

*The Commissioner:* The unfortunate part of it is that I have not got the evidence. I have never even seen it. The reporter got so far behind with his notes that neither Mr. Poynton nor myself ever saw the evidence, our report being made solely on the newspaper reports, which were fortunately exceedingly full.

1. *Mr. Dinnie* (to witness).] You made a slight mistake the other day, Mr. O'Brien, as regards the promotion of Constable Dale: I think you did recommend him?—Yes, I intended to correct that part of my evidence the first thing. I did not strongly recommend him was what I should have said, and I wish that alteration made. There are certain reasons given in the report why I did not. I regarded him as an efficient constable, and a man of some energy, but there were certain matters over which he had no control which were sufficient reason for my not recommending him. The constable I had in my mind whom I did not recommend but who was promoted was Burroughs, station sergeant at Waikouaiti.

2. *The Commissioner.*] Were you ever asked to report in regard to him?—Yes.

3. And he was promoted?—Yes.

4. *Mr. Dinnie.*] I think in the last three years you have recommended six men for promotion?—The files will show I am pretty careful not to recommend a man I consider not deserving.

5. Were they West, MacIntyre, Matthews, Dale, McKenzie, and Taylor?—Yes.

6. West was about fifty years old?—Yes.

7. *The Commissioner.*] What is your general opinion as an old police officer of what should be the age-limit for promotion?—About fifty.

8. A man over that age should not be promoted, having regard to the duty in cities being heavy?—No.

9. *Mr. Dinnie.*] The circular is not out of place in respect of age, requiring that men should not be over fifty?—That is reasonable. When I first recommended Dale I think he was under fifty.

10. Do you know that MacIntyre refused to take up street duty, being unable owing to his health?—No; so far as I know he has never been offered promotion. He is employed in the Weights and Measures Office, Dunedin.

11. Why has Matthews not been promoted?—I do not know; I know he accepted an appointment in the Chathams some time ago, but he was recommended for promotion some time before he was asked to accept that appointment.

12. What was his service?—Thirteen or fourteen years.

13. Dale was promoted?—Yes.

14. McKenzie and Taylor have not yet completed thirteen years?—I cannot say without the list.

15. Out of six, one, who is fifty years old, has not been promoted in accordance with your recommendation?—Yes.

16. In regard to transfers, do you know I have a list containing thirty or forty names applying for transfer from one district to another? If you were to adopt your system of obtaining men from your own district, how would you deal with these applications?—I do not ask that that should be done; I suggested my changing men already stationed in my district—sending one man to another station, and sending the other man back to where the first came from.

17. Supposing a man applied, because of his own or his wife's health, to get another district or climate, what are you going to do?—That is a matter for your consideration.

18. Then, that is a reason for transfers being left in my hands?—I do not suggest that every transfer should be taken out of your hands at all. I suggest that in my own district I should have the power to change a man from one district to another. Then if you afterwards think he ought to be sent away to another district and another man sent here in his place, by all means do so.

19. That would leave transfers entirely in my hands?—To that extent.

20. You know a good deal about the system of investigation as to candidates for enrolment in the service?—Yes.

21. You know the form that is used: do you think the inquiries are carried out carefully?—Yes, so far as I know.

22. Could you suggest any better system of investigation?—Yes. Very often these inquiries are made by practically inexperienced constables in charge of country stations. In my opinion, no man under the rank of sergeant should be intrusted with such inquiries; if a station sergeant, or Sub-Inspector, or even the Inspector, can do it, so much the better.

23. *The Commissioner.*] But how about the local knowledge the man in charge of the station has—though I quite agree with you theoretically?—His local knowledge might assist very much, but the sergeant could interview the local constable amongst others.

24. He should be specially detailed to go to the locality and make inquiries?—Yes, to insure thorough investigation.

25. *Mr. Dinnie.*] Constables in charge of stations have considerable experience before their appointment?—Some of them.

26. *The Commissioner.*] Is service altogether the point? I know some in charge of stations I should be sorry to take the opinion of?—They would have a service of six years.

27. I want the matter of clerks appointed to do work in a district office made quite clear. What is their mode of selection? There is a great deal of dissatisfaction apparently in the Force?—First of all, you must have a good penman; that is absolutely necessary—a man who writes an ordinary legible hand. Then I want to be satisfied in my own mind that he is thoroughly honest. Then I want to be satisfied he is discreet, and that he will not go blabbing the contents of the correspondence to every Dick, Tom, and Harry about the station or in the street. Hitherto I know the service has suffered very considerably on this account—loose-tongued constables in the district office.