

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS.

INVERCARGILL, WEDNESDAY, 7TH JULY, 1909.

The Commission met at the Supreme Court at 10.30 a.m.

Present: H. W. Bishop, Esq.

Mr. W. Dinnie, Commissioner of Police, was in attendance to represent the Police Department.

The Commission was read by the Secretary.

The Commissioner intimated, in response to a question by Mr. Dinnie, that the proceedings would be open to the public and the Press.

Mr. Dinnie said that he had asked for this ruling because he wished it to be understood that he had applied for this Commission, and because he wished the Press to know the particulars of his application, which he thereupon read as follows:—

“Police Department, Wellington, 17th June, 1909.

“Hon. the Minister of Justice.

“In view of the serious and reckless charges which have been brought against myself and the Police Department, over which I have had the honour to preside for the last six years, by certain members of Parliament, and which charges I have not had the opportunity of refuting, in the interests of the Department, the public, and myself I respectfully beg to request,—

“1. That those charges be at once definitely framed by those members who made them.

“2. That a copy be supplied to me in order that I have a fair opportunity of defending myself and the Department.

“3. That an independent tribunal be appointed to investigate the charges and report the result thereof.

“4. That the result be made public through the Press.

“5. That in justice to me a copy of this application be forwarded to the Press without delay.

“W. DINNIE,

“Commissioner of Police.”

The Commissioner said he presumed the Minister would have no objection to a copy being furnished to the Press, but it was unusual to hand a Ministerial document to the Press except by consent of the Minister to whom it was addressed. Mr. Dinnie must take the responsibility for its publication.

The Commissioner publicly announced that every officer in the Police Force was specially invited to give evidence before the Commission if he so desired, and that he (the Commissioner) desired to assure members of the Force that they could give evidence before him throughout these proceedings with a feeling of the greatest possible security from future injury in the service because of their evidence; and in this connection he read the following assurance from the Hon. the Minister of Justice:—

“H. W. Bishop, Esq., S.M., Police Commission, Invercargill.

“For the purpose of insuring that every police officer who gives evidence before the Commission should do so freely and without any possible fear of the consequences of his evidence should it be averse to the administration of the Department, I, as Minister of Justice, desire you to give an assurance that the giving of such evidence will not be allowed to prejudice in any way the career in the Police Force of any such officers, provided, of course, that in your judgment as Commissioner such evidence is not given falsely or in bad faith.

“J. G. FINDLAY,

“Minister of Justice.”

The Inspector of Police for Invercargill District asked the direction of the Commissioner in regard to certain police officers in his district who desired to give evidence relative to their service in the Armed Constabulary Force counting for superannuation purposes.

The Commissioner ruled that this question did not come within the scope of the Commission.

George Scandrett, police constable, stationed at Invercargill, was sworn, and gave evidence.

John Connell, police constable, stationed at Invercargill, was sworn, and gave evidence.

Alfred James Mitchell, Inspector of Police, Invercargill District, was sworn, and gave evidence.

The Commission adjourned at 1 p.m.

INVERCARGILL, THURSDAY, 8TH JULY, 1909.

The Commission met at 10.30 a.m.

Mr. W. Dinnie, Commissioner of Police, was in attendance.

James Stuck, retired farmer, Invercargill, was sworn, and gave evidence.

Alfred James Mitchell, Inspector of Police, Invercargill, was further examined.

John Campbell Mackenzie, sergeant of police, stationed at Gore, was sworn, and gave evidence.

Patrick McGrath, sergeant of police, stationed at Bluff, was sworn, and gave evidence.

Wallace Abercrombie Brookes, sergeant of police, stationed at Invercargill, was sworn, and gave evidence.

James Kerr Simpson, sergeant of police, stationed at Invercargill, was sworn, and gave evidence.

The Commission adjourned at 3.10 p.m.