

I quite recognise that the efficacy of the Police Force can only be maintained by strict supervision, but at the same time, when private citizens who assume to claim the ear and attention of Ministers of the Crown go so far out of their way as to hold out threats to any member of the Force, I feel a measure of justification in approaching you upon this subject with a view of defending those whom I believe to be innocent men from such cowardly, unjustifiable, and un-British attacks, such attacks as should by all right-thinking men be at once resented.

I have no intention or desire to defend the police in any dereliction of duty (indeed, I conceive it to be my duty upon any such information becoming known to me to at once make the proper representations to the proper authority on behalf of the city), as it must be recognised by all that an efficient Police Force is highly essential for the safety, and peace, and well-being of any community. At the same time I am equally justified in resenting interference by private citizens.

In justice to our local police and the officer in charge, I may be permitted (in my official capacity) to state that upon any occasion that the Council has had to communicate with them upon local matters we have always received prompt and careful attention to our requests.

We are proud of the fact that we can claim for our city practically an immunity from crime and disturbance, more so, we believe, than any other city or town of the same size in the colony. This fact, I have reason to believe, you are already conversant with, and duly appreciate.

Faithfully yours,

H. BAIGENT, Mayor.

Commissioner Tunbridge, Nelson.

#### SERGEANT MACKAY.

*Charge No. 1.*—Improperly refusing Constable Bird access to the official statutes when the latter asked to be allowed to see them.

*Finding.*—Constable Bird, in my opinion, absolutely failed to substantiate this charge. It was proved conclusively that the Sergeant's office, in which the statutes are kept openly on a shelf, was accessible to all the men practically at all times, night and day, and there was an entire absence of any evidence whatever to suggest that Constable Bird, or any other man on the station, was ever refused free access to the statutes.

J. B. TUNBRIDGE,

Commissioner of Police.

#### *Charge No. 1.*

13th March, 1902.

Constable JOHN BIRD, No. 357, states:—

*Examined by Inspector Macdonell.*] About two and a half or three years ago I was on night duty on No. 1 beat. A few minutes past 11 p.m. I was opposite the Trafalgar Hotel, corner of Bridge and Trafalgar Streets. Sergeant Mackay came round and remarked on a light being in the bar of the Trafalgar Hotel. He entered the hotel, and when he came out he accused me of not knowing my duty, and said I ought to have gone in and seen that they closed up properly. I asked him how I was expected to know my duty when I did not have access to the statutes to read up. He replied that if I wanted to see the statutes I could buy copies of my own. He said he was not going to let everybody finger his statutes about. I replied that some of the statutes were in duplicate, and the spare copies ought to be left out for the men to see. The sergeant said there were only two or three duplicate copies, and I said there were nine or ten. Some angry words passed between us on that occasion on the subject of the statutes. The statutes and the duplicate copies are always kept in the sergeant's office. I have never referred to the subject since, so far as the sergeant is concerned. From what he said to me on that occasion I was afraid to take the statutes out of the office to peruse them. I have seen some of the men in the sergeant's office looking at the statutes on one or two occasions. When new statutes reach the station they have never been shown to me, nor, as far as I am aware, to the other men.

*Cross-examined by Sergeant Mackay.*] On the occasion in question there were no other persons present except you and I. I do not remember seeing Constable McGrath. He did not join us that night before we separated at the corner of Hardy Street and Trafalgar Street. I do not remember seeing Constable McGrath before we separated. I remember on two or three occasions being left in charge of the office in your absence. From the time ex-Constable McDonald retired—he went on leave previous to retirement on 4th June, 1900—until 3rd June, 1901, I was left in charge of the office whenever the sergeant was absent. I was in charge on the 3rd June, 1901. On that date I received a telegram from the Inspector stating that Constable Jeffries was to be placed in charge, and since then, as far as I now remember, I have not been left in charge. Since 3rd June, 1901, I have often been in the sergeant's office. When I have been in the office I could have perused the statutes; but owing to what you said two and a half or three years ago I did not touch them unless I wanted to see something in particular. On a few occasions last winter I sat by the fire in your office before 9 a.m. reading the newspaper, and I could have seen the statutes had I so desired. I remember on one occasion taking down one of the volumes of the statutes and referring to it while you were in the office. That was subsequent to the Trafalgar Hotel occurrence. You did not object to what I was doing. I think you told me to do so. I have been paraded both by the Inspector and Commissioner from time to time since the occasion in question, and asked if I had any complaints. I never complained of this matter. I abstained from complaining for fear that I might have to suffer at the hands of the sergeant if I did so. It has been understood that men who complained to the Inspector or Commissioner would have to suffer at the hands of the sergeant, irrespective of whatever the decision on their complaint might have been. The first complaint I made on this subject was in February last, when the Inspector requested me to make a report about anything that had occurred at the station within the last year or two. I then made a report. I did not submit the report through you as my next superior officer. I did not do so because the Inspector directed me to send it direct to him. I think I