

1898.

NEW ZEALAND.

PUBLIC PETITIONS A TO L COMMITTEE.

(REPORT OF COMMISSIONER OF POLICE ON THE PETITION OF ALFRED CROSSEY.)

(See also Appendix I.—I.)

The COMMISSIONER of POLICE to the CHAIRMAN, Public Petitions A to L Committee.

Police Department (Commissioner's Office), Wellington,

26th October, 1898.

SIR,—

In view of what occurred yesterday, and to avoid any possible misconstruction, I desire to place before you the following statement:—

As regards the action of police in respect to the petitioner's house, I take the fullest responsibility. Inspector Pender acted upon instructions given him by me. What I did I had a perfect right to do, and shall repeat it if necessary. Everything was done openly. I have nothing to hide or even qualify, and had I omitted to take action, with the knowledge I possessed, I should have neglected my duty as Commissioner of Police.

Paragraph 2 in the petition contained such glaring inaccuracies that I felt bound to make the unusual request that the evidence be taken on oath.

As you are aware, when the petition came on for consideration on the 13th instant, the Committee were pleased to accede to my request. Mr. Jellicoe, on behalf of the petitioner, thereupon applied for an adjournment, and an adjournment till 10 a.m., 20th instant, was granted, no evidence being taken. On leaving the Parliamentary Buildings after the adjournment, Mr. Jellicoe and I walked down to the front of the Government Buildings together, and on the way he suggested that some understanding might be come to, and that the petition might then be withdrawn. I informed Mr. Jellicoe that I was prepared to stand by my action, and could not enter into any compromise with Mr. Crossey. All I desired was that Mr. Crossey should conduct his business in a proper manner, and withdraw the guard from his front doors on Sundays, and then there would be no need of special police supervision. Mr. Jellicoe said he would consult his client and see me again.

On the 17th instant Mr. Jellicoe called at my office, and said that Mr. Crossey would withdraw the guard, and that when the case came on again he would apply to withdraw the petition. I informed Mr. Jellicoe that I was perfectly indifferent on the matter, I could only repeat what I had told him on the 13th instant, and I should make that statement before the Committee. Nothing further passed between us.

On the 20th instant the Committee did not sit, but I was informed that Mr. Jellicoe had attended at the Committee-room and had handed in a statement.

At 10.30 a.m., 21st, I attended before the Committee, and Mr. Jellicoe's statement was read to me. As this statement appeared to me to be open to misconstruction, I requested to be allowed to explain all that had taken place between Mr. Jellicoe and myself, and, being allowed, I then repeated what had taken place as already stated herein. You then asked me if I had any objection to the petition being withdrawn, and I replied that I had none, but by that I did not intend it to be understood that I was any party to the withdrawal, or that I acquiesced therein. I felt that it was entirely a matter for the Committee, and that if the petition was withdrawn it was tantamount to saying that the statements in the petition were also withdrawn. From the commencement I had looked upon this matter not as affecting me personally, but as an attempt to question my administration of the Force; consequently it was quite immaterial to me what Mr. Crossey chose to put in his petition. I was convinced that my action would be correctly interpreted by all persons in the colony whose good opinion is worth having, and could therefore afford to pass over with indifference any attempt that might have been made to misrepresent me. All I desired was to place before your Committee the correct account of what occurred, and to show Parliament, through the medium of your Committee, that my actions were not improper.

I have, &c.,

J. B. TUNBRIDGE,

Commissioner of Police.

The Chairman, Public Petitions A to L Committee,
House of Representatives, Wellington.

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