

POLICE BILLS.

There is presented to me for final action a number of bills passed at the recent session of the General Assembly which, if approved, would have the effect of compelling the Police Commissioner of Baltimore City to reinstate certain former members of the Department who had severed their connection with the force under varying circumstances.

These bills are as follows:

Chapter 150 (House Bill 223), for reinstatement of John E. Coppersmith.

Chapter 162 (House Bill 368), for reinstatement of John W. Brown.

Chapter 394 (Senate Bill 301), for reinstatement of John J. Mulligan.

Chapter 444 (House Bill 408), for reinstatement of Martin R. Goonan.

Chapter 521 (House Bill 291), for reinstatement of Jos. Leo Finney.

Chapter 538 (House Bill 599), for reinstatement of Wm. F. Heunick.

While it will serve no useful purpose to review in detail the cases in question, I might state that I have reviewed the respective histories. In several of the matters, the individuals while members of the Police Department were involved in cases of serious infractions of the law and of departmental regulations. In certain instances the individuals have been separated from the service for a number of years.

It is my considered judgment that the attempt to legislate back into the Police service former members who have been separated from the service is undesirable legislation. The Police Commissioner of Baltimore City is vested with ample authority to reinstate former members in deserving cases. The records, case histories and all available information are before the Commissioner, as the commanding officer of the Department, and he is best situated to determine whether an individual ought to be reinstated. To compel, by legislative enactment, the reinstatement of a person who has left the Department under charges, for example, might be most demoralizing to the force. Certainly it strips the Commissioner of the authority to determine who can be returned to active duty without disruption of the discipline so necessary and desirable in the constabulary.