

of public men more than another it is the branch of the Justice Department which we speak of as "the police." That is clearly shown by the statement I have just made as to the difficulty of obtaining evidence. I may say that during last week, although I think every member of the community knows that any communication sent to me is absolutely confidential, yet I have received scores of letters either under *nom de plume* or without signature at all. The Police Department is a department which, if it is to be successful and do the work it should, must have the full confidence of the general public. While it is necessary that our Judges and our Magistrates should be men who have the sympathy, co-operation, respect, and confidence of the public, I think the ordinary member of the Police Force hardly comes second to the people holding the high positions I have just referred to; and after my travels through the Dominion during the last few months I have come to the conclusion that the Police Force of to-day has not the confidence of the general public, and that the confidence which the general public had in the Force is gradually being lost; and if that position is continued or becomes more acute the result will, I believe, be serious. It is not necessary for one to emphasize the fact that when we are in a strange city we look upon the ordinary policeman as our friend when we meet him in the street, and when we leave our home we leave feeling a certain amount of security, not only as regards our property but also as regards our wives, and daughters, and our families generally, because we realise there is a Force of straightforward, clean, honest men who are there prepared to sacrifice themselves for the protection of that which is ours. Immediately the confidence of the general public is lost the position becomes most lamentable. Now, if that be the case, there must be a reason for it, and I will go further presently, and strive to show that the Force itself is in a state of dissatisfaction—that there is an undercurrent of unrest amongst the members of the Force. I have already said it is difficult to get members of the Force to prove this, but I trust the Commission itself will find the proof. The public know it is a fact. Individual public men know it is a fact; and I myself, though I cannot call dozens of witnesses to prove it, on my oath, say it is so.

*Mr. Dinnie:* We shall see how many more say so.

*The Commissioner:* I would ask you not to interrupt, Mr. Dinnie.

*Witness:* If the Commissioner can prove that it is not so, I shall be delighted. I am not here this morning to act as prosecutor of the head of the Department, or of any other member of the Department; but what I do want to see is justice done to the members of the Department, and also to see the confidence of the general public, which I say is being lost, restored. That is all I ask. If I am quite wrong, if the public have confidence, and if the members of the Force are quite satisfied, then I myself shall be delighted. Certain things, however, have arisen, and I will say that in all probability in Dunedin we have as little discontent and as little public mistrust in the Force as there is to be found anywhere; but it is an open secret that things have happened and have appeared in the public Press that have caused this public unrest to some extent. For instance, the fact of certain constables rowing amongst themselves in the street of a city, and, as a result, making an assault upon certain private individuals, is public property. The fact that a constable goes out of the barracks at 9 o'clock at night, and at 10 o'clock at night is ordered home in a state of intoxication, is public property; and the public not only want to know why that is allowed, but they want to know where he got the drink between 9 and 10 o'clock at night; and I shall be glad if it can be proved that the constable was not in a state of intoxication when he left the barracks at 9 o'clock. If he was, then I want to know who is responsible. I need not enlarge upon those things, which have been made public, but they are quite sufficient to cause the unrest I have alluded to. Now, with regard to the Force itself, what do we require of members joining the Force? In the first place, a man must be physically fit; he must be a man with certain educational attainments; he should be a man of good moral character; he should be a man possessing something above the ordinary intellect; and he should in most cases be a man who is prepared to sacrifice himself at the call of duty. Now, if the Department can secure such men as that—and in all probability they can—when those men are in the Force they should receive the very best consideration and treatment it is possible to give any large body of men. Now, it has been suggested that, in consequence of laxity of inquiry in respect to candidates for the police, those individuals who have been alluded to, and others, have entered the Force—

*Mr. Dinnie:* Not suggested. It has been openly stated by yourself.

*The Commissioner:* I would ask you, Mr. Dinnie, to refrain from making answer to Mr. Arnold's statements while he is speaking. You know he is here at the express request of the Minister. Such interjections cannot have any possible effect upon the final decision I shall give upon the matter submitted to me. It is inconvenient, and it is disconcerting to interrupt a speaker when he is giving a connected narrative.

*Mr. Dinnie:* I do not quite see, with all due respect, the reason for this opening speech at all.

*The Commissioner:* That is for me. I do not recognise your status in connection with the Commission at all, unless it may be in respect of any charges made against you personally. I cannot allow you to make any reference to the manner in which I think proper to conduct this inquiry. It is for me, as Royal Commissioner, to say when any witness is travelling outside the order of reference.

*Witness:* Thank you, sir. It is of little consequence to me, because if the inquiries were made which should have been made, and still those people entered the Force, which certainly they did, I can only say there must be something very radically wrong somewhere. Now, I do not think it is a fair thing for any man to be asked to quote the names of individuals referred to, and I do not intend to do so. If a man is not in the Force to-day, there is no reason why I, in referring to something in connection with his character, should injure him; and if a man is in the Force to-day, such as men I shall presently refer to as having received promotion, it is not wise that I should publish the name of that man so that the general public will be in a position to say, "Ser-