

give medical certificates in cases that require them. They should also attend police-cell cases when required, and render such other medical service as may be arranged in connection with a pension system or otherwise.

At present constables have to obtain certificates at their own cost, and are at times put to the expense of paying their medical attendants for repeated certificates of unfitness for duty when suffering from slight illness. Such certificates are often received with suspicion of malingering, which would no longer exist if the certificates were given by the police surgeon.

Medical attendance on sick constables and sergeants should be free, the usual deduction being made from their pay while on the sick-list, except in cases of injury received in the course of duty.

Inquiries.

There is a rankling sense of injustice felt by some constables owing to records of offences being on their defaulters' sheets, in respect of which they feel they have not had a fair trial. Some go so far as to say that they have not been aware of their records until the sheets were produced to your Commissioners. We are satisfied that in many cases the men have good grounds for complaint. Investigations were, a few years back, conducted in a perfunctory way, and the Inspector, in many instances, was the prosecutor and judge combined. But few instances of this have taken place in recent years; but that Inspectors not now in the Force have behaved in a despotic manner we have no doubt, and the evil results of their acts still remain. It is very desirable that there should be a feeling amongst the members of the Force that punishments are imposed only after a fair trial. We recommend that when an Inspector is conducting an inquiry the evidence should in every case be taken in writing, and signed by the witnesses; that a copy of the decision should be given to the sergeant or constable immediately after it is delivered; and that it should state, in the case of a conviction, whether or not it is to be recorded on his defaulter's sheet. Should the constable or sergeant desire to appeal against the Inspector's decision, he should have the right of appeal to the Commissioner. In the event of appeal the evidence should be taken on oath before a Stipendiary Magistrate, and forwarded to the Commissioner with a report by him on the case. This would give the Commissioner the advantage of having evidence taken on oath, and the case presented to him from the point of view of a man trained in the laws of evidence and wholly disinterested, on which to form his judgment, without in any way interfering with his discretion, as the final decision should rest with him.

The record of trivial offences on a constable's defaulter's sheet should be cancelled after five years' good conduct.

Retiring Allowance.

Although there is no allowance on retirement as of right, it has been the practice for years to grant to constables an amount not exceeding one year's pay as compassionate allowance. In the case of Inspectors, up to two years' pay.

Reappointment after Compensation.

Three cases have been brought to our knowledge where officers have retired on compensation and have been subsequently reappointed to the Force on the understanding that the amount paid to them should be refunded, but this has not been done.

It has been suggested that these men have been favourably treated by the department in being allowed to retain these sums.

In one case an Inspector (Moore) was, after being retired on compensation, readmitted to the Force as sergeant-major. The Minister telegraphed to him, "You are to be reinstated in the Police Force with rank sergeant-major. On first vacancy Inspectorship you to be promoted to your former rank as Inspector. Compensation paid to you to be refunded."

He afterwards contended that the proper interpretation of the Minister's telegram was that he was not required to refund the compensation until restored to his former rank. As the refund was not made the Minister informed him he had lost his confidence, and the officer remained and died in the rank of sergeant-major.

The colony has lost nothing by the amount not being repaid, except the interest, as the amount, if not paid to the officer, would in the usual course have been paid to his widow at his death.