

*Venerable Archdeacon Stock.* going wrong I fancy the prisoners would soon let the Visiting Justices know. I do not think anything would be long kept from Mr. Pearce. They seem to like him very much, and would tell him things that they would not tell any one else.

23rd Aug., 1878.

904. Supposing there was in the gaol a deliberate system of mismanagement, either as to stores or as to breaches of discipline, at which the gaoler connived, do you think the Visiting Justices, on their ordinary visits, would be able to detect that?—I cannot say; I should think so, if they went into the stores' accounts.

905. Have you any experience of gaols in the colony except this one, or out of the colony?—No; I may mention that I knew well the chaplain of the Pentonville Model Prison in England.

906. *Mr. Rolleston.*] What are the principal classes of offences here—I mean as to forgeries, violence, and so on. The question I am leading up to is this: Do you think there is a criminal class in this colony?—No; in this province, certainly not.

907. What are the principal crimes?—There are men in the gaol for forgery and for arson. There is one in for attempt at murder—the German, Smat. Crime does not appear to run in any particular groove.

908. Nor to be recurrent?—No, I do not think so.

909. Are you aware of any cases of prisoners becoming worse by reason of imprisonment here?—No. If such cases had occurred one would have heard about it, and I have heard nothing. Most of the bad men have gone away. There is one point I would like to call attention to. It would, I think, be a good thing if the prisoners had the power of earning money which they could claim as their own when they left the gaol. Each man should, as a privilege granted for good conduct, be enabled to earn a small sum, to give him a start when he left the gaol.

910. *The Chairman.*] You know the mark system which was established in 1875 is working well, and prisoners might very well be allowed to earn a small sum on their marks?—Yes, the Visiting Justices at present have power to grant the men small sums of money; but the money so obtained is not looked upon as it would be if it were earned by the men's self-denial. The extension of the privilege of being enabled to earn money should, I think, be left to depend entirely upon the good behaviour of the men. It would benefit the men individually, I think, as well as the gaol.

911. *Mr. Rolleston.*] You think there would be a fair prospect of the men who got out of gaol with this money turning over a new leaf?—Yes.

912. Do you think it would be so in the case of women?—The case of the women is entirely different. The women in the gaol are almost exclusively prostitutes.

913. *The Chairman.*] There is a first-offenders' ward for women?—Yes.

914. *Mr. Rolleston.*] I suppose the women commit few offences except those arising from prostitution?—No. I may add that this province has been exceptionally free from crime. Whether it is the absence of gold fields with a fluctuating population and the attendant evils, I do not know; but the fact remains.

915. Does the Benevolent Society assist prisoners?—No. I could always get a grant from the society if I wanted it, I am sure; but I have not applied. The men come to me, and generally ask for two or three shillings, nothing more, just to enable them to go up country.

916. And you have found them that?—Yes. Mr. Pearce has told me the same thing. I may mention that, as I am not official chaplain, I cannot very well inquire into the working of the gaol, as I otherwise might do. I just make my visits as a private person.

917. *Mr. J. C. Brown.*] Do the short-sentence boys get their meals together with the men?—No; they are kept entirely separate.

918. *Mr. Swanson.*] Is there a musical instrument in the gaol?—Yes, a harmonium.

919. Is it the property of the gaol?—I suppose so. Mr. DeCastro collected the funds to purchase it.

*Rev. DeCastro.*

23rd Aug., 1878.

Rev. C. D. DECASTRO examined.

920. *The Chairman.*] You are in the habit of visiting the Wellington Gaol on Sunday?—Yes.

921. You perform service there?—Yes.

922. How long have you been doing so?—For about three years.

923. Have you visited the gaol at other times?—Not except when I went to visit some sick person.

924. Then I presume you have not had much opportunity of judging of the gaol management and discipline?—No.

925. What is the average number of prisoners attending the services?—About fifty men, and six or seven women.

926. Do others besides the Church of England prisoners attend?—Yes, all Protestant denominations.

927. Are there any of the prisoners Jews?—There was one who professed to be a Jew.

928. Did he attend your service?—Yes.

929. Do you think the service has a good effect upon the prisoners?—Yes, they are very attentive, and I think they thoroughly appreciate the service. I regret to say there is no suitable accommodation. Service is held in the corridor, a place which is very cold and draughty all the year round, and in which at service time the smell of the cooking is very offensive.

930. If a better place were built would there be any difficulty in its being used by all denominations?—The Roman Catholic priest seems to wish to have his own altar, otherwise it could be done.

931. You have music and singing?—Yes.

932. Do the prisoners seem to enjoy that?—Yes.

933. There is a harmonium?—A Mason and Hamlin organ, which I bought some time ago.

934. Who plays it?—The Rev. Mr. Porritt.

935. Do you know anything about what books the prisoners have in the gaol?—No; I do not know much about them.

936. Do you know anything of any teaching going on in the gaol?—Religious teaching?

937. Religious or secular?—I know some people visit for the purpose of teaching; but I do not know anything of the character of the teaching.