

We are of opinion that the age at which children can be committed to the Industrial School should be raised. The age up to which children may now be committed is fifteen years, and this is too low. The age of consent is now sixteen years, and yet a girl between fifteen and sixteen years may be the associate of prostitutes without the police having power to rescue her.

General Remarks.

The sittings of the Commission have been attended by Mr. Tunbridge, the present Commissioner of Police, who has held the office since October last, and by Colonel Hume, who was Commissioner from 1890 up to Mr. Tunbridge's appointment. Each of these gentlemen heard all the evidence adduced, cross-examined witnesses who were called in support of allegations against the department, gave evidence themselves, and produced all documents and records in their custody which were required. The Commissioner of Police further furnished us with all returns and other information called for. From both these gentlemen we received every assistance in their power to afford.

We summoned the Right Hon. the Premier and the Hon. Mr. Thompson, the Minister in charge of the department, to give evidence before us. They appeared and claimed to be exempted on the ground that, as your Excellency's Advisers, they ought not to be called upon to give evidence upon matters as to which they will have to tender their advice to your Excellency, and that as Ministers they can only be called to account for their actions by Parliament. For the reasons given we considered we ought not to require them to give evidence, and did not do so.

A number of constables gave evidence as to personal grievances: men who complained that others, their juniors, had been advanced over their heads, and others who thought their services entitled them to promotion, and that they had been unjustly passed over. These men represented two sections of the Force—namely, those who consider that seniority should give a right to promotion, and those who claim it on ground of special services. There is no existing rule as to promotion; generally it has been for seniority combined with a clean defaulter's sheet, but this did not always secure it. Promotion for special services has been the exception.

A number of men were promoted in class on the ground that they had been Clerks of Court for a certain time. They were in many cases junior to others who had not been fortunate enough to be appointed to stations, and therefore had not been Clerks of Court. The subsequent advancement of these men was made, not on the ground of length of service in the Force, but of service in their class, and men who have longer service in the Force feel they have a grievance in being, as they consider, passed over. On the other hand, if those junior in service but senior in class were not advanced, they too would feel that they had suffered an injustice. The regulation (No. 59, now repealed) relating to promotion appears not to have been generally understood throughout the Force. By it advancement was to be by seniority in class, and not in service.

These promotions constitute one of the evils of the class system, which we desire to see abolished; and by the adoption of the system of payment by length of service, which we recommend, this grievance will, we believe, be removed.

It would be wholly impossible, without an almost entire reclassification of the Force, to remedy the grievances of constables who consider they have been unjustly treated in respect of promotion.

We do not think it necessary to comment upon the individual cases referred to, except those mentioned in the Schedule; but the evidence given in respect to them has been of value in enabling us to form an opinion on the general question of promotions, which we have given expression to in our remarks under that head.

SPECIAL FINDINGS.

The following are our findings on such complaints as have been brought before us which we consider require special notice; the others are submitted in Schedule hereto:—

Charges by Mr. Thomas E. Taylor, M.H.R., and Findings thereon.

Charge No. 1.—“Tuesday, 15th February, 1898.—The Chairman, Police Commission, Wellington.—SIR,—With a view to placing myself in a position to appear before your Com-