

ERNEST JOHN PRATT, warehouseman at Sclanders and Co., Nelson, states :—

Examined by Mr. Maginnity.] I was at the football social at the end of last season. Durbridge, Glover, Coote, King, and myself left the social, as near as I can remember, about 10 p.m. We went as far as Oldham's Creek along the Wakapuaka Road on bicycles. King, who resides at Wakapuaka, went on, and the others turned back to Nelson. On the way back, when near the cemetery, some one remarked about getting a drink at the Bush Tavern. Sowman made some remark about the time, and some one looked at his watch and it was said to be a quarter to 11. We went on to the Bush Tavern. On the way Durbridge said something about there not being time to get the drink. I do not know how access was gained to the premises. I was out in the road and was called in by some one, and went through two gates. I do not know who opened the gates. The door was at the back of the house. I heard some one ask Woodward if they could get a drink. That was while I was in the road. When I got inside the house the whole party were there. I do not know who called for the drinks or who paid for them. We only had one drink and then left. Coote, Durbridge, and I went to Vause's; Coote was staying there. Coote was admitted by Vause; I did not notice any remark by Vause, except that he said "Good-night." It might then have been 11.15 or 11.30 p.m.; I cannot say. I left Durbridge at the corner of Harley and Bridge Streets and went home. There was no disorder at the Bush Tavern.

Cross-examined by Inspector Macdonell.] I do not remember any singing. I was quite sober myself, and do not remember being otherwise than sober. The reason I did not enter with the others was because I was fixing up my bike-lamp. I might have been three or five minutes behind the others when they went on the hotel premises. I do not remember seeing any one getting over the gates. I cannot remember seeing any light inside the hotel as we approached. There was a light in a little room off the bar when I got into the passage of the hotel. We had our drink in this room.

Re-examined by Mr. Maginnity.] I am not sure whether the door we entered by is on the side or the back of the house. E. J. PRATT.

FREDERICK BABBERS VAUSE, licensee of the Wakatu Hotel, Nelson, says :—

Examined by Mr. Maginnity.] I know Constable Durbridge. I remember being called to the door one night at 11.20 p.m. by a Mr. Coote, who was lodging at my house. On arriving at the door I saw Mr. Coote, Constable Durbridge, and another young man named Pratt outside. I admitted Mr. Coote, and the others left after bidding Coote and myself "Good-night." I do not remember any remark being passed between Durbridge and myself. None of them were the worse for liquor; Mr. Coote was perfectly sober, and, as far as I could see, the others were likewise. I once kept the Bush Tavern. There are both a side and a back entrance to the house. To get to the back door from the road you have to pass through two gates.

Cross-examined by Inspector Macdonell.] The side door is just inside the first gate; the back gate is nearly 6 ft. high. A man standing inside the stable could see the back door, but could not see inside the passage. The side door would not be visible from the stable. I fix the time on this occasion by a remark I made to Mr. Coote at the time to the effect that it was twenty past 11. I could not state the time he came home on the night before or the night after.

Re-examined by Mr. Maginnity.] Walking quietly from the Bush Tavern to my house would take from a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes. F. B. VAUSE.

NEW ZEALAND.—POLICE DEPARTMENT.

From Inspector Macdonell, Grey.

Received 26/2/02.

SUBJECT : Misconduct of Constable Durbridge in the Bush Tavern, Nelson.

Police Office, Greymouth, 24th February, 1902.

Re Constable Durbridge and several Half-drunk Footballers insisting on and getting Drink after Closing-time in Bush Tavern Hotel "The Wood," Nelson.

THE following is the evidence in the case :—

Edward Woodward, licensee, Bush Tavern, says : "About the end of last football season, on a Saturday night, I closed the house at the usual hour. About half-past 11 I went out to the road in front of my house. I was talking for a short time to one named Alfred Wastney, when we heard a noisy crowd coming from the direction of the town. They came along singing and shouting. I told Wastney to come round the back and we would lock the gate at the end of the house to keep them out. We did this, and went into the stable to keep out of sight and avoid annoyance. They came along, and, finding the gate locked, one of them jumped it and entered the house by the back door, and was in the dark. I followed him to see what he was doing. As I got in he struck a match, and I saw it was Constable Durbridge. He was in plain clothes. I asked him what he was doing there. He said it would be all right. They wanted a drink. I refused several times. While reasoning with him the rest came in, and would have a drink. Would not leave without it. At last, for peace's sake, and to get them away, I gave them one drink each. Some of them paid for it. I cannot say which of them. There were about half a dozen of them. They had had quite enough before they came to my place. I repeatedly told them it was after closing-time, &c., and that I could not give them a drink, but they persisted it was all right. This was the only time Constable Durbridge troubled me after hours for drink.—EDWARD WOODWARD."

Alfred Wastney, labourer, at "The Sands," near Stoke, says :—"About three months ago, one Saturday night, fully 11.30 p.m., I was on the road in front of the Bush Tavern talking to Mr. Woodward, when we heard a noisy push coming towards us from the town. Woodward says, 'Here comes a rowdy push; let us get in out of the way.' We went round the back; he locked the gate, and went into the stable to watch. One of them jumped the gate and entered the house by the back door, and struck a light. Woodward followed him and said, 'What the devil are you