

constables to remain as they are at present, receiving, of course, the allowance they now receive for plain-clothes work. I think it would be a cruel thing to say that because a man elects to join the detective branch of the service anybody should say to him, "Now you may go on until you attain the rank of Chief Detective, but there you must stop." Well, to begin with, the detective is selected for his work simply because he shows more intelligence, more tact, and more ability than the ordinary constable. Then, why should he be debarred from attaining higher rank in the service—even that of Commissioner—provided he has the ability to fill the position? There is one other little matter I desire to refer to, and that is the number of defaulters from other districts who have been sent to this district during the last four or five years, which has occasioned me great surprise, so much so that I begin to look upon the Dunedin district as a common dumping-ground for defaulters. On the other hand, as is the case in all other districts, I have my defaulters here, but my defaulters in about nine cases out of ten are left with me. They are not palmed over on to the Inspectors of other districts. There may be a reason for that—I do not know. I have had a constable sent to me not long ago whose defaulters sheet gave me very great concern. It was anything but creditable to the man, and the question that arose in my mind was, Why was this man not discharged from the service in the district from whence he came? I scrutinised the sheet very carefully, and I asked myself three very serious questions: what the man could have been doing at a certain place at a certain hour of the night, or, rather, I should say morning. I do not know what the explanation was, but no doubt the matter must have been investigated. The explanation may have been a feasible one, leaving upon the mind of the investigating officer perhaps an innocent impression; but I have not had an opportunity of perusing the papers.

4. *The Commissioner.*] I am calling for the papers in that particular case?—Then, I think you will realise what I mean, sir. However, I shall not proceed further on that subject. As to the mode of recruiting constables at present, I must say I am not in agreement with it. I have had constables sent to me from the depot to this district whom I could not conscientiously recommend to a master chimney-sweep for appointment. When those men got into the service I can only think there was either bad judgment or neglect to scrutinise, to say the least of it. By that I do not mean to convey the impression that their general character had not been inquired into. Very probably it had; but the physique and the general intelligence to be found in those men was something very terrible indeed, for neither physique nor intelligence could be found there. There is one other little matter which has also given dissatisfaction in this district, and that is the apportioning of rewards for special services, such as convictions in the matter of sly-grog selling. I shall only quote one instance where a conviction for sly-grog selling took place in a no-license district. The person convicted was a notorious sly-grog seller, and he gave a great deal of trouble for, I think, over a year. In that district I had a very zealous constable stationed, who I know of my own knowledge had worked very hard indeed both day and night for months and months in order to bring this offender to justice. Finally he succeeded, and a heavy penalty—£50, I think, and costs—was imposed. In that case I recommended that the full reward—that is to say, £5—should be given to the constables responsible for this result. The full reward was not given. I recommended that four-fifths of the reward should go to the constable stationed at the place where the conviction took place, being the constable who had done the major portion of the work. The duties of the only other constable who was concerned in the matter extended to assisting in executing a search-warrant which took him from a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes. The reward was apportioned in this way: £2 10s. was given to the constable who did the major portion of the work and £1 10s. to the constable who did practically nothing at all. It is needless for me to say that the constable who did the work was somewhat disappointed. I wish also to recommend that, in the matter of departmental investigations, the Inspector holding the inquiry should have the power to swear his witnesses just as they are sworn in a Court of justice. Every Inspector of Police is a Justice of the Peace, and I see no reason why he should not be empowered to administer an oath at these inquiries. It would be a safeguard to the constable accused or the sergeant, as the case may be, and it would be a safeguard to the Department. As we know, there are some people very good-natured and very obliging, and if a constable should happen to get into a little trouble, and he should go to one of those people and say, "There is a little trouble in connection with which I may be fined or punished, but if you come along and tell the Inspector so-and-so I will get out of it. You need not fear any consequences. There is no oath to be taken. You have only to mention the matter to him; that is all." I think that should be discontinued as early as possible. Officials of the Railway Department who are not Justices of the Peace have the power at present to take evidence upon oath—that is, the evidence of any witness at an inquiry—and I think it is quite as desirable that the same practice should obtain in the Police Force.

5. Have you verified that statement with regard to the Railway Department?—I have, sir. I did not believe it until I actually saw the thing. I discussed the matter with a railway servant, and he convinced me of it. I do not know that there is anything else I desire to refer to specially.

6. *Mr. Dinnie.*] You have had occasion to have a little grievance?—I am not aware of that.

7. We had a previous Commission here?—That is so.

8. What was the result of that Commission as regards yourself—I am sorry to have to be placed in this position. What recommendation was made—

*The Commissioner:* That is on record. I have a copy of the report.

*Mr. Dinnie:* I simply want to show that the witness—

*The Commissioner:* If I remember rightly, that recommendation did not provide for Inspector O'Brien being here, so that evidently the recommendation was not carried out.

*Mr. Dinnie:* Well, I shall not proceed with that any further.