

Mr. Read.
9th Aug., 1878.

sometimes be discharged at eight o'clock in the morning and at noon will cart a load of coals to the gaol for his employer down town.

120. *Hon. Mr. Fox.*] That will not apply to women?—No; but we have very few women, except the most abandoned prostitutes, and if you gave them money on their discharge they would walk to the first publichouse and there spend it. I remember that last week a woman who was about to be discharged complained to _____, a lady visitor to the gaol, that she did not know what she should do. The lady told the woman to call at her house when she left the gaol, and she would see what could be done. On her discharge she did call, but _____ was out at the time. The woman went off to the publichouse, by some means got drink, and in the evening was again in the lock-up in a dreadful condition. It would be of no use giving such people as that money.

121. Suppose the case of a first offender, who wished to get away from the place where he had disgraced himself?—It might be done in a case like that, certainly; but to give money to these old offenders would merely be an inducement to them to put in the winter in gaol, knowing they would come out in the pleasant season of the year with some money in their pockets. I may remark that under the present system there does not appear to be any increase in the number of committals. In fact, in spite of the increasing population, the committals have of late greatly decreased. Last year there was an actual decrease of eighty-seven, as compared with the total of the previous year.

122. *Mr. Swanson.*] Is there any scarcity of work in the winter here?—No; but there are in this community loafers, just as in others. These men do not like work, and will not work; and they find themselves better cared for in prison during the winter than they would be outside.

123. Of course it would be a good thing to get these men out of that habit?—Yes.

124. Well, do you not think that a man of that class would be induced to keep up to his work in gaol by the prospect of his earning some money, and that he would thus gradually come to find that work was not so irksome as he imagined. Would such treatment be likely to reform him? Well, my experience teaches me different. If he earned any money, the first thing he would do on his release would be to run off to the publichouse and drink good luck to the gaol.

125. *The Chairman.*] About the hospital arrangements: Have you got a separate room in the gaol?—No.

126. What do you do with sick prisoners?—Merely leave them in the ordinary cells.

127. As to medical attendance?—There is a medical officer to the gaol. He attends twice a week regularly, and comes when sent for, or pays extra visits should cases require it.

128. Have you had any reason to complain of want of attention?—No. We have very little sickness in the Wellington Gaol. However, we do want an infirmary.

129. The gaol is healthy?—Yes.

130. The water good?—Yes.

131. The drainage good?—Yes.

132. I remember once visiting the gaol, and there was certainly a nuisance in the yard from the privies. There was a want of some arrangement there?—Well, the privies have been lately rebuilt, but that nuisance remains very much the same, and it cannot well be helped. We have had earth-closets, and they will not answer. They (the earth-closets) smelt very bad.

133. *Hon. Mr. Fox.*] You could not have used proper earth?—Yes, we have tried all kinds.

134. *Mr. Tole.*] Have you had prisoners removed to the hospital?—Two or three.

TUESDAY, 13TH AUGUST, 1878.

MR. MICAH READ, further examined.

Mr. Read.
13th Aug., 1878.

135. *The Chairman.*] Are there any arrangements made for religious or other education in the gaol here, Mr. Read?—Yes, Sir. Divine service is performed every Sunday by Mr. DeCastro, and on the first Sunday in the month others attend, and the Roman Catholic priests also hold Divine service.

136. Every Sunday?—Yes, Sir. The priest comes as a rule every Sunday, except when he has to attend a funeral, or is otherwise engaged. As to instruction, there is a room set apart for the purpose. The prisoners are supplied with copybooks and other school requisites, and in numerous cases very good results have accrued.

137. Are they taught every day?—They receive instruction every night during the year, except on Sundays and special occasions. This instruction has been productive of great benefit, many prisoners being taught to both read and write. I have seen instances where prisoners who, on their admission into the gaol, could scarcely write their own names, have acquired a facility to write very well.

138. Are they willing to learn?—Yes; I generally find them very willing to attend.

139. And, practically, do all prisoners learn to read and write in the gaol?—If they stay long enough they do. We had a Maori committed for eighteen months from the Hutt, who, when received into the gaol, could neither read nor write; but, when his term of imprisonment was completed, he could write very well, so much so that he was enabled to write several letters to his friends. I have seen many cases of a similar kind. A man named Robinson, from Wanganui, learnt the shoe-making trade, as well as to write, and he was enabled to write to his parents after being in gaol for some time. He now writes very well indeed.

140. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Who teaches them?—Some of their fellow-prisoners. A man named Lyell, and another named Hill, take part in teaching their fellow-prisoners.

141. Do they get anything for teaching?—No, Sir; they consider it rather an honour to teach the others.

142. *Hon. Mr. Fox.*] As regards religious instruction, is it purely of a voluntary nature, or is any one paid by the Government to do it?—It is simply voluntary.