

205. Does it often happen that the chief officer draws attention to the fact that the supplies are not good?—Sometimes potatoes are not good, and there has been a great deal of complaint about them. I have frequently had them sent back again. Mr. Read.
13th Aug., 1878.

206. With potatoes and supplies of that kind would it not be better to get a good supply at one time, and store them?—I do not think it would be. Our highest rations only costs 5d., and that includes bread, tea, sugar, salt, and potatoes.

207. Do the officers of the gaol get their supplies from the contractors?—They get them where they please. I believe some of them do get them from the contractor; others do not.

208. Do they get them at contract prices?—Oh, no; they pay the ordinary prices.

209. Do you ration them?—No; it is a great mistake to ration gaol warders.

210. What check have you that they have not taken food?—The prisoners know what amount of food they are to have, and take good care to get it. If there was a little less than the proper quantity they would very soon call my attention to it, and in such cases I generally put the food into the scales and let the prisoners see it weighed.

211. In the case of petitions, what is the gaol rule about allowing prisoners to petition?—The prisoners are allowed to petition if there is any sufficient ground; but they very rarely ask to petition.

212. Do I understand you to mean that prisoners are not allowed to petition except under the mark system?—Very rarely.

213. In what cases are they allowed to do so?—Prisoners will sometimes send in a petition for remission of sentence, on the ground that they have been wrongly convicted.

214. Who gives them leave to do so?—I should give the necessary permission, and take the petition to the Visiting Justices. I do not think I have any right to refuse them.

215. When have you a right to refuse?—I do not think I have any right to refuse a petition at all. I can only discountenance it so far as to say it will be no good.

216. If anything was handed to you, you would not let it go?—I would show it to the Visiting Justices for them to exercise their discretion.

217. They can petition on the ground of ill-health, I suppose?—They would have no need to petition, because, if a prisoner's health was bad, I would represent the fact myself. I must do it; and on one occasion, a man suffering was taken to the hospital; but he died soon afterwards.

218. *Mr. Wakefield.*] What medical inspection have you of the gaol?—Well, there is really no systematic medical inspection, as you may say. A medical officer visits the gaol twice a week, and if any prisoner wishes his aid he can have it. The medical officer walks past them in the different wards so that no man can say he has not had a chance of medical relief; but, as far as a proper medical inspection goes, we have none.

219. What are the hospital arrangements?—We have no hospital.

220. What do you do if a prisoner is sick?—We put them in the ordinary cells, and appoint a wardman to attend and wait upon them. We have very few cases of sickness here.

221. What alterations would be required in Wellington Gaol to enable you to classify prisoners?—There should be a place for juvenile prisoners; a place for drunkards sent up for short periods to be imprisoned; there should be another yard, if possible, in which to place offenders sent to gaol for the first time, so that they could be kept apart; and, with that, I think we could manage.

222. That would involve considerable addition to the gaol?—Yes. I have sent in a report to the Government, and think that they are prepared to make some addition. I think a sum will be placed on the estimates for that purpose, to enable us to keep the prisoners apart, and have better accommodation for juveniles.

223. That would not make any provision for separating first offenders?—No, Sir. There are twenty-six prisoners there under sentence of penal servitude, but they occupy the same position as the hard-labour prisoners, though they are not placed with them; and if better provision was made it would be of great assistance.

224. What provision have you for such cases as prisoners committed for contempt of Court?—None.

225. What do you do in the case of a prisoner committed for contempt of Court?—Well, the only thing we can do is to put him in the debtors' room, and that is not sufficiently large for its requirements. We had a case recently where a gentleman was committed for contempt of Court, and his friends were allowed to see him by getting an order from the Visiting Justices. They came as often as they liked, and the debtors had to go into the yard and remain while his friends were there. It was a great injustice to the debtors, but was the only thing that could be done under the circumstances.

226. What were these debtors committed for?—For not paying money which a Magistrate had ordered them to pay.

227. On judgment summonses?—Yes. It is a singular fact that, although imprisonment for debt is said to be abolished, I have as many debtors in the gaol as ever I had. There are four in gaol at the present time, and there were five a few days ago.

228. *Hon. Mr. Fox.*] How did you say that you disposed of the prisoners for contempt who are sent to you?—I put them in the debtors' room.

229. Then have you to turn the debtors out for that?—No; they all sleep in the same room together. The person who was committed for contempt of Court was allowed to have food from his friends. He could have roast duck and green peas if they sent it to him.

230. The debtors would not be allowed to receive those luxuries?—No; the debtors would not be allowed to receive them.

231. Does he only receive gaol rations?—Only gaol rations, or he may keep himself entirely.

232. Or he may contribute towards his rations?—If a debtor keeps his room clean he may be allowed to receive food from his friends two or three times a week, in moderate quantities.

233. In case of prisoners for contempt, are they allowed to see their friends as often as they like?—Yes; by getting an order from the Visiting Justices.