

visited very seldom; in fact, I heard that Father McGuinness, the clergyman who is supposed to attend to the duty, was too ill to do anything. *Mr. Woodward.*

14th Aug., 1878.

371. Is there a good library?—Fairly good.

372. Are the books much used?—Very much.

373. What kind of books are most used?—The lightest that can be got; but there are some other sorts used a good deal, such as Cassell's Magazine, The Leisure Hour, The Sunday at Home; they are eagerly read.

374. *Major Atkinson.*] When are the men allowed to read?—On Sundays, and when it is light enough to see in the cells.

375. *Mr. Wakefield.*] Each prisoner has his Bible?—There are those in each cell.

376. *The Chairman.*] Have many offences on the part of the officers of the gaol towards the prisoners been detected?—Very few. We are singularly free from complaints of that kind.

377. *Mr. Wakefield.*] Do you think it would be possible for officers to ill-treat prisoners without the Visiting Justices coming to a knowledge of it?—I hardly think it possible. There is rarely a time when we have not in the gaol one or two of that class of prisoners known as "sea lawyers," who are very happy to ventilate grievances on behalf of their comrades. There is one man there now who would soon report the matter were anything of the kind to occur.

378. *The Chairman.*] In your opinion, what is necessary to secure better classification?—The first thing would be space, then a little more assistance in the way of officers. There are not enough officers now, even if we had more space.

379. Do you consider classification would be best promoted by the extension of local gaols, or be better effected by having a separate prison for long-sentence prisoners?—I adhere to my long-cherished opinion that a central gaol is required. These local gaols ought to be nothing more than places of detention.

380. Supposing the long-sentence men were provided for in a central gaol, would there then be sufficient means of classification in the Wellington Gaol?—Yes, for a very fair classification. Slight additions might be desirable.

381. We had some evidence from the Gaoler as to the inadequacy of the accommodation in cases of contempt. There was a case of the kind lately, and we were informed the prisoner was put in the debtors' prison?—That really is the only room available for such a purpose. It is a small room at the entrance of the gaol, and is tolerably comfortable.

382. Have any improvements been effected in the gaol by prison labour?—Yes; considerable. A large part of the work has been done by prison labour.

383. Do you think that a good way of using prison labour?—Yes; incidentally it is a good way of teaching them some use of tools.

384. Have you any other suggestions you would like to make to the Committee?—There is one point. We find in the Prisons Act there are two classes of offences which may be committed in the gaol, and are punishable by the Justices. The clauses referring to the first offences seem to contemplate a single offence, and the other what are called repeated offences. In the first case we have no power to extend sentences, but merely to inflict punishment during the currency of the sentence. We think it would be desirable that we should be enabled to extend a sentence in a serious case—say, assault, or attempt to escape, for instance—though it is a single or first offence. Of course we can bring the case to the Supreme Court, and have the prisoner tried, but that is not always deemed advisable. It would be better to deal with such cases in the gaol.

385. Is there much communication with outside by short-sentenced prisoners?—We cannot doubt it.

386. Have you heard of any man getting himself into gaol for the purpose of communicating with a prisoner in the gaol?—No; we should be unlikely to hear of it, but it is a very possible thing.

387. *Mr. Wakefield.*] Do you think prisoners could be advantageously employed in gardening?—Yes, very advantageously.

388. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] I understand there is a garden outside the Wellington Gaol?—It belongs to the Gaoler himself.

389. Is it his private property?—I think it is part of the Gaol Reserve, or part of the Town Belt.

390. Does he use prison labour?—I have no doubt he does.

391. And the proceeds are his own private property?—The proceeds are nothing more than his own supply of vegetables.

392. Would it not be more advisable to use these reserves for providing food for the gaol?—Certainly it would.

393. *Mr. Wakefield.*] It would teach the prisoners something, and give them healthful occupation away from the public?—Yes.

394. *The Chairman.*] Are there means for dealing with fire in the Wellington Gaol?—None.

395. No engine or apparatus?—No.

396. Are there any facilities for getting water?—There is water laid on, and there is a good force-tank.

397. Are there any fire buckets?—No.

398. Could the prisoners be got out in case of fire?—I do not think there would be any difficulty.

399. Is gas laid on?—No; it is one of the things very much desired.

400. Are the prisoners ever in possession of money when convicted?—Not often.

401. Who takes charge of it when a man has any money?—The Gaoler gets it, and it is preserved and given to the man when he leaves gaol.

402. Is there any system of account, or check upon the Gaoler?—No.

403. No Regulation that it is to be placed in the bank, or anything of that sort?—No.

404. *Mr. Wakefield.*] A prisoner's clothes and effects are kept together till he goes out?—Exactly so.

405. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] If a prisoner has any money in the bank, what would be done with it?—