

322. In your opinion, have they generally been fairly dealt with?—Yes, decidedly.

323. Have they been punished reasonably, or have, in your opinion, the punishments been unduly severe, or too lenient?—I think they are generally pretty fair. I cannot recollect any nstance of unfair treatment.

324. In your opinion have the punishments been reasonable?—Yes.

325. *Colonel Hume.*] I understood you to say you did not approve of paying by service—getting their increases by service?—No, I do not.

326. Why?—Well, because I think merit and ability come first, beyond all service. There are some men who should certainly be promoted in a short time, while others are never fit for promotion.

327. I was talking about giving men increase of pay by service. I understood you to say you preferred the pension scheme to anything of that sort?—I do not quite understand you.

328. For instance, you enter the service at £150 a year; in three years you get £160, in nine years £200, and so on?—At that rate you are putting every man on the same level. You are putting the good and the bad together. If you have a scale of pay arranged on that basis you would have the biggest loafer in the Force getting just as much as the smartest and most meritorious man. In two years you get so much, and in four years so much, and all you have to do is to keep off the defaulter's sheet.

329. You say political interference has not tended to promote men unjustly?—I have never known an instance where a man has got promotion by political influence. I suppose I have been promoted as quickly as any man in the Force, and I am quite convinced I have never had any political influence.

330. Then, do I understand you to tell the Commissioners the men were willing to forego their long-service pay and compensation to get this pension?—Oh, no.

331. But that is part of the scheme?—Oh, no; only to forego compensation, not long-service pay. They were to get long-service pay. Long-service pay has not been granted since 1887.

332. Government were to pay up £20,000?—Yes.

333. I think it says any man over fifty was not to be taken into consideration?—Over fifty-five. There were only a few over fifty-five at that time. I think there were about thirty.

334. Did it ever strike you what it would cost the Government if they paid £20,000, and continued the long-service pay and compensation?—I worked it all out at the time.

335. You do not think it was an unreasonable sum to ask?—I do not think it was enough. I think the Government were making a lot of money by it. £20,000 would only cost them £600 a year at 3 per cent.

336. You could not get money at 3 per cent. at that time?—Well, 4 per cent., and then it would be only £800 a year, and you were paying at the rate of £1,600 a year for compensation.

337. But then compensation did not cease?—It only went on for five years. At the end of five years it ceased altogether.

338. As regards the uniform system: do you consider the Government should supply the uniform, or give a fixed sum?—I think it would be better to give a fixed sum.

339. Why do you think that?—Well, some men are more careful of their uniforms than others.

340. And you do not wear a uniform?—There may be something in that.

341. Generally the majority of the men belong to friendly societies—the married men?—I do not think so. I do not think there are many in Wellington who belong to them.

342. Those who belong to friendly societies do not have to pay this 10s., or whatever it is, for a doctor's certificate?—They have to pay it indirectly. They pay their contributions to the lodges, and it practically comes out of their own pockets.

343. You say you do not know an instance of a man being unjustly punished in the Force. Do you consider a fine of 2s. 6d. for being five minutes late for duty, and no entry against the man for being late before, an excessive punishment, we will say, during a term of three years' service?—It all depends. Sometimes a man is brought in and cautioned, and there is no entry in his sheet at all.

344. But supposing he had never been late before, do you think that would be excessive?—I think it would. If the man had a good character, and had never been before the Inspector before for anything at all, I should say a caution would be sufficient.

345. *Mr. Tunbridge.*] With regard to the question of increment *versus* classes. You are aware there have been selections of men who have got advancement. For instance, there are men with as little service as three years who are Clerks of Court, and men with not more than three years' service who were Clerks of Court were advanced to second class. Do you hold with that?—No, I do not. I thought it was wrong at the time. I recollect at the time there was a batch of them made.

346. Then, again, there was another selection made of men with not less than seven years' service who had no serious reports on their defaulters' sheets: do you remember that selection being made?—I think the first was men with seven years' service and a clean sheet.

347. And then a further selection of men who had only slight reports against them. Did you believe in the first selection?—The first one, certainly not. As to the second one, there was something in that. I did not believe in the first lot, because I hold it is no criterion at all of a man's ability or worthiness for promotion that he has got a clean sheet. My experience is that some of the best men in the Force have got the dirtiest sheets.

348. These selections did not give satisfaction in the Force generally?—No, sir; very great dissatisfaction.

349. Do you not think that dissatisfaction would be likely to arise from any course of selection?—Well, there is always a certain amount of dissatisfaction, but there would be general satisfaction if the selections were made with good judgment.