

228. Have there been many retirements from the Detective Force?—Not many, but the men in it have been very much improved.

229. Take the clause preceding :—

There are too many ranks, both of sergeants and constables, and a new classification is much required. Firstly, third-class sergeants should be rated as senior constables; secondly, the rank of sergeant-major, which is an anomaly in a police service, should be abolished; thirdly, the second- and third-class constables should be amalgamated; and lastly, the office of chief detective should be done away with. The rank of sergeant-major has virtually become obsolete. In former times the holder of this position was selected for his knowledge of drills, which he imparted to the men, but now the office is administrative, and to a great extent absorbs or monopolizes the duties which ought to devolve upon the Inspector; besides, a sergeant-major is an unnecessary go-between the ordinary rank and file and the superior officer.

That existed in 1891?—Yes.

230. Have you altered that?—No.

231. And yet you say you consider the Force thoroughly efficient and not disorganized?—Yes. It is not disorganized because that remains so. It is not disorganized because all my recommendations are not being carried out. All I say is, it would be better if that were done.

232. There is a general muddle in ranks?—There is no general muddle at all. There are too many ranks, that is all. That is what is the matter.

233. Have you not said the number of ranks bars promotion?—No, I have not said the number of ranks bars promotion.

234. Have you not said that too many sergeants bars promotion?—Yes.

235. Does that not mean disorganization?—Yes; but that is all wiped out now. Sergeants were made the other day.

236. Has the Chief Detective been abolished?—No, but the fact of retaining the name does not disorganize the thing. I never supposed when I wrote those reports that every recommendation was going to be carried out. If I got half of them carried out, I think I would be lucky.

237. At the present time it is not over-officered at any point?—I have nothing to do with the present time.

238. At the time you left off control?—At the time I left off control they were an efficient body.

239. When Colonel Hume said it was thoroughly efficient and not disorganized, did he refer to to-day, and not to October last?—No; I say it was not disorganized in October last. The fact of there being too many sergeants does not disorganize it. The only thing is the unfortunate ratepayer has to pay if there are too many sergeants. It ought to make it much more efficient.

240. Does not dissatisfaction mean disorganization?—I have not said there was dissatisfaction amongst the men.

240A. In your report of 1891 you say: "A better feeling has, I am glad to say, already been established, and though promotion has been blocked, the disappointment is less acute than if juniors had been promoted over the heads of their seniors for no greater qualifications or recommendations than political or local influences"—That is what I call disorganization—putting juniors over seniors.

241. Had that stopped in 1891?—I think quite stopped.

241A. And local or political influences do not affect transfers and promotions in 1897 at all?—Local and political influences; when did I say that?

242. Here; the term is here in your report?—That must have come on after that, because I have told you straight about that; that they do exist. The promotion was blocked at that time, there is no doubt about that.

243. It is not so now?—No; they are promoting them now.

244. And those injustices have absolutely ceased now?—Of promoting juniors over the heads of seniors, I think absolutely. There may be some exceptions.

245. What would the reason for the exception be?—Well, for instance, the constable that caught the convict Allandale; he would be promoted for meritorious conduct.

246. Were not some promotions made by the Minister during your term of office without any reason being given you at all for the promotion?—No; I do not think so.

247. You do not remember a single case?—No; I do not think so.

248. Were all the promotions recommended by you adopted by the Minister?—Yes, I think so.

249. In every case?—I think so.

250. Was it only in regard to transfers that he interfered with your recommendation?—Yes; I do not think he interfered with any promotions I recommended. In the detective branch he made more promotions than I had recommended, but in the way only of seniority.

251. In the other branch were no promotions made without your recommendation?—I do not think so.

THURSDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY, 1898.

Examination of Colonel ARTHUR HUME on oath continued.

*Colonel Hume*: I wish, Sir, to correct a mistake, which I find I made yesterday. When I spoke of Constable Nixon being one of those two men who were employed as night-watchmen at the Government Buildings when an attempt at incendiarism was suspected, I was entirely wrong. Constable Nixon was a different man from either of these two. The Commissioners can easily understand how the mistake arose, because at that time I was also Under-Secretary for Defence, and it was impossible for me to remember details of each particular branch. Both of the two men employed as night-watchmen were appointed to the Militia after they had completed their work at the Government Buildings.