

expect to be taken at their own estimate of themselves and their capacity, and I am very far from saying that every man who has advanced his claims for promotion is qualified for it. But when I see some of the inconsistent, inequitable, and apparently quite unwarranted instances of promotion, I do not wonder at many men feeling aggrieved, and expressing themselves in no measured terms over the way in which they have been treated. The Commissioner has repeatedly, during the course of this inquiry, asked complaining constables whether they have ever applied for promotion, and, if answered in the negative, has appeared quite satisfied that he has completely disposed of the complaint. I say most unhesitatingly that there should be no necessity for a man who is entitled to it to ask for promotion. I would almost regard the asking for it as a disqualification. It is scarcely necessary to say that all promotions should go by merit and service, and that, all things being equal, seniority should govern. The Commissioner tells me that all promotions recommended by him have been based on these considerations. He can, I suppose, easily persuade himself that this is so, but in several instances the facts do not bear it out. I have no doubt whatever, and it is not seriously disputed, that the main consideration in conferring some of the promotions has been to get the increased pay for the work being done by the constable by means of the improved rank. I cannot imagine anything more mischievous in practice than this system, nor more disastrous to the best interests of the Force. A man should always be paid according to the work he does, but he should be paid as for the work, and not given a rank that he is in no way entitled to. I will take the case of what is probably the most flagrant instance of all to emphasize what I mean—that of Sergeant Muggerridge. He was enrolled into the Police Force on the 1st July, 1899. After doing only seven months' actual police work, he was appointed a junior clerk in the Wellington District Office on the 23rd February, 1900. On the 1st September, 1901, he was appointed to be Police Storekeeper, and on the 1st October, 1906, he was promoted to be sergeant over the heads of about 273 constables, all senior in service to himself. And this, too, after seven months' actual police work, and less than seven years' complete service! Can it be wondered at that constables with excellent records, some of them with over thirty years' actual and continuous police service, proved men, and recommended by their officers for promotion before this man even entered the Force, should feel dissatisfied with an administration where such an egregious act of injustice was possible? Men under these circumstances naturally become disheartened, and lose all confidence in the controlling head. A single instance of this sort does incalculable mischief in striking a fatal blow at the *morale* of the Force. It is, of course, impossible to say how many of the 273 constables who were passed over in favour of this man were fully qualified for promotion, but I certainly know of a great number. It is sufficient in this connection to point out that twenty-two sergeants have been promoted since the elevation of Sergeant Muggerridge, each one being senior in service to this man, and each one of these is now, of course, junior to him as sergeant, and therefore so much lower in the competition for further promotion. Is it a stretch of imagination to assume that very few of these twenty-two men were any less fit for promotion on the 1st October, 1906, when Sergeant Muggerridge received his promotion? And what on earth were his special qualifications from a police point of view that justified such an extraordinary jump? The work done by the Storekeeper is important and responsible, but certainly does not call for any special ability, and I have shown elsewhere that it might have had better and more satisfactory results. I say emphatically that if the Commissioner considered that this man was underpaid he should have made provision for his remuneration in some direct way. It was quite as easy to deal with him on the estimates as "Police Storekeeper," with a certain salary, as to term him "Sergeant (Storekeeper)," with allowances. Periodically the Commissioner asks each Inspector to forward to him a list of constables with over ten years' service and under fifty years of age whom they can recommend for the rank of sergeant. Evidently seven years in a store is of more moment than ten years in active police work.