

and that, in order to reach the Minister at the head of the department, it was desirable to obtain the assistance of some member of the Legislature or friend of the Minister; and, acting on that opinion, this influence has been resorted to in many cases. The practice is not of recent origin—it has been in existence more or less since the abolition of the provinces, and under successive Ministries.

The influence thus invoked, so far as our inquiries have enabled us to ascertain, has been exercised more frequently with a view to remedy a supposed wrong or injustice than to obtain special favour in the way of preferment, and without much success; but that it has been used with both objects is established by the evidence we have taken. In no case, however, has it been proved that political services were urged or suggested as the ground for consideration or preferment. In the majority of the cases which have come under our notice the Minister appealed to has replied firmly that the arrangements of the department could not be altered. In a few cases only the concession asked for was granted.

The late Commissioner (Colonel Hume) has informed us that letters marked “Private” are not put on the file, but are usually destroyed, and are therefore not produceable. We can, consequently, form no opinion as to the extent to which influence used in this way may have been successful in securing the advancement of members of the Force. That such influence has been used we can have no doubt—it is used in every service and every State.

As illustrative of the point to which reliance upon support from outside the department has reached, one Inspector (Pardy) stated that a constable had told him that he had sufficient influence to overrule him and the Commissioner too; and a member of the Legislative Council told us that he had been many times applied to by policemen and their friends for his assistance, and had written or wired to Ministers about them; he also stated to us that on one occasion a constable had taken two telegrams already written and addressed to the Minister or to the Commissioner for his signature, and that he had signed one of them: he added that it did not secure its object.

The promotions made during the latter part of last year and the beginning of this year have done much to create a more contented and hopeful spirit in the Force, and we have no doubt will tend to destroy the feeling that outside influence is necessary for advancement.

It is of the highest importance, in order to secure efficiency and proper discipline, that this feeling should cease to exist, and that men should realise that promotion depends on their efficiency and the good opinion of their own officers, and it should be regarded as the duty of all prominent men, politicians especially, to abstain from using their influence on behalf of members of the Force, and not encourage them to break one of the Police Regulations, and so expose themselves to punishment; but so long as the internal affairs of the Force are under the personal control of a Minister it is probable the influence referred to will be brought to bear upon him.

Alleged Sectarian Influence.

It has been stated in evidence before your Commissioners that members of the Force of the Roman Catholic faith are in charge of the majority of the out-stations, and it has been suggested that they have been favoured by Inspectors of that creed. The returns show that 101 Roman Catholics are in charge of out-stations, and 134 Protestants. The suggestion that the members of the Roman Catholic Church have been specially favoured appears to us to be unsupported by facts.

A large proportion of those who joined the Force many years ago, and who are now in charge of stations, were men who had been members of the Irish Constabulary, who in process of time have become senior members of the Force and are numbered amongst its most efficient constables. Of the Inspectors four are Roman Catholics and three Protestants. The proportion of Roman Catholics holding stations is 42·9 per cent., while the percentage of Roman Catholics in the Force is 41·6.

Efficiency as shown by Crime Returns.

Notwithstanding all that we have referred to, the work of the police has been fairly satisfactory in the detection of crime and preservation of order.

As bearing on this subject, we submit for your Excellency's information a statistical analysis of the annual returns, showing in tabular form the proportion of persons sum-