

TUESDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY, 1898.

Examination of Colonel ARTHUR HUME on oath continued.

910. *Colonel Pitt.*] Colonel Hume, in reference to instruction, are the members of the Police Force supplied with a copy of the Police Guide by (now) Sir Howard Vincent?—Yes.

911. Every man?—Yes.

912. And that contains information upon almost every point that a policeman requires to know in reference to his duty?—Yes, Sir.

913. *The Chairman.*] About the disorganization in the detective branch, referred to in your several reports, what was the disorganization you refer to?—What is the report, Sir.

914. In 1891, and again in 1894?—Well, the principal thing was the extreme anxiety of every detective to get charge of a particular case, especially big cases, and there appeared to be jealousy existing between the members of the Force as to who should get a case in hand and make the arrest. I attribute it a great deal to the chief detective—to the fact of having the rank of chief detective. Naturally, the case was reported to him first, and I found very often he would take charge of the case himself, and perhaps some other detective would find out something about it and arrest the man, and then there was jealousy between them.

915. The disorganization referred to in the detective branch, then, arose from jealousy?—Jealousy, yes.

916. In your report for 1891, you say the Detective Force is in an unsatisfactory state, owing perhaps to men having been selected more from political influence or favouritism than special intelligence and aptitude for their duties?—I have already quoted a case, I think.

917. Does that influence continue?—Well, I quoted the case of Mayne.

918. Were you referring then only to an individual case in that report?—Then another case has happened since. What I mean to say is this: that members of Parliament and Justices of the Peace and other people are incessantly, even up to the present time, making representations. They say, "So-and-so would make a splendid plain-clothes constable. Can you not do something for him?"

919. You said yesterday, if the Commissioner had backbone that would not influence him. Does this backbone not exist, or where is the backbone that this influence affects?—I think it is not fair to the Commissioner trying to bring pressure to bear on the department.

920. In your report for 1896 you state: "I do say, however, that interference with the administration of the Force, without due cause, must result in the breaking of the bonds of discipline." To what interference do you refer?—I refer to local influences generally.

921. But then over whom was this influence brought to bear?—It is brought to bear on the Minister.

922. On the Minister, not on the Commissioner?—Oh no, on the Minister.

923. And what is the effect of this influence being brought to bear on the Minister?—Of course it is hard for him to resist.

924. He yields, in other words?—I would not like to say that altogether. Well, I suppose in some cases he does yield.

925. Does the consequence of his yielding to this influence affect independence of management on the part of the Commissioner?—Yes, I think it does.

926. Does it control the will of the Commissioner?—Well, the will of the Commissioner is subservient to the Minister. I would like to give a case that comes to my memory now. A constable made an arrest for sheep-stealing. Of course, as I have explained to the Commissioners, the Commissioner of Police has a fund at his disposal for giving rewards for anything of the sort that he considers deserving. The Inspector may or may not draw his attention to it. He generally does, and the Commissioner acts on it. Not long ago, five or six Justices of the Peace wrote recommending a man for this reward. I maintain that it is no business of the Justices of the Peace or anybody else. That thing should be entirely in the hands of the Inspector and the Commissioner. The Inspector may recommend, or may not; or the Commissioner may consider the Inspector should have recommended and give a reward. But the local people send in a form of petition—"What a splendid man this is, and what a splendid arrest he has made"—and, if you do not listen to the prayer of their petition, they immediately have a grievance. In the same way you will get a letter from local people to say a man's quarters are not big enough for a man who has seven children, as there are only five rooms in the house. Well, I maintain that the Inspector and the Commissioner who visit these stations are the men to settle these matters. (*Vide Regulation No. 118.*)

927. To whom do you say these communications come?—Sometimes to me, and sometimes to the Minister.

928. If they come to you, do they influence you?—I am afraid they do sometimes.

929. *Mr. Poynton.*] You have no power under the Act or regulations to make any appointments to the Force?—No.

930. That power vests in the Governor, who is represented, of course, by Cabinet or the Minister?—Yes, Sir.

931. And when you submitted a list of eligible candidates for admission to the Force, and the Minister exercised his choice, he was acting strictly and legally within his rights?—Yes.

932. Now, the only constable that you remember as having been enrolled since 1891 is Nixon, in contravention of the regulations?—Oh no. I did not give the Commissioners to understand that.

933. You told us that all the appointments made were in accordance with the regulations up to 1891?—Yes.

934. Since 1891, do you know of any other constable but Nixon who was appointed in contravention of the regulations, up to the date these regulations were cancelled?—Oh yes, there are a