

R E P O R T.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable Uchter John Mark, Earl of Ranfurly, Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over Her Majesty's Colony of New Zealand and its Dependencies, and Vice-Admiral of the same.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the Commissioners appointed by your Excellency's Letters Patent of the 4th day of February, 1898, to inquire into the several matters and things hereinafter mentioned and referred to, that is to say,—

- (1.) The general organization, distribution, control, and enrolment of the Police Force of the colony as it now exists in its several branches, and the discipline and efficiency thereof, and in what respect the said Force or any part thereof could be better recruited, organized, controlled, or made more efficient:
- (2.) The pay, emoluments, and rewards of the said Force, including any provision for superannuation or retirement therefrom, and the allowance of compensation thereon; and to make such suggestions as to all or any of these matters, or in respect of allowances to be made to members of the said Force in case of illness or accident while in such Force, or by way of compassionate allowance to their wives or families in case of death:
- (3.) As to the general conduct, sobriety, and morality of the members of the said Force, and the alleged failure of the said Police Force to maintain order and enforce the laws of the colony,—

have now the honour to report to your Excellency as follows:—

The scope of our inquiry has necessitated our visiting so many parts of the colony, and the hearing of so many witnesses, that we found it impossible to submit our report at the time originally appointed. We therefore applied for and received from your Excellency an extension of the time for presenting it.

In view of the great public interest in the matter of our inquiry we deemed it advisable to admit the Press and public to our sittings, and to give all parties desirous of bringing any matter under our consideration, or against whom any complaint was made, the right to appear by counsel, and advertised the arrangements in all the daily newspapers of the colony.

The opportunity thus afforded was taken advantage of to lodge complaints of a more or less serious character against individual members of the Police Force of all grades, and to make charges of maladministration, negligence, and general inefficiency against the Force as a whole.

Many of the complaints and charges so preferred have on investigation proved to be of a very trivial character, but nevertheless a considerable time was occupied in their investigation, and a large amount of evidence taken which swells the bulk of the records we have to submit to your Excellency, while others were of an important character, and will be commented on in this report.

In the early part of our inquiry we took evidence of matters forming grounds of complaint against the Police Force which occurred subsequent to the date of our Commission, but afterwards, having held that our inquiry was limited to that date, we refused to receive evidence on such matters.