

blished, which, for obvious reasons, is much more desirable than the former diversified and uncertain local regulations on these matters. The classification scheme appears to be appreciated by the better class of prisoners, and I cannot learn that even the ill-conditioned ones have much to say against it.

14. Prisoners sentenced to penal servitude have during the year been transferred from the smaller or second-class prisons to the larger ones, thereby preventing their contaminating influence affecting short-sentenced and incidental offenders, and making more distinction between penal-servitude and hard-labour sentences.

15. I regret to have to report that, at my visits of inspection to the larger prisons during the past year, I have from time to time found many boys and youths undergoing sentences, and deem it my duty to respectfully point out, in reference to the treatment of these juvenile offenders, that in my opinion much requires to be done in the direction of establishing a sound reformatory system which shall have the effect of preventing the growth of adult criminals.

16. In my last report (paragraph 14) a brief reference was made to this important question, and my ideas, then expressed as to the propriety and necessity of establishing a reformatory on the lines of the Philanthropic Society's Farm School at Red Hill, in the County of Surrey, for the reclamation of criminal and other boys, remain unaltered. I would again urge the formation of such an institution in this colony, believing the advantages in saving young offenders or waifs and strays from a future of crime, and at the same time freeing the colony from a large part of its evil influences, would be undoubtedly great, while such an institution from a financial point of view could be made self-supporting, or nearly so, after once being fairly set on foot, and placed in working order.

17. The plan I would suggest is that the Government set apart a sufficient area of land (partly flax-bearing), situated between two rivers, to render escape difficult if not impossible. This estate should then be divided into several sections as circumstances may require. On each section should be a flax-mill, and buildings sufficient to accommodate from forty to fifty boys, a schoolmaster, and the requisite staff.

18. The boys should in the first instance be employed in cutting the raw *phormium* and transforming it into flax and tow. So soon as the flax is cut down the usual process of clearing, draining, and stocking would follow. By means of detached schools and dormitories, placed on different parts of the farm, the convicted and unconvicted boys would be kept entirely apart, except on rare occasions, such as assembling at chapel on Sundays; but even then they would be kept immediately under the eyes of their respective masters.

19. The buildings need not be of an elaborate or imposing character, and I would specially recommend that there be nothing suggestive of a prison about them, except the necessary means of seclusion by way of punishment for ill-conditioned boys. The daily routine should be so divided as to devote a certain number of hours to educational purposes and the remainder to agricultural labour. The boys would thus be instructed, trained, and enabled to take their places amongst productive colonial labourers as soon as they have arrived at the years of discretion.

20. It is considered, as I have said, that a reformatory of this kind should not have the aspect or condition of a prison; and the accuracy of this view, in dealing with this class of offenders, appears to be borne out by the experiences of the Philanthropic Society's establishment, already referred to. In a sketch of the principles and working of this society, the following statement is made: "The system of management and discipline is made as kind, persuasive, and intelligent as possible, the great object being to interest the boy himself in the business of his reformation, and induce him to improve and regulate himself for his own interest's sake."

21. The other alternative appears to me to be the adoption of training ships; but I think there cannot be two opinions about the question from the labour-market point of view as to which of the two classes, agricultural labourers or sailors, are most required in the colony, especially as sailing ships are annually becoming fewer in the world's mercantile marine. However, should such ships be considered more advantageous than the farm scheme, I would suggest the establishment of one in connection with Timaru Prison. That gaol has now few prisoners, and there is ample room on the reserve for building dormitories, &c., if deemed desirable; and when the breakwater is a little further advanced towards completion, the training ship would always have a safe anchorage, easy of access from the prison. As regards female criminal children, I believe an institution which would train them for domestic servants, seamstresses, dressmakers, dairy-maids, and such like, is the only practicable one.

22. The prison officers have, as a rule, given satisfaction generally, but many do not sufficiently study the characters of those of whom they have charge. This is especially observable in their plans of awarding marks for labour. To every prisoner with upwards of a three months' sentence is assigned (as you are aware) the task of earning a number of marks, on which his or her remission depends; but many officers are in the habit of awarding the marks for the actual quantity of work done, irrespective of physical capacity, instead of for the amount of exertion expended by the prisoner in performing it, and, in working their men, are too apt to expect the actual results for labour to be the same in the case of two prisoners working side by side, the one perhaps before conviction having been engaged in purely sedentary employment, while the other had all his life been accustomed to hard outdoor manual labour. Again, in my prison experience I have rarely, if ever, met with any prisoner, however bad and desperate he may be, who has not in his disposition some redeeming point on which his better feelings can be appealed to for good to some extent; but, to