

It was said by Mr. Arnold that the conduct of the men in barracks in Wellington had occasionally been bad, and that "scenes" had been created. I have inquired into this matter, and the evidence obtainable only shows that there were disturbances on two occasions—one at midnight, which had to be quelled by the sergeant. A number of witnesses have testified to the general good conduct of the men in barracks, and, as the constables seem to feel the reflections cast upon them somewhat keenly, I am very glad to be able to say that, so far as the evidence goes, there is every reason to believe that the great majority of the men are a credit to the Force.

"As to whether any political or other improper interference exists in connection with the Force; and, if so, to what extent, and whether such interference has any influence in the administration of the said Force."

To enable me to form a judgment in respect of this, I have carefully examined all files of papers relating to cases where it appeared that there was any suspicion of influence being a factor in certain events that could not reasonably be accounted for in any other way. I have found a great number of letters from members of Parliament to Ministers, written on behalf of certain members of the Force, either to secure promotion or other advantage; I have found letters from members covering complaints from constituents and asking for inquiry, and expressing opinions adverse to certain members of the Force; I have found letters and petitions of all sorts and varieties: but no single case have I found in which there was positive proof of political influence having been the determining factor in any act done as regards an individual or locality. On the contrary, I have seen a large number of letters written by Ministers to members in response to a variety of solicitations, in which there is a most distinct independence of tone adopted in refusing to accede to requests—refusals, too, which were subsequently adhered to.

A large number of witnesses have testified to their belief that political and other influence is rampant. Very few have done more than express this belief, based on statements made by men who had boasted that they have been able to exercise it, or echoing the general cry, "Oh! every one knows it is used." A few have given instances of events which to their minds were quite unaccountable-for except on the favourite hypothesis. Every instance quoted has been carefully probed, but without any positive result.

In addition to the ordinary police witnesses, I had the evidence of the Hon. Mr. McGowan, voluntarily given at the Auckland sitting. Mr. McGowan was Minister in Charge of the Police Department for some nine years. He admitted, of course, having been constantly approached by members on police matters generally, but stated emphatically that such had no influence on himself or his actions.

But I think that the most mischievous direction in which political influence has operated has been in inducing the enrolment of men into the Force without sufficient inquiry. I have not the slightest doubt that the word of the member has gone very far in many cases. I am equally sure that in very few instances has the member had sufficient personal knowledge of the applicant to justify his action.

A great number of "confidential" letters are doubtless written to Ministers on matters affecting the Force, and what the effect of these is it is quite impossible to say. They are not filed, as a rule, in the usual way, and one cannot trace them or their effect. In the same way, of course, members have boundless opportunities of speaking to the Minister, or even to the Commissioner, on matters affecting the Force, and presumably with a view to influencing action in a certain direction. It would be simply amazing if this did not have some slight effect. I am not prepared to say that the administration of the Force has suffered to any appreciable extent through political influence, but the knowledge and feeling that such, if judiciously used, may be successful has a very mischievous effect. Some constables have approached members in the most open way to advance their interests. One man admitted to me that he had solicited