

NEW CHIEF CONSTABLE FOR DUNDEE

Mr John Macdonald Selected— How the Vote Went

By OUR OWN REPORTER.

Mr John Macdonald, assistant chief constable of Dundee Police Force since 1922, has been appointed chief constable in succession to the late Mr John Carmichael.

The appointment was made at a special meeting of Dundee Town Council on Thursday. The three candidates on the short-leet—Mr Macdonald; Mr D. C. Christie, chief constable of Angus; and Mr W. R. Wilkie, chief constable of South Shields—attended and were interviewed by the Council.

The vote for the appointment resulted:—Mr Macdonald, 17; Mr Christie, 13; and Mr Wilkie, 2.

The members voted as follows:—Mr Macdonald—Baillies Carnegie, Gillies, William Reid, and M'Cube; Lord Dean of Guild W. Halley Brown; Messrs R. A. Scrymgeour, A. Blair Anderson, W. H. Buist, Findlay Lesslie, John Phin, P. J. Fletcher, G. F. Caldwell, A. A. Leslie, J. B. Archer, Robert Loggie, G. A. Greig, and James Nicoll.

Mr Christie—Lord Provost Johnston; Baillies Patterson, Christie, and Macpherson; Treasurer Frain; Messrs James Lockhart, Robert Blackwood, Thos. Stewart, A. J. Bayne, D. R. Kidd, John Reid, S. G. Fraser, and R. J. Larg.

Mr Wilkie—Messrs J. G. Fraser and Garnet Wilson.

The candidates were given an opportunity to add anything further they might desire to their letters of application, while Mr Larg, the convener of the Police Committee, questioned each of them on his views of the police box system, which it is proposed to introduce in the city.

Replying to Mr Larg, Mr Christie said he was satisfied that the system could be introduced to Dundee with advantage to the service and would be one of economy and efficiency. He had not gone deeply into it so far as Dundee was concerned, but he considered that from the experience of other forces the staff could be reduced.

If the Council agreed to introduce the box system he would close down all the sub-stations, including Lochee. He would probably make the Lochee office a box. He believed the system could be operated from the present headquarters with internal arrangements.

Efficiency and Economy.

Mr Macdonald considered the introduction of the police box system in Dundee would make for efficiency and economy in the end, although it would mean some expenditure to begin with. He would not say that one of the economies would be the reduction of staff.

If the system were introduced he would if necessary close down all sub-stations, including Lochee.

To the question as to whether he believed the system could be operated from the present headquarters Mr Macdonald at once emphatically declared that he did not. He thought it would be an advantage to delay the scheme for the building of the new police headquarters.

Mr Wilkie, whose wife it was brought out in the course of interview was a Dundee lady, had personal experience of the working of the police box system, as it was in operation in South Shields. It was the only way, he declared, by which increasing police expenditure could be stopped.

In answer to a question by Mr Archer as to what space was required for the box system Mr Wilkie said—Sufficient for a man to sit in front of the operating board.

Mr Archer—Is that all. Well, we are going to spend £50,000 on that.

Mr Wilkie added that all they wanted was a soundproof box and a yard for vehicles. There was no necessity for extensive alterations. He had closed down three stations since the police box system was introduced. All they needed was a room about eight feet square.

The Nominations.

It was suggested that they should dispense with nominations and simply vote on the three candidates on the short-leet, but several members felt that it would be better to submit nominations.

Mr Larg thereupon nominated Mr Christie, pointing out that he was the youngest and they would get much longer service out of him. Mr Christie had proved himself competent and had retained the confidence of officials and men without any unnecessary harshness.

Lord Provost Johnston seconded.

Mr W. H. Buist put forward the name of Mr Macdonald, who, he said, had shown during the nine years he had acted as assistant to be a most efficient and capable officer. His handling of the city during the past few weeks said a great deal for him.

Mr Scrymgeour, who seconded, said if they were not to carry out promotions within their own ranks they must have very sound reasons for not doing it. He had heard no complaint or even criticism of Mr Macdonald.

Mr Garnet Wilson submitted the name of Mr Wilkie, remarking that it was an undoubted fact that of the three candidates Mr Wilkie had been the outstanding one in his personal appearance before the Council.

It looked as if Mr Wilson was not to get a seconder, but eventually Mr J. G. Fraser seconded.

The vote was then taken, and resulted as already stated. As Mr Macdonald had a majority of the Council he was declared elected.

Mr Macdonald, who was then summoned to the Council Chamber, was warmly applauded when he entered. The Lord Provost intimated the decision of the Council

and would most certainly be discovered and most certainly be severely dealt with.

At the close of the evidence Mr Archibald said that the crowd by their acts that night constituted a mob, and their behaviour was such as to terrify the lieges in the vicinity as well as any person who might be on the roadway.

Dealing with the evidence, Mr Archibald remarked that it said a great deal for Ellen Thomson, millworker, 2 Dudhope Crescent Road, that she had the pluck to come into court and give evidence against an act practically of hooliganism.

Period of Excitement.

On behalf of the Healys, Mr Reid submitted that it was a case of misidentification, which was likely in such a mob.

Mr Marcus submitted that the evidence for the prosecution was insufficient in law to convict accused.

He recognised on the occasion referred to the police were confronted with great difficulty, and it was also a period of excitement.

He enlisted for overseas service with the forces in January 1915. He was transferred to the reserve (Black Watch) and was retained on police duties during the period of the war.

Mr Macdonald was specially commended by the Civil Commissioner for Angus, Perthshire, and St Andrews and Cupar district of Fifeshire for the excellence of the police arrangements during the general strike.

The new Chief Constable has taken active part in negotiations for the improvement in the conditions of the police service which culminated in the statutory formation of the police federation in 1919 and the passing of the Police Pension Act, 1921. He assisted the late Captain Dewar in compiling his "Liquor Laws," which was considered a standard authority on the subject, and has given considerable study to the licensing laws.

For many years the duty devolved upon him of answering queries on police law and practice appearing in police papers, and he has revised the Police Manual, issued in 1922 as a book of general instructions for the guidance of constables.

Shortly after his appointment as assistant chief constable he took steps to form the Widows' and Orphans' Fund in connection with the force as well as the Bootless Bairns' Fund, which has been the means of providing boots to thousands of necessitous children in the city. He has successfully organised sports, concerts, and social gatherings in aid of these benevolent objects.

When the system of traffic signals by constables was first introduced the lack of uniformity in giving these signals correctly induce him to arrange for the traffic constables being collectively instructed in drill formation by the drill instructor, which proved so successful that this method of instruction was afterwards adopted by other forces in Scotland.



Mr John Macdonald, assistant chief constable, who has been elected chief constable of the Dundee Police Force.