

*Mr. Read.*  
13th Aug., 1878.

234. They may have hundreds if they like?—A prisoner for contempt may hold a levee if he likes.
235. Have you had more than one?—Yes, I have had more than one.
236. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Do you know the rule in England? I understand that Arthur Orton, the Tichborne claimant, is treated differently from the others?—I do not think he is.
237. You do not know the rules there, do you?—Not in England; I only know what they are here. I think they are very nearly the same here as in England.
238. I mean Colonel Baker, who was treated with exceptional leniency?—Yes; he was committed for misdemeanour.
239. But if a prisoner was committed for misdemeanour, would he not be treated in gaol the same as the others?—He would be considered an ordinary prisoner, unless special reference was made to the case.
240. If you had what is called a first-class misdemeanant, how would you treat it; differently to the others?—In this way: If a prisoner was convicted for misdemeanour, and not sentenced to hard labour, he would get a lower scale of rations, while one committed for first-class misdemeanour would get the full scale. If he was sent to gaol as a first-class misdemeanant we would be obliged to put him in the debtors' room, and keep him apart from the other prisoners.
241. That is practically the only means of classification—to put the man in the debtors' room?—That is the only means.
242. *Hon. Mr. Fox.*] It is hard on the debtors if they should have a man like Colonel Baker put in with them?—In the case to which I have referred, where a gentleman was put in for contempt of Court, on the Saturday night a debtor was put in who had not had time to wash his face, and the other gentleman was very indignant at the company.
- 242A. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] What do you call the large room?—It is the room in which they eat and sleep.
243. Are there any rooms apportioned off?—There is only the one room, in which they eat and sleep. There is a fire-place in it, and it looks very comfortable.
244. What is the difference between penal servitude and hard labour in the gaol?—Practically, at present, there is no difference; but penal servitude is supposed to carry heavier punishment than hard labour.
245. But it does not carry heavier punishment?—No, it does not.
246. Now, are the prisoners trained at all to build at the gaol? If you have got any alterations or additions to make to the gaol, do the prisoners assist?—Yes Sir; we have recently made some very extensive alterations to the gaol, and the men have done a great deal of work; two men were employed as carpenters, and did quite as much as the free workmen, who were paid by the day.
247. Have you ever tried concrete there?—No Sir; I should very much like to try it.
248. Are there any facilities by which you could get gravel there?—I do not know of any spot near the gaol where we could get gravel. It would be a splendid thing if we could get the exercising yards laid down in concrete. It would be a very great improvement.
249. Is it over-crowded?—We are not over-crowded now, Sir. We want more accommodation, but the number of our prisoners now is not above the ordinary average.
250. *The Chairman.*] When you say you are not over-crowded you mean as to cubic feet, but do you approve of putting three or four men into one cell?—No, Sir; the proper system would be to put only one man in a cell.
251. Then, you mean that under the present system, you are not over-crowded?—Precisely. It is a mistake altogether to put three or four men in a cell, because they do a great deal of harm talking together at night, and they can plan means of escape. I know now that the man Shine, whom I spoke to you about as coming from Auckland, is inciting other prisoners to escape. He is continually urging them, and he will attempt to get away from the gaol. I am sure he will. He escaped several times in Auckland, and he will try to do the same here. A man like that is a great nuisance in a gaol, because he influences the others by holding out inducements to escape.
252. *Mr. Gisborne.*] Is there any foundation for that statement made in the newspapers yesterday about alleged ill-treatment of a prisoner by officers? Is there to be an inquiry about it?—An inquiry will be held before the Visiting Justices. I believe that, as far as I can learn, that it was part of a plan for several prisoners to escape. The other prisoners did not know that the man had gone until he had come back. He was a man under sentence of four years penal servitude, and they called him Jack Sheppard in the gaol. I do not know why. He is a notorious thief, and robbed a place at Palmerston.
253. *The [Chairman.]* Mr. Gisborne asked if the warders abused him?—The warders admit that they knocked him down twice, and struck him; but that is scarcely to be wondered at, as they naturally lost their tempers in running over rough ground and through gorges after him.
254. There was no provocation on his part?—No; they knocked him down without provocation on his part, so far as I am aware.
255. But that is a very serious offence?—They might have shot at him.
256. Officers have no business to avenge themselves on a runaway prisoner?—They had no right to do so, but one must make allowance for a man's temper. Of course it was not in any way justifiable.
257. Where did it happen?—It happened near the hospital.
258. Where did he run to?—He ran round the spur of a hill, and then in the direction of Howe's farm towards Kilbirnie.
259. Did he show fight?—No; when they came up to him they knocked him down.
260. And kicked him?—I do not know. He could not have been hurt much, because he made no complaint.
261. Did he work during the remainder of the day?—Oh, no; he was at once brought back to the gaol. He made no complaint about being ill-used to the officer who was bringing him home. I have