

92. But they had not fourteen years' service?—They were approaching it, and some had a great deal more. I will give you another instance. I remind the Commission of Constable Lees, at Roxburgh. His qualifications are very good. He is a very fit man to be promoted, but he has not been; he is about fifty-three or fifty-five, but he was much younger when I recommended him.

93. You recommended a man name Dale?—I did not strongly recommend him, and he was promoted. Regarding the standard of education, I should like to say that, in my opinion, the standard should be kept up to the Fifth. I think the man whose degree of education is less than that is very likely to shirk duty which entails the writing of a report. You very often find a constable would rather not see a thing that would entail the writing of a report if he can possibly get out of it. If we can get physique as well as a degree of education up to the Fifth Standard it would be well. But discretionary power might be given to the Commissioner, where a man's physique and other surroundings are good, to enrol him although he has not passed more than the Fourth Standard.

94. *The Commissioner.*] You are then liable to open the door to complaint by aggrieved people that they were not accepted under similar educational conditions?—I would simply give the Commissioner power to reduce the standard in certain cases.

95. Would it not be better to lower the general standard to the Fourth?—I would be very much against lowering the standard except in exceptional cases.

96. I am not in favour of lowering it, but if you cannot get sufficient candidates who can pass the higher standard you must necessarily reduce it?—I am told there are excellent men in the back-blocks who have only passed the Fourth Standard, but who would make very good men.

97. *Mr. Dinnie.*] You do not know the number of application forms we send out to men who apply for enrolment which are not returned?—That goes without saying.

98. Nor the number of men who apply to me at my office, and when they are told they have to pass the Fifth Standard nothing more is heard of them?—No.

99. Do you not think we are apt to lose a great many men of the farming class who might turn out the very best constables, but are not eligible owing to the Fifth Standard requirement?—I do not think there is much excuse for young men not being able to pass it.

100. *The Commissioner.*] But the fact remains that—I am not speaking by the book—the great majority of lads in the country leave school after passing the Fourth?—A great many do.

101. *Mr. Dinnie.* The Fifth Standard is only on its trial, so far.

102. *Witness.* I am a great believer in farmers' sons as candidates for the Force.

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WEDNESDAY, 14TH JULY, 1909.

JAMES NEIL, Botanical Chemist, examined on oath. (No. 17.)

*Witness.* I reside in George Street, Dunedin. I have a small grievance against the police. I do not think they are sufficiently zealous in trying to protect the liberties of public speaking. I have been at public meetings, from which I have been glad to escape with my life, where there were three or four thousand people, and seats and things were broken, and it was a wonder heads were not broken too, and there were only two policemen. After a time I succeeded in getting outside, and saw five constables and a sergeant, and I asked them if they were going to do anything to save people from getting killed. The sergeant asked what they could do, and I said, "You can go and let the people out, at any rate." They did go, and in a quarter of an hour the place was quite orderly. Some men fear neither God nor man except a policeman, and as soon as they see one they are cowards. I have known of a man paying £5 for the rent of a hall, and not being allowed to speak one word owing to roughs taking possession, and I noticed two policemen at the back of the hall enjoying the fun. My personal grievance is that policemen do not like open-air preaching.

1. *The Commissioner.*] What have policemen to do with that?—Well, a number of young men come along, and have not the sense to go away if they do not like to listen, but make mischief, and prevent people from speaking. I have been preaching at the Fountain for five or six years, and sometimes they come and throw water over me, and knock my hat over my eyes, and even push me down. I have complained to the police of it.

2. To whom?—Not any one in particular—the Force as a whole—and I have been told I ought to take a hall for preaching. I said, "The people I want to speak to will not go to a hall." The law allows liberty to speak in the open air. I have preached in Glasgow, Belfast, London, New York, and Melbourne, and have never been handled so roughly as in Dunedin. I thought there was a law preventing juveniles from smoking, but in my experience numbers of young senseless lads get behind me and smoke me off the place. I was told by the Inspector that there is only one man from the Octagon to the Monument, and he could not be everywhere. I said he did not want to be everywhere, but he could put in an appearance occasionally, and if there were any complaint he could attend to it. So long as open-air preaching is allowed by law, policemen should try and stop senseless disturbance. I would suggest that one or two plain-clothes men should attend sometimes, and make an example of one or two of the disturbers. As a citizen, I consider I have a right to have my liberties protected so long as I say nothing blasphemous, galling, or personal.

3. Have you made any complaint to the authorities?—Yes.

4. To any responsible head?—I have complained to the Inspector. My complaint was that I was maltreated by these roughs.