

The number of small gaols maintained in different parts of the colony is a cause of very considerable waste of public money, whilst it perpetuates many other evils in connection with prison management, discipline, classification, and employment. As an illustration of the loss to the colony, we may mention that whilst in Auckland we found 158 prisoners, maintained at a cost for food of £10 13s. per head, and £20 for superintendence, whilst the actual cash received for each prisoner's labour being £9 7s. 6d., and the estimated value of labour given to various public Boards and institutions was £15 7s. 4d. per head. In Picton, on the other hand, we found an annual average of $5\frac{1}{2}$ prisoners, costing £23 19s. per head for food, and £83 1s. 9d. per head for superintendence, whilst the cash earnings were *nil*, and the work performed for their locality of very little value. In still smaller establishments the cost per head for superintending a prisoner is even more illustrative of the extravagance of the present arrangement. In Arrow Town, where they seem to have a prisoner two days a month, the cost of waiting on him is at the rate of £2,837 15s. per annum; Westport, £645 7s. 6d. per head; Russell, £465 7s. 6d.; Naseby, £317 17s. 4d.; Thames, £189 10s. 10d.; Reefton, £152 1s. 8d.; Clyde, £116 2s. 2d.; and Greymouth, £113 10s. 1d.

Wasteful expense in small gaols.

It is very evident that such occasional duties as are necessary in these particular instances should be performed by the police or by some temporarily-appointed person, and not be made a reason for appointing permanent officers.

Permanent officers should not be appointed for occasional services.

What has been done in the Auckland Gaol shows that our able-bodied prisoners can be maintained without adding anything considerable to the burdens of the colony, and that the heavy cost now incurred for maintaining small numbers of prisoners in isolated establishments is one that can be and should be avoided. The advantage obtained by local bodies from the prison labour offers a temptation to advise the continuance of these expensive and useless institutions; and, in order to avoid any local jealousies on that ground, it is desirable that prison labour should in no case be given to any local institutions except at its market value.

Local bodies interested in continuance of gaols.

TRAVELLING ALLOWANCE.

Officers travelling on public duty are allowed the actual cost of conveyance by rail, steamer, or vehicle, and such a daily allowance in addition as is supposed to cover their hotel charges for board and lodging. This hotel allowance varies according to salary: the hotel expenses of Ministers and Judges are assumed to be 2 guineas a day; District Judges, $1\frac{1}{2}$ guineas; and all other public officers, 3s. 6d. for each hundred pounds of salary, but in no case less than 7s. 6d. per day. While the lowest-paid officer can only draw 7s. 6d., those paid £1,000 can draw £1 15s. a day in addition to cost of conveyance.

Allowances made.

Travelling allowance being given solely for the purpose of covering reasonable expenditure, precautions should be taken to prevent persons from regarding this allowance as a source of indirect profit. Inquiries which we commenced on this subject have shown us that it is not only possible, but also probable, that improper charges and entries have been made for the purpose of obtaining payments under this head.

Danger of abuse.

PENSIONS.

We are of opinion that any provision for pensions or retiring allowances must necessarily interfere with that free choice of servants which every employer finds necessary in order to secure vigilant and attentive services, and that the uncertainty which many circumstances introduce as to its eventual realization prevents it from being valued by the possible recipient at its full cost to the Government.

Pensions undesirable.

A still greater objection exists as to any implied or traditional claim which long service, accident, or other circumstances, may or may not be supposed to confer on any Government employé; everything should be avoided that would place Civil servants in the position of suppliants for favours, either from their superior officers or from the Legislature; and no uncertainty should be allowed to prevent them from making such provision for their own future as their prudence would dictate in any other employment.

Should be no uncertainty about them.