

his goods or sell them, and away he goes, but unfortunately some of the members of his family who may be just commencing to do business have to be left behind, and that is a hardship. I spoke in the House with regard to the travelling-expenses of the Detective Force. Personally, I do not think it sufficient, and I am sure it is not a fair thing for a man away on duty to ask him to go down into the steerage—particularly in some of the smaller steamers—and rough it with the same class of criminals he is always doing duty among. My opinion is that if the Force is to be placed on a better footing these conditions will have to be improved, and there will have to be a rise in pay. The conditions will have to be made more attractive than they are at present. And, above all, the men will have to be made to feel, if they are to belong to a class which the Commissioner and all of us wish to see in the Force, that on entering the Force they are going amongst a community of men who are their equals intellectually and morally as well as physically. I have to thank you, sir, for listening to me so attentively. I have alluded to the fact that I am satisfied you will have great difficulty in getting the evidence I would like you to have. I am quite satisfied that any communication you may receive confidentially, without my stating where I got my information from, from time to time as you go on your tour, you will look into; and I am quite satisfied, whatever the Force or the public may think of the appointment of this Commission, that, as a result, good will be done, not only to the general public, but more particularly to the members of the Force.

1. *The Commissioner.*] Have you given any thought to the conditions of pay, &c., necessary to make the Force more attractive?—I have not, because I do not think I should suggest what increase there should be.

2. Do you think the Force is insufficiently paid?—I do.

3. The whole question comes under the head of recruiting, in connection with which the Commission is asked to make suggestions?—I think you will find in your travels that recruiting is not only falling off, but that the class of recruit is not as acceptable as those of a few years ago. I have reason to believe, and I know, that reports have been received by Inspectors that recruits who go on night duty are not men fitted for the position of constables—not in this town. I should be glad, the training depot being in Wellington, if the Commission, while sitting there, will ascertain how many of these recruits have been reported by the two sergeants in charge of the station as being fully qualified for appointment as constables. In regard to pay, I think the pay of a constable joining should be increased by at least 1s., and there should be a general rise.

4. Do you think the standard of education required is too high?—Yes, I do. I think the Fourth would be quite sufficient, providing you permit Sergeant Dart, who does this class of training at the depot, to state that he considers the educational qualification of a candidate is sufficient. There are men at the age of twenty-five or twenty-six who cannot readily get a Fifth Standard certificate, yet since they left school and have improved their education all round are well qualified for the position of constables.

5. *Mr. Dinnie.*] They do not have to produce a certificate if they pass an examination equal to the Fifth Standard?—I know, but they have to pass an examination either under a schoolmaster or one of the School Inspectors, and frequently the passing in this way is more difficult than the Sixth Standard examination in an ordinary school.

6. *The Commissioner.*] Do you wish to ask Mr. Dinnie any question, Mr. Arnold?—I do not intend to take up the position of prosecutor in any way. At first I did. I was communicated with by a large number of members of the Force, and thought of going through with the Commission, so that I might receive communications from them constantly, if necessary, and represent their case. However, I do not see that much is to be gained by that course.

7. The only thing to be gained would be that they would give you information which they would not give me personally?—Exactly, but perhaps if they knew that anything I receive from them I will forward to you—not the documents, but the information—that may be of some help. I do not intend asking Mr. Dinnie or any other person any questions at the present juncture, and the reason I took action in Parliament was that I felt the time had arrived for some action to be taken. It is very well for a person like myself to be told “You should communicate with the Minister,” but constables know if they communicate with the Minister that would be in itself an offence. If a man communicates with the Minister he may be marked. I do not say such things are done in New Zealand, but it might happen, and in any case the Minister gets a reply from the Department, and that is sent to the man, and the whole thing drops at that. I felt the time had arrived when something more should be done, and that was the reason I made the speech in Parliament, which I believe has been the cause of the appointment of the Commission. In future, if I find there is any necessity for me to follow the Commission up north, I shall be pleased to do so. In the meantime I am not prosecuting the Department, but I want to see it placed on a satisfactory footing in the eyes of the public, and for the sake of the men themselves.

8. Have you any clear opinion as to whether there is any political or other interference?—I have not. I do not think there has ever been political influence so far as this town is concerned, either in the appointment of constables or promotions. I do not know of any.

9. If a constituent comes to you and makes a complaint in regard to the conduct of any local officer, what would you do?—If a constituent who is not a constable came to me and complained of the action of any constable I would go to his superior officer.

10. Would you communicate direct with the Minister? My reason for asking this is that on going through the file the other day—which I intend to do in connection with every case that comes under my knowledge—I found that there are no less than three letters from a certain member of Parliament addressed to the Minister, forwarding complaints made to him by his constituents with regard to a certain constable. It seemed to me by going to the Minister direct a political aspect would be introduced, while it is open to the member to go to the immediate superior officer or to the Commissioner. In the latter case it becomes a departmental matter.—

*Mr. Dinnie:* I am not supposed to answer any member of Parliament. That answer must be sent to the Minister.