

QUOTATIONS

“The news from the Safety and Security Minister could hardly be more depressing: in 2003 and 2004 nearly 3000 police personnel were convicted of crimes. He did not elaborate on the types of crimes and responded with a blunt ‘no’ when asked whether he would make a statement on the matter. This is not good enough. Surely the public of this country deserve an explanation of these appalling statistics? And a breakdown of the crimes involved? Or, at the very least, what plans he has to address this problem? And it clearly is a problem. These figures confirm what many would have suspected from their daily intake of media: barely a day passes without some reference to a police member being accused of or involved in some crime.

This has given rise to an unhealthy perception about the Service: it is not to be trusted. This is a disservice to the many loyal, dedicated and honest policemen. But it is also a disservice to South Africa as a whole as it gnaws away at the country’s moral fibre. It is cold comfort, but the fact that so many policemen have been convicted suggests that somebody is aware of the problem and is trying to do something about it. We would hope that the minister and the police leadership would adopt a proactive approach to combating this problem.

The statistics, even in their rawest form, must suggest that the police recruitment model is inadequate. It is evident that the selection process itself needs to be tightened to ensure a better crop of recruits. And then the training processes need to be adjusted to emphasise the role of integrity, honesty and ethical conduct in good policing. Such steps - combined with the existing system of punishment for miscreants – should, over time, restore law and order to the forces of law and order. And, hopefully the reputation of the police service to the sort of standing that it should have had all along.”

Extract from the editorial of the *Cape Times* of the 12 October 2005.