

Mr. Read.
9th Aug., 1878.

sufficient to provide boots and shoes for the whole of the people in the gaol, as well as the gaol at Wanganui.

69B. *Hon. Mr. Fox.*] As regards the hard-labour gangs, they are employed, I understand, chiefly on town works, improving the streets, and so forth?—Not in improving the streets. They are employed in making roads for the trustees of the hospital near the Terrace School, and a large number are employed making bricks and levelling the site for the new Hospital. There are nearly 3,000,000 bricks made already, all of which have been made by prison labour.

70. Then the work of the prisoners is for the benefit of some outside persons. The hospital trustees do not pay for this labour?—No.

71. The work is given without remuneration?—There is no direct payment from these bodies that I am aware of. The men have to work pretty hard, especially those who are at work making bricks. There can be no mistake about the amount of labour which they do, because they have to keep a machine going. The machine has to be fed, and the bricks must be carried away as fast as the machine turns them out. The work must be done.

72. I understand you to know nothing more about this matter, except the execution of the work? Well, I know that no pay is given; but it seems to me the thing is as broad as it is long, because if the prison labour was not employed in the erection of the hospital the Government would have to pay for free labour.

73. *The Chairman.*] There is no payment made or separate account kept?—No.

74. *Major Atkinson.*] Supposing you have a bank clerk who has been embezzling, to what sort of work do you put him?—We do not put him to the severest work at first; we put him to some lighter work, and gradually inure him to the harder work.

75. Would he obtain as many marks as the other men who do harder work?—Yes; he would do as much as he possibly could, although he would not be able to take to the severer work at once. A man cannot do more than he can do, and we would give him marks accordingly.

76. *The Chairman.*] Is a prisoner ever employed in clerical labour?—Sometimes, but not generally. When returns are called for, we sometimes put the prisoners to clerical work.

77. Is there often communication between the prisoners and the public?—Yes; we cannot prevent that. It is one of the evils arising from the prisoners working with free labourers. They are bound to talk, and to communicate about things outside.

78. Do the free labourers ever pass the prisoners tobacco or drink?—I have never known of any one passing drink, but I have heard of tobacco passing. When that is discovered, we take them before the Magistrate.

79. *Hon. Mr. Fox.*] Do you ever get newspapers into the gaol?—Sometimes, but it is strictly prohibited.

80. You do not allow them to see the papers?—No; we allow them to see books.

81. Have you any books in the prison?—Yes, about 500 volumes. They read these. It is a very great punishment to the prisoners to be shut out from the newspapers and local news. In a gaol like this we cannot altogether prevent the men getting local news. It very frequently happens that a man comes in to do twenty-four or forty-eight hours; he is in company with the long-sentence prisoners, and of course gives them full information of what is passing outside.

82. Can short-sentence prisoners facilitate communication by long-sentence prisoners with outside?—Yes, it is frequently done. It is one of the failings of our system. As I said before, a man comes in for drunkenness, to do his twenty-four or forty-eight hours, and he tells the prisoners with whom he comes into contact the whole of the news outside, and also, I have great reason to believe, carries messages to the outside people from the prisoners. I remember a case which occurred a short time ago. A man had come in to do a short term, and on being searched when he was leaving the prison we found a note in his boot, written in German. This note, when translated, proved to be an elaborate plan of escape, planned by a long-sentence prisoner, and this note was to have been given to his wife, who was to have made the necessary arrangements outside.

83. Have you any information of such a thing occurring as a man deliberately getting himself a short sentence with a view of getting into the gaol to communicate with the prisoners?—It has not come to my knowledge, but it is a very likely occurrence. I have no doubt that in serious robbery cases an accomplice of the person arrested would not hesitate to get himself twenty-four hours for the purpose of being in gaol and communicating with a prisoner, with a view of hiding stolen property and removing witnesses of the crime where it was possible to do so. I cannot say that I have discovered any such case, but my impression is that it is frequently done.

84. You have had no lunatic prisoners in the gaol of late?—No; but we have had prisoners worse than lunatics. We have had men suffering from *delirium tremens* constantly sent to the gaol. We had four some months ago; and it is something frightful the amount of bother and trouble which they give. There should be some alteration in the present system. I think a man suffering from *delirium tremens* when brought up at the Police Court is always remanded to gaol on suspicion of lunacy, and they give us a very great deal of trouble. The beds and the cells are frequently covered with excrement.

85. *The Chairman.*] About the scale of rations: Have you anything to say about it?—Nothing, except that I think that it is amply sufficient.

86. Is it too indulgent?—I do not think so. If you make men work you must feed them.

87. Is there any waste of bread?—No; I believe if one man does not eat his bread he will give it to another.

88. They can pass their food through from one to another then?—It cannot be prevented.

89. I have heard it stated that with a great many men the bread allowance is more than sufficient?—It is quite sufficient. I believe many men cannot eat all, but some can eat more.

90. I was at Lyttelton Gaol a very short time ago, and I was told the allowance of bread was much too large?—We have not found it to be too large. Our men eat it all.

91. But it is done by passing the bread from one to another?—That is done, I believe, in some