

64. In those cases the opinion of the Inspector was taken?—Yes. Well, the next thing I would like to say is: I think a very great mistake was made in giving the police an electoral vote. The position is intensified at every election.

65. *Mr. Poynton.*] Will you state the reasons why you think so?—At every general election it is absolutely necessary that men should be sent to different places on that particular occasion, and therefore they are disfranchised. Another thing is: It is all very well for a candidate to go and ask a policeman for his vote, but naturally it must give that policeman a political leaning one way or the other.

66. *The Chairman.*] They are all canvassed for their votes, and it must give them a political leaning?—Quite so. In fact, I go further than that and say that, in my opinion, anybody in the employ of the Government ought not to have a vote. Well, the next thing we get on to is the subject of transfers. The mode I adopted was: I submitted to the Minister a list of transfers that I considered necessary, for his approval. I forgot to state that when I first took over the office it was under the Minister of Defence. Since then it was transferred to the Minister of Justice. The Minister of Justice now administers the police.

67. *Mr. Poynton.*] How long since?—I could not give you the exact date straight off. I should think it was about eighteen months or two years ago.

68. *The Chairman.*] You submitted, then, a list of proposed transfers?—Yes, for the approval of the Minister, and he either approved or disapproved, as he thought fit.

69. You give reasons for your recommendations?—If he asks. I do not put them in writing usually. Sometimes the Minister says, "Oh, well; I happen to know that man: he has got a sick wife; I do not think that climate would suit him. This had perhaps better stand over"; and he would alter that. Another time he will say, "That man has got a very large family: I do not think there is any necessity for moving him." And then, of course, if one alteration is made it entails probably the alteration of two or three others; and, as I have pointed out in my reports, there is this tremendous difficulty about these transfers: If a constable wants to be transferred, we hear nothing about it; it is all right. If he does not want to be transferred, there is a petition almost invariably got up to keep him there. I believe, myself, the best way to get over the difficulty would be to let it be clearly understood a man should be removed, say, every five years. That is quite long enough for him to be in one place.

70. *Mr. Poynton.*] Would that not entail a large cost?—It does not follow. It all depends how far you arrange it. In any case, it is a big cost every year.

71. Can you give an idea what would be the average number of years they stay in one place at the present time?—I suppose there are men who have been at a station for sixteen years.

72. But can you give a rough average?—No, I do not think I could.

73. If the average were five years, then it would be no extra cost to periodically shift them as you suggest?—The average at present is a great deal more than five years.

74. *The Chairman.*] You have cases where men have been at the one station for how long?—I think there was one case of a man being stationed at one place for nineteen years.

75. *Colonel Pitt.*] You mentioned yourself some had remained at the one station for some time?—Fourteen or fifteen years.

76. *The Chairman.*] In speaking of these removals, do you refer specially to those who are in charge of small districts?—Those in charge of different stations.

77. What class of men is placed in charge of these stations—are they men of a particular class?—No, Sir. Do you mean class, or rank?

78. Are they second- or third-class constables, or what?—As I read out this morning, I found in some places junior third-class constables in charge of stations, and first-class constables doing duty in town. I obviated that to a great extent.

79. What is your opinion in respect to that?—Seniors ought to be at the different stations first if they are qualified. In order that I might know exactly how the seniority business stood in this matter, soon after I was appointed I had a distribution return sent in to me half-yearly.

80. *Colonel Pitt.*] Was that continued?—Yes, Sir. It showed, first of all, the name of the station, and the rank and name of the man, whether mounted or foot, whether married or single, number of children, date when he went to the station, religion, residence of parents or relatives if in the colony. Then there is a note at the bottom of that return: "Officers in charge of stations are to be filled in first, above; all others on the strength of the district, but not in charge of stations, will be entered according to seniority," so that I could see directly who was the man in charge, the order of seniority, his religion, number of children, and so on; and so see whether he would be a suitable man to be transferred to a particular district or not.

81. Why do you ask their religion?—I will answer that, but I would rather that it should not be taken down. Well, there is no use mincing matters: if there are two out on a station, I do not think there ought to be two Roman Catholics or two Protestants. I think there ought to be one of each.

82. *The Chairman.*] You desired a diversity of religions amongst the men on a station?—Quite so; and on the big stations I liked a fair sprinkling of each.

83. The number of country stations where there are more than one is not large, is it?—Oh, yes, there are a great many places. Just to give you an idea: Coromandel, 2; Devonport, 2; Eden Terrace, 2; Newton, 3; Gisborne, 5; Hastings, 2; Waipawa, 2; Wairoa, 2; Patea, 2; Stratford, 2; Feilding, 2; Manners Street, 2; Masterton, 3; Palmerston North, 5; Blenheim, 4, and so on. While on this return I just wish further to explain that this return placed me in a position to know as to whether the first man was the senior man, and was fit for a station that was vacant as regards number of children, where his relatives were—for that is an important consideration—and so forth. Of course, I knew nearly all the men in the Force, or something about them. I knew pretty well their qualifications right through the Force. Then I got in that return which