

Another fruitful source of discontent has been the promotion of some of the men who have been acting as District Clerks in various parts. The latest of these appointments has been that of Sergeant Cummings, who entered the Force on the 1st July, 1899, and was promoted on the 1st July, 1909, having served exactly ten years. This man is District Clerk in the Napier office. He has been a District Clerk since the beginning of 1907. He was an assistant clerk for about seven years previously. Presumably he has done very little active police work. There is no doubt that the duties of District Clerk are onerous, important, and responsible, and deserve special recognition, but not in the form of police rank, and it is a great mistake in the interests of the Force to make service in the District Office a short cut to promotion. It has created the utmost dissatisfaction. This man was promoted over the heads of 209 other constables all senior to himself.

There are several other instances in which District Clerks have been unduly promoted over the heads of men their seniors, and who have themselves afterwards been promoted, but losing the seniority. The system in a Police Force that permits such a thing as this is radically bad.

Of five other District Clerks, I find that one was promoted over the heads of 126 seniors, a second over 113, a third over 89, a fourth over 140, and a fifth over 221.

Of the sergeants in the Headquarters Staff, one was put over the heads of 161 seniors, another over 172, and a third over 53.

I do not question the quality of these men—they are, no doubt, very competent in their respective vocations; but their advancement over the heads of men who have since themselves been promoted cannot be defended, looking to the fact that their qualifications were mainly clerical. The others should either have received promotion when they were entitled to it, and ahead of these clerks, or else, having been once passed over, should have been left as constables. This sort of in-and-out business has played havoc with the spirit of the Force.

To show the lack of method in carrying out promotions, and to justify the existence of the apparent grave discontent in the Force, I will take the case of another man, Sergeant McKeefry. This man was enrolled into the Force in 1887 after service in the Armed Constabulary. He was promoted to the rank of sergeant in 1908, at the age of forty-eight. He applied for promotion in 1904 and received a favourable reply. He remained satisfied until December of that year, when a man junior to himself was promoted. He then felt annoyed, and applied again. He got a reply saying that the application would be considered when the next selections were being made. After eighteen months there were other men junior to himself promoted. He then saw the Commissioner on the subject, and he told him for the first time that he would have to pass an examination. Several of the men junior to McKeefry had never passed an examination before being promoted. However, he sat and passed, and finally got his stripes. The result to him of it all was that twenty-six men junior to him in service were his seniors as sergeants. I know McKeefry well, and I also know many of the men who have become his seniors. Many of them were in no sense his superiors. As he says, he taught many of them all the police duty they ever knew. McKeefry was without doubt as much qualified for promotion in 1904 as when he received it in 1908, and the loss of seniority has been wholly undeserved, and rankles sorely.

I could multiply instances of unfair promotion, but it would serve no good object. A number of witnesses have given evidence in detail showing how utterly inconsistent has been the so-called method of promotion. These details can be seen in the evidence. There are several instances on record where very worthy constables, with excellent records and anxious to be advanced, have been told that they are too old for promotion. They know that this has not been a bar to others. Men are told that no one can be promoted over fifty years of age. And yet a man of over fifty was promoted this year, and is now doing duty in a city. Other men are told that they cannot be promoted because they have not passed the Police Examination. They know, and it is admitted to be true, that