

There are many matters which have occurred to us in the course of our examination which, had the buildings been in existence, would fittingly have formed a part of this report, such, for instance, as indicating industries to which prison labour could be applied without coming into contact with free labour. We content ourselves, however, with the axiom that all public departments at any rate should avail themselves of this labour. For instance, we would recommend the erection of a bakery: the cost would be trifling, and, for a few additional shillings per day beyond the salary paid to a warder, the services of a good journeyman baker could be obtained, who would act in the double capacity. Surely a benefit would result from supplying the Asylum, Hospital, Old Men's Refuge, Industrial Home, and Training Ship, besides the sick and the destitute. At present a market is required for boots, shoes, and clothing; and the knitting of socks by the women for these institutions ought to form one of their employments.

It appears to us that advantage would accrue to the Government by having separate tenders for the butcher, the baker, and the grocer.

Printed rules are exhibited in the prison, though not obeyed. Those of them which are useless ought to be expunged. The example of persons in authority ignoring them cannot be otherwise than prejudicial to the mind of the prisoner.

In view of the Government ordering the construction of new buildings, we recommend that a number of skilled masons be employed as warders.

Under other circumstances we should have been disposed to recommend that a certain percentage on the actual cash earnings of the prisoners ought to be divided among the overseers. We feel, however, compelled to notice that the officers are paid less than in other gaols in the colony.

In gaol accounts it is highly desirable that a uniform system of returns should be adopted throughout the colony, as much in consonance as possible with those in existence among our neighbours. The absence of such a uniform system renders it possible that a gaol with fewer prisoners, and worked at a vastly greater cost, might, by having the labour assessed by those interested in placing an exaggerated value thereon, present accounts calculated to mislead the superficial inquirer. We regret that we have not had the opportunity of investigating the recent accounts of the Dunedin Gaol. Governor Caldwell, however, was good enough to furnish us with the enclosed estimate of the earnings of thirty prisoners per diem, which appears to us to show either a most exceptional state of the labour market, or that prison labour, without interest, yields better results than free labour, for, deducting the overseers, &c., it leaves about 14s. per diem for each prisoner. No doubt it is capable of explanation, yet what we contend is that from such a diverse mode of accounts no reliable data as to the systems of discipline in operation can be arrived at. For contrast we supply a statement of the earnings of Auckland Gaol on the same principle as that adopted in Dunedin.

We found that the money property of the prisoners, sometimes amounting to a considerable sum, is retained by the Governor in a wooden box in the office. We would recommend that it be placed in the Government Savings Bank for the future.

Now that the civic authorities have a plentiful supply of water within a short distance, we would press on the Government the urgent necessity of availing themselves of the supply, not only because of the risk of fire, but also for sanitary purposes, which are in an unsatisfactory condition at present.

In conclusion, we have to admit our inability to deal as comprehensively with this very important subject as we could have wished, as the limited time would not permit us to obtain other information for our guidance.

If we have travelled beyond that which it was intended we should deal with, we must plead as our excuse zeal for that which must ever deeply concern all right-thinking members of the community, as well as all Governments.

We have, &c.,

W. J. HURST, Chairman.
WM. SWANSON.
THOMAS MOREIN.
A. K. TAYLOR.
J. S. MACFARLANE.

The Hon. F. Whitaker, Resident Minister,
Auckland.

Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

MR. MAHONEY to the CHAIRMAN of the GAOL COMMISSION.

SIR,—

Auckland, 4th May, 1877.

In compliance with your instructions of date 19th March, 1877, I inspected the Mount Eden Gaol, and have the honor to submit to you a sketch plan of the same, and to add that the plan shows the position of the several structures on the Gaol site or reserve.

The buildings are of wood, some old and partly decayed, and all unfit for the ordinary purposes of a prison.

The structures being of wood, and roofed with shingles, are liable to be set on fire either wilfully or by accident. In either case it is fearful to contemplate the consequences, as it would be almost impossible for the warders in charge to liberate all the prisoners from the several cells and wards as arranged at present.

Proper classification under existing circumstances is simply impossible, as, owing to the want of a sufficient number of cells, several prisoners in some cases occupy the same room.

For the purpose of supervision the different wards with their airing-grounds are badly arranged, as the Governor and Chief Warder are compelled to go from one airing-yard to the other when making inspection, whereas they should be enabled to overlook all from one or two central positions.

There are no workshops worthy of the name, the only accommodation being a low shed about 40 feet long, divided by two partitions, and made to serve as carpenters' shop, shoemakers' shop, and smithy.