

1878.  
NEW ZEALAND.

## GAOLS COMMITTEE.

### REPORT ON GAOLS MANAGEMENT, TOGETHER WITH MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

*Report brought up 23rd October, 1878, and ordered to be printed.*

#### ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

*Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.*

THURSDAY, THE 1ST DAY OF AUGUST, 1878.

*Ordered*, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the present state of the gaols in the colony, and the improvements necessary to enforce proper classification and discipline; with power to call for persons and papers. That such Committee do consist of fourteen members, and that five be a quorum. The Committee to consist of the Hon. Mr. Fox, the Hon. Mr. Gisborne, Mr. Ormond, Mr. Rolleston, Mr. Seymour, the Hon. Mr. Sheehan, the Hon. Mr. Stout, Mr. Swanson, Mr. Tole, Mr. Wakefield, Mr. Bunny, Mr. Hunter, Major Atkinson, and the Mover. To report in six weeks.—(Mr. Bowen.)

FRIDAY, THE 2ND DAY OF AUGUST, 1878.

*Ordered*, That the name of Mr. Curtis be added to the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the state of gaols, &c.—(Mr. Sharp.)

WEDNESDAY, THE 21ST DAY OF AUGUST, 1878.

*Ordered*, That the name of Mr. J. C. Brown be added to the Gaols Committee.—(Mr. Bowen.)

FRIDAY, THE 13TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1878.

*Ordered*, That the quorum of the Gaols Committee be reduced to three.—(Mr. Bowen.)

WEDNESDAY, THE 25TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1878.

*Ordered*, That the Gaols Management Committee have leave to postpone the bringing up of their report for three weeks from to-day.—(Mr. Bowen.)

THE Gaols Committee, appointed to inquire into the present state of the gaols of the colony, and the improvements necessary to enforce proper classification and discipline, have the honor to report as follows:—

1. At present the Government exercises no real control over the gaols and gaol officers. Every gaol in the colony is—subject to the law and regulations issued from time to time by the Governor—managed to a great extent according to the views and experience of the gaoler, the only check upon the action of that officer being the supervision of the Visiting Justices. These gentlemen take, in different parts of the colony, different views of their position; and whereas in some gaols their visits are frequent and regular, in others they are few and far between. Though the services of the Visiting Justices are most valuable, and indeed indispensable, as independent and unofficial visitors, it is impossible that they should supply that sort of inspection and control which it is necessary that the Government should keep in their own hands. A punishment inflicted in one part of the colony, though nominally the same as that inflicted in another, is really a totally different punishment. In technical matters, and with respect to a great deal of the discipline and conduct of the gaol, the Visiting Justices must necessarily be, to a great extent, in the hands of the gaoler; while there is no control or audit whatever of the Government stores in gaols throughout the colony.

The first essential step towards a reform in prison discipline and management is an efficient system of Government inspection. The inspector should be a man thoroughly trained in the soundest principles of prison management, and should not have been connected with any gaol heretofore established in New Zealand.

2. Since the report of the Royal Commission on prisons in 1868, little or nothing has been done towards classification of prisoners. The enlargements of the local gaols have not much more than kept up with the increase of crime, consequent on increased population, and further accommodation is urgently needed to carry out the recommendations of that Commission. No