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Forum Page Editor  
The Straits Times

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Dear Editor

## **PROMOTION BASED ON MERIT**

I refer to the letter 'Is promotion in Civil Service based on tenure?' (ST, Apr 11) by Ms Elsie Tan Hwee Lian.

To be promoted, a civil servant has to show potential to handle a bigger job. A person with a high potential can expect to progress more quickly, provided he is also a consistently good performer.

An officer who does not show the potential to take on greater responsibilities will not be promoted, even if he has many years of service. Promotion is based on merit and not automatic according to his years of service.

Ms Tan also noted that there are officers who continue to perform the same job after promotion. Unlike the private sector, civil servants are paid according to their salary grade and not by job appointment.

It is not unusual to have officers doing higher level jobs while still in a lower grade. This is to stretch and test them. They will only be promoted to the grade commensurate with the job size when they are able to handle the higher job competently.

All Civil Service salary schemes have a performance bonus component. Those who do well will be paid performance bonuses, with the better ones getting a higher quantum. Those who just meet the job requirements or under-perform will not get any performance bonus.

Most of our graduate schemes have a variable merit increment system, where the annual increments are linked to performance.

In short, the appraisal system ensures that officers receive salaries that are commensurate with their contributions, abilities and potential.

Yours sincerely

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