

Keeping this in view, and recognising the importance of giving the fullest publicity to everything brought before me, I afforded all facilities to members of the Press and to the public to attend my sittings; and, to give parties everywhere ample opportunity of bringing any matters they desired under my notice, I caused the arrangements for my sittings to be advertised in the leading newspapers in most of the places I visited. The fullest opportunity was also afforded to the Commissioner of Police and others interested to cross-examine all witnesses.

It was, of course, unavoidable that the opportunity was taken full advantage of by a number of persons to air all sorts of grievances that could scarcely be considered as coming within the scope of the Commission. A number of people, too, made complaints of a more or less serious nature, many of them utterly groundless, against individual members of the Force of all ranks. Any complaints that seemed to me to justify such treatment, after I had decided that they could not properly be dealt with by me, I arranged to be inquired into departmentally. It was inevitable that I should occasionally have to take evidence that appeared to the casual observer to be somewhat irrelevant; but it was difficult often, until a complainant's statement was heard, to decide whether it did or did not come within the scope of the fairly wide order of reference. It was often more desirable to listen patiently to complaints and dispose of them in a few words than to peremptorily refuse to hear the parties. The worst that can be said of my procedure is that it has added to the bulk of the evidence that I have to submit to Your Excellency. By some of the police witnesses the bogey of sectarianism has been raised, more or less specifically, as was the case before the Police Commission of 1898. One occasionally hears echoes of this sort of stuff, but the cry as a rule emanates from those who either have chronic grievances or who are always seeking to account for something personal to themselves that they will always attribute to any cause rather than to their own defects and inefficiencies. I can only say that, so far as I am capable of forming an opinion, I do not believe there is the slightest ground for assuming that a man's religion is in any degree a factor in his relation to the Force. Having said this, I thus dismiss an element which I always discourage, and which I shall make no further reference to.

“The general organization, control, and enrolment of the Police Force of the Dominion as it now exists in its several branches, and the discipline and efficiency thereof, and in what respect the said Force, or any part thereof, could be better recruited, organized, controlled, or made more efficient.”

The Force is organized under “The Police Force Act, 1908” (consolidated). Section 2 of this Act empowers Your Excellency to cause from time to time a sufficient number of fit and able men to be embodied as a Police Force, who shall be sworn to act as constables in and throughout New Zealand for preserving the peace and preventing crime, and apprehending offenders against the peace.

Section 3 states that Your Excellency may also from time to time appoint such Commissioners, Inspectors, and Sub-Inspectors or other officers as you deem expedient for the general superintendence and management of the said Force.

Section 10 gives power to any Commissioner to suspend or dismiss any constable whom he thinks remiss or negligent in the execution of his duty, or otherwise unfit for the same. Power is also given by this section to any Inspector to suspend a constable similarly until the decision of a Commissioner is known.

Section 11 gives power to make regulations generally for the government of the Force.

I may remark here that the main regulations made under the corresponding section of “The Police Force Act, 1886,” were made on the 7th January, 1887. They have been slightly added to and amended from time to time since then, but in the main they still stand as then drafted. Many of the regulations are entirely obsolete, useless, and ineffective, and in some instances positively absurd as applied to the present day. For several years past there has been an urgent