otaki again?—The next thing on the file appears to be the usual sort of document which we get on the occasion of transfers, and is as follows:—

SIR,—

Otaki, March, 1891.

We the undersigned, Justices of the Peace of Otaki district, have the honour to direct your attention to the fact that the removal of Constable O'Rourke is in our opinion an ill-advised proceeding, and for the following reasons we respectfully ask you to keep him at Otaki, and allow his successor Sergeant Hannan to return to Stafford: 1. This is a large district, with a scattered population about half Native and half European; the means of communication to the various settlements and most of the settlers' homesteads is almost entirely by horse-tracks difficult to find, and at times dangerous on account of the rivers which have to be forded. Constable O'Rourke has during the short time he has been stationed here made himself acquainted with the district, and is now able to go to all parts of it without the assistance of a guide. This, of course, his successor will be unable to do for some time. 2. The district being a newly-settled one, bounded on the north and south by much older settlements, and situated on the main line of communication between Wellington, Wanganui, and Napier, a great number of criminals come here, and are, unfortunately, encouraged to remain, as they find it easy to make a living amongst the Natives. Constable O'Rourke, from his four years' service as a watch-house keeper in Wellington, has had a good opportunity of becoming acquainted with the class of criminals who are usually sent in from the country districts, and therefore specially qualified to be stationed in this district, and we are therefore without hesitation unitedly of the opinion that the ends of justice would be materially furthered by your granting the request herein made.

We have, &c.,

JOHN KEBBELL.

ALEXANDER SMALL.

MORGAN CARKEEK.

ARTHUR DRAKE.

W. H. SIMCOX.

Hon. R. J. Seddon, Minister of Defence, Wellington.

216. As a matter of fact, had he been at Otaki many years prior to his removal?—No; he was shifted to Otaki as soon as I was Commissioner. I minuted that letter to the Defence Minister as follows: "I would respectfully point out that Mr. Simcox and four residents at Otaki not only ask permission to select their own constable for Otaki, but they also provide for Stafford, where they have probably never been or do not even know where it is. Comment is needless." On that Mr. Reeves writes "Seen."

217. In May, 1891, Constable O'Rourke was removed to Otaki. What were the circumstances?—I see there is a departmental memorandum from me dated the 13th April, 1891: "The following transfers are made, with effect from this date: Acting Third-class Sergeant Hannan, Otaki to Masterton; Third-class Constable O'Rourke to Otaki, *vice* Hannan." O'Rourke was apparently in Wellington again at that time. Then, there is the following memorandum: "The Under-Secretary, Justice Department.—Constable Timothy O'Rourke has been placed in charge at Otaki, *vice* Acting-sergeant Hannan transferred."

218. Then, he was away from Otaki altogether under six months?—Yes.

219. *The Chairman.*] Did he go to Stafford during that time?—Yes; he went there and came back on leave, on account of his wife's illness.

220. *Mr. Taylor.*] He returned, then, to Wellington?—Yes; apparently he got to Wellington. It is not shown very clearly here. There is a memorandum, "Noted and returned to Commissioner. Constable O'Rourke passed through here a few days since on leave of absence.—J. BELL THOMSON. 24/2/91." I find here that I telegraphed down to Inspector Goodall on the 3rd February, 1891, "Leave granted to Constable O'Rourke."

221. With regard to Constable O'Rourke, did he as a matter of fact vacate the police premises at Otaki at all; did he not carry on intrigue after intrigue to retain the use of the station premises until ultimately he got back to Otaki?—I cannot say there was any intrigue about the boy's leg being taken off, and his wife's confinement.

222. Have you the papers I mentioned this morning in respect to the awards?—Yes. One man Mr. Taylor complained had not been promoted was Sergeant Mackay, now in the South. This man belonged to what was known in Auckland as the Water Police. It was the only place where there were Water Police, and it was run as a separate branch, and they had a boat of their own. There are two cases of life-saving I see, in his merit-sheet. One is in 1891, "Saving a woman from drowning; reward, £3." The other in 1892, "Saving a boy, Joseph Barber, from drowning; reward, £5." In the first case Constable Mackay reported the matter to Inspector Broham, who sent the report to me with the following memorandum: "Forwarded to the Commissioner, with a recommendation that a gratuity be given to Constable Mackay for his intrepid conduct