

55. I am quite content with your having been 26½ years in the Police Force in New Zealand. Now, I am going to put a very pertinent question to you: During the whole course of your career in the Police Force did you ever before know of policemen taking single girls—respectable or otherwise—into the single men's quarters at midnight?—No, never.

56. Do you think that men who would do such an act are fit to remain in the Police Force?—No, I do not.

57. Now, there is another charge against Constable Burrell—namely, “Improperly leaving his beat without just cause and going to the Nelson Police-station about 2.30 a.m., 14th instant.” How do you work the Police Force there—I suppose you divide the work so that the town is always protected by certain men?—Yes.

58. Then, if in the course of a night a man leaves his beat, is it a fact that the town is unprotected?—It would be—his beat would be.

59. How many men had you on duty at night in Nelson?—Two.

60. The town was divided into two?—Yes.

61. For the time a man is away from his beat that part of the town is entirely unprotected?—Yes, unless there is an arrangement with the other man to look after it.

62. Then he has to neglect his own beat?—Yes.

63. If any policeman who has been instructed by his superior officer to look after the welfare of a part of the town deserts his post, and neglects his duty—for which he is paid—that part of the town is unprotected?—Yes.

64. Do you consider it conducive to discipline to overlook an offence of that nature with a fine?—I would prefer not to answer that question.

65. Then I will not press it. But is it not absolutely necessary that when instructions are given, whether from Wellington or from the Inspector in charge of the district, that men are to be on certain beats on certain hours, those instructions should be given effect to?—Oh, yes.

66. Now, do you consider that a man who would neglect his duty—would neglect to look after the welfare of the thousands of people intrusted to him—by leaving his beat is fit to remain in the Police Force?—In my opinion, it would depend a good deal on his previous character.

67. But, supposing it was a young officer, would it not give an indication of what he was going to be in years to come if he started in that way?—Yes, I should think so.

68. Would that give you a good impression of that officer?—No, it would not.

69. That is charge No. 2 that I have been referring to. You say you would be guided in your opinion as to the man's fitness for remaining in the Force or not by his previous character?—Yes.

70. Then we come to charge 3: “Improperly leaving his beat without just cause and going to the Nelson Police-station at 12.30 a.m., 15th instant, and remaining there until 1.20 a.m.” That is the following night?—Yes.

71. I do not know at the moment if there are any more such charges. I have not looked through them thoroughly, but these charges follow one on the other, and of both of them the constable was adjudged to be guilty. Now, with those two charges preferred against him, would you consider him a fit man to remain in the Police Force?—I would not like to say that he should not.

72. Do I understand, Inspector, that when a man has certain work intrusted to him which he is paid for doing, and has the welfare of thousands of people to look after, he is justified in leaving his beat?—No, he is not justified in leaving his beat.

73. If he is not justified in leaving his beat, I ask you, as a man who has had a great deal to do with the Police Force, and passed through all grades up to your present position, is he fit to remain in the Police Force?—I cannot say. It might be a serious thing.

74. There might be burglaries, houses might catch fire, or people might be killed while he was away enjoying himself at the police-station?—Yes, certainly.

75. Now, the next charge mentioned in the petition is against Durbridge: “Improper conduct as a police constable in going with a number of other men to the Bush Tavern, Nelson, after closing-hours (11.40 p.m.) one Saturday about the middle of last football season, and demanding and obtaining drink from the licensee for himself and companions.” Were you acquainted with the circumstances of this case?—Yes.

76. In the course of your duty as an Inspector you have had a good deal to do with trading after hours in hotels?—Yes, a good deal.

77. I suppose that is one of the most difficult things to deal with?—It is.

78. Should it not be the duty of a policeman, whether in uniform or not, to set an example to the rest of the community in connection with such matters?—Undoubtedly.

79. Would the fact of a policeman in private clothes being in an hotel after hours have a good effect on the general community or those in the hotel who knew him to be a policeman?—In my opinion, it would have a very serious effect indeed.

80. It would look as if the police were encouraging it?—Yes; and, worse than that, if the police go into hotels after hours they place themselves, in a way, under the control of the hotel-keeper.

81. They lose their freedom of action?—That is so.

82. A policeman who goes into an hotel after the ordinary closing-hours places himself at the mercy of the hotelkeeper?—That is so. I never saw a case where it would have a good effect in the way of making him carry out his duty in the future. I may say that, in my opinion, the only remedy for that is to remove the man, so that he cannot do such a thing in the same place again.

83. It may be that I have an exaggerated idea of what the Police Force should be, but do you think removal would be sufficient?—No, I do not. I say that, in my opinion, that is the only chance of the man being able to do his duty afterwards.