

The Bay of Plenty Times, which is published at Tauranga, has some lengthy remarks under the head of "Hard Lines," and we cannot help thinking when the case comes to be related that it is very hard lines indeed so far as the individual referred to is concerned. And this is what is the hardship:—The township and district of Opotiki, fifteen miles from Tauranga, constitutes a police station, and at this station there is placed in command one William Joyce, a very old and respected member of the Armed Constabulary. Joyce, it appears, has been dismissed from the police force without any notice—not for, be it understood, incompetency, not for neglect of duty, not for allowing the escape of a prisoner, or failing to apprehend an offender. Nothing of this kind has been alleged against him, but something very much worse indeed than any one or all of these put together. Joyce was dismissed for misconduct. He had married without permission of the authorities, and Joyce has to take a double set of consequences. Dismissal from the police force, and the fruits which may follow upon his matrimonial alliance unhallowed by the head of the police department at Wellington. Joyce, it appears, had applied for permission some time ago to be united in the holy bands

of wedlock. He had been many years in the service, and had maintained a high reputation for efficiency and good conduct, but he married without permission, and has been dismissed the force. The power of the police authorities at Wellington cannot decree a divorce in the case of William Joyce, otherwise this action might probably have preceded his dismissal. Joyce having anticipated obtaining permission, made preparations, even to the writing to the lady to whom he had been engaged, which induced her to come to Opotiki. Joyce's application, however, was returned from Wellington in consequence of his having omitted to enclose his certificate of good character. The lady was quite satisfied with her intended's character—so satisfied that she entrusted her happiness to him for the natural term of her or his life, but the authorities were not. So, we repeat, they have dismissed Joyce because he got married, which is more than the lady's father could do, or the father of the bridegroom. Joyce without any difficulty obtained a certificate of good character, which he had no doubt in the fullness of time and after having gone through the usual course of red tape, would be allowed. It is now we give what the Opotiki correspondent of the *Bay of Plenty Times* has to say in the matter:— "Here, then, was the dilemma: the house was bought and furnished, the cold baked meat prepared, and the guests bidden. What could the man do, the permission being in all probability on its way back at the time? Why, he did what you or I or any other man possessed of his senses would do—he got married and gave us the bravest wedding feast that Opotiki has seen for this many a day. And mark the result! Down comes a thunderclap of a despatch, saying Constable Joyce, having disobeyed the rules of the Force, is dismissed. Dismissed, mind; not discharged, which would be honourable in comparison to a disgraceful dismissal. Others there are who have committed the same unpardonable offence wilfully and intentionally, and were fined *one pound*, and told *not to do it again*; but the one pitched upon to make an example of is a man of eleven years' good character, who has deservedly earned the good opinion of Messrs. Broham and Naden, and has become an efficient officer under their superintendence. In Opotiki he is universally liked, even the very delinquents upon whom he has found it necessary to visit the penalties of the law respect him for his forbearance and kindness, and for his impartiality where his duty enforces the demands of justice." Now, according to the police regulations, Constable Joyce committed an egregious offence in getting married. If he had not got married, but had done something very much worse, nothing would have been said or done. We live in a land of liberty and have a free, untrammelled Press. Anyone in the colony may get lawfully married, always providing—first, that he is not in possession of a living wife; second, that he can get anyone to say "yes." And, third, if he is not a policeman. It would have been proper, perhaps, for the lady to have asked papa's permission. It would have been the correct thing for the bridegroom elect to have counselled with his friends. As a man, he did all that he should have done, but, as a constable, he deserved dismissal, and he has met with his deserts. Even an Inspector of Police, we believe, must not get married without subjecting himself to being dismissed, although he has obtained mamma's consent, and the lady's approval. Man is a free agent in this matter, except in the case of his being a member of the Armed Constabulary, when he is not. William Joyce will have this impressed on his memory for all time to come.

HARD LINES.

