

The conduct generally of the men has been good. I have personally examined the defaulters sheet of every member of the Force, and, so far as these can be taken as a guide, the result is satisfactory. But, in addition to these, I have the sworn testimony of all the Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, and sergeants, and they say that the general conduct of the men is distinctly good. This is speaking of a Force of upwards of eight hundred men. But there are exceptions.

These exceptions have to be mostly referred to under the head of sobriety. I am convinced that a good deal of drinking goes on amongst the younger men in the Force. I also regret to say that there are a number of instances in which older members are clearly shown to be habitual drinkers, and these men, being so well known as they are, should be promptly dealt with. Inspector Cullen's evidence was somewhat disquieting as to the extent to which drinking goes on amongst some of his men in Auckland. He said that there had been more drunkenness during the past twelve months than during the previous three years. He said that at one time you could not go upstairs without tripping over empty beer-bottles in the passage. It was found necessary to take the extreme step of searching the men when coming off duty. The presumption was that the liquor was generally given to the men—for what purpose can only be presumed. Inspector Cullen's evidence was corroborated in all essential particulars by Sub-Inspector Hendrey, and he emphasized the difficulty of entirely preventing the drinking amongst the men.

All charges of drunkenness against constables and sergeants are dealt with by the Commissioner; and I am bound to say that I think he has dealt far too leniently with the great majority of cases; and this is a serious element in the difficulty of stopping the practice. I am strongly of the opinion that the effect of dealing too leniently with serious offences is to lower the ideal of duty of every man in the Force, and, if persisted in to any extent, will have most dire results on efficiency generally. Personally I consider drunkenness on the part of the men a most serious offence, dangerous to the individual, dangerous to the community. There should be no place in the New Zealand Police Force for men who are addicted to drink, or who have disgraced themselves, and their comrades, and the whole of the Police Force by being found drunk while on duty and in positions of great responsibility. I am aware that the Commissioner does not view the offence in the same way that I do, but I am strongly of opinion that the leniency shown, and the extraordinary inequality of treatment, are responsible to a large extent for the existence of what I consider a most dangerous element in the Force at the present time. There are a considerable number of men still in the Force who have been dealt with at various times for drunkenness by the present Commissioner. Since the Commission started two men have been called upon to resign on account of drinking habits, and one detective has been reduced to the ranks. To show what I mean by "inequality of treatment" and "extreme leniency," I will quote a few cases dealing with drunkenness alone and what flowed from it.

But before doing this I desire to quote the police regulation on the subject:—

*"Drunkenness on duty will invariably be punished by dismissal or enforced resignation, according to previous character. Simple drunkenness will not be overlooked even on a first occasion. Under extenuating circumstances, recommended by the Inspector, this offence may on a first occasion be visited with a lesser punishment, but should the offence be repeated the member of the Force will be dismissed."* (Reg. 62.)

It is most regrettable that the Commissioner should on certain occasions have deliberately ignored the clear language and intention of the regulations. The effect, in my opinion, has been disastrous as regards a small section of the Force.

- A. Drunkenness and assault: transferred to another station.
- B. Drunkenness on duty: fined 10s. and transferred. Drunkenness on duty again, seven months later: fined £1 and disgraced.
- C. Drunkenness on duty; (2) insulting a sergeant; (3) disobedience of orders: fined £1, 5s., and 5s. and cautioned.