A most harsh and unmerited punishment has been inflicted upon our town police man, Constable William Joyce, of the A.C., and one which has roused general indignation in the settlement, being no less than his dismissal from the force, for having married without permission. Joyce, it appears, applied for permission some time ago, and he, having served eleven years in colonial forces, seven of them in the Constabulary, without a single crime ever having been brought against him, of course anticipated an immediate permission, and accordingly made every preparation, even to the extent of writing to the lady to whom he had been engaged, and inducing her to come to Opotiki. Joyce's application was then returned from Wellington in consequence of his having omitted to enclose his certificate of previous good character. This he immediately obtained, and returned with the application, which there could be no moral doubt would, in the fullness of time, and after having gone through the usual course of red tape, be granted. Here, then, was the dilemma: the house was bought and furnished, the cold baked meat prepared, and the guests bidden. What could the man do, the permission being in all probability on its way back at the time? Why, he did what you or I or any other man possessed of his senses would do—he got married, and gave us the bravest wedding feast that Opotiki has seen for this many a day. And mark the result! down comes a thunderclap of a despatch, saying Constable Joyce having disobeyed the rules of the Force is dismissed. Dismissed, mind; not discharged, which would be honourable in comparison to a disgraceful dismissal. Others there are who have committed the same unpardonable offence wilfully and intentionally, and were fined *one pound*, and told *not to do it again*; but the one pitched upon to make an example of is a man of eleven years good character, who has deservedly earned the good opinion of Messrs Broham and Naden, and has become an efficient officer under their superintendence. In Opotiki he is universally liked; even the very delinquents upon whom he has found it necessary to visit the penalties of the law respect him for his forbearance and kindness, and for his impartiality where his duty enforces the demands of justice. He has effected a marked improvement in Opotiki since his arrival, and one that we all appreciate. I told you some time ago, Mr Editor, that the new brooms were sweeping most uncomfortably clean. I beg now to retract that expression, for Constable Joyce's sweeping away several glaring abuses has been so constantly and consistently clean that I consider my former judgment as premature and erroneous. However, I am heartily glad to say that a good substantial memorial has been drawn out and signed by nearly every inhabitant in the place, and forwarded by this mail to Colonel Moule, which will at least have the effect of explaining away any possible misapprehension, and of showing that the A.C. Force has lost one of its worthiest members. William Joyce will never want for friends in Opotiki; but the gross injustice of a disgraceful dismissal for so trifling an offence, and the expressed desire of your subscribers here, have induced me to enlarge on the subject.

ATLM-0023-24
COMPLETED

*Bay of Plenty Times
Oct 14.*

Copies are supplied only to facilitate private research and may not be reproduced without the permission of:

The Alexander Turnbull Library
P.O. Box 12349
Wellington

2/1/10
11

Apatiki
October 26th 1874

My dear Sir,

I avail myself of the privilege you are good enough to accord of communicating with you by letter to lay before you the following: -

Some time since the constable of the A. C. Jones who was attached to my Court as Civil Constable and who had been specially chosen for this duty on account of his ability and general good conduct got married without leave of the Commisprover. I believe he did so simply through a mistake and under the impression that leave would be granted, but however this may be, when I heard that he had not had leave to marry I wrote through Major Roberts requesting that the constable's general good character and usefulness as a Civil Constable might be taken into consideration in permitting the breach of the regulations of which it appeared he had been guilty, I being aware at the time that similar cases had been condoned for a small fine -

My letter was never answered

The Honorable
Sir Donald McLean
Wellington

Copies are supplied only to facilitate private research and may not be reproduced without the permission of:

The Alexander Turnbull Library
P.O. Box 12313
Wellington

The Alexander Turnbull Library
P.O. Box 42345
Wellington

answered and the constable was summarily dismissed. When this was known here a meeting of inhabitants got up a petition on the subject and sent it to Wellington and, I understand on the telegraphic recommendation of Mr. W. Kelly, the man was again sworn in -

I trust you will think me justified in bringing under your notice the contempt openly shown for my opinion by the officers of the Constabulary, I say openly because my letter although it was not answered was fastened to the order of dismissal, as if to show the constable and through him all the force and the public that the opinion of a Civil magistrate had no weight whatever - even in reference to the conduct of a constable attached to his own Court - - At all events this is the light in which others besides myself look at it -

I should not have troubled you with this subject were it not that the dismissal of the constable for marrying has been noticed in several newspapers and it occurred to me that you would perhaps see the "Local" and suppose (especially after your direction to me when last at Apia) that I had recommended the man's dismissal, as it is mentioned that he was attached to my Court - whereas the contrary has been the case. I enclose the newspaper extracts which are perhaps more correct than such reports usually are and apologizing for troubling you with this matter.

I remain your very obediently

Assistant W. D. D. D.