

Hon. W. H. Reynolds, M.L.C.
20th Aug., 1878.

694. *The Chairman.*] Have you seen what has been done at Lyttelton by the prisoners?—Yes. The same thing could be done in Dunedin if there was plenty of space, but the building there is a complete patchwork, and could not well be patched further. It is secure enough, however; with the present staff, it would be a most difficult thing for any man to get away. I believe the gaol is well managed too. Mr. Caldwell is a capable man as gaoler. I do not know what he would be if promoted to a higher position. As gaoler he is a very good man.

695. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Has he had English experience?—Yes, I believe so. Considering the rough characters he has had to deal with, he has managed the gaol very well. There have been but few complaints against him, and when complaints have been made and inquiries have taken place they have always been found to be groundless. As far as I know, there has not been a single case in which fault found with the Governor of the gaol has been sustained upon investigation.

696. *The Chairman.*] Visiting Justices must necessarily, on certain matters, depend for their information entirely upon the officers of the gaol?—Yes.

697. Such as the management or discipline of the gaol?—No; the Justices, when I was one, frequently visited the gaol, and saw for themselves as to the discipline of the gaol.

698. Are they in a position to judge for themselves?—I think so, some of them. Some have qualified themselves to be so situated by continually going down and seeing what is going on. One gentleman is continually there, and takes a great interest in knowing what is going on; and if anything was going wrong he would soon know, quite independently of the officers.

699. You are aware that the cost of the Dunedin Gaol is very much greater than that of any of the other gaols of the colony?—Yes.

700. Is that inevitable?—I think it is, from the fact that the prisoners have to work in detachments. That is the only way the officers can keep the prisoners classified outside the prison. Of course the expense of supervision is thereby increased. I know the warders have no very easy time of it.

701. They have an equal number of prisoners at Lyttelton, within a few; but there the cost is infinitely less, and the discipline is very strict?—It may be, but I do not suppose they work the men in separate gangs there.

702. There are two batches of them?—There are sometimes three or four in Dunedin.

703. They work them at gaol works and at their trades?—There would be a great outcry with us if prisoners were to be worked at trades.

704. Are the boots used in the gaol made in the gaol?—Yes; when it has bootmakers as prisoners.

705. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] I suppose there is no outcry about that?—No, there would be if the boots were made to be sold outside.

706. *The Chairman.*] Do they never teach young prisoners the trade?—I do not think so; I have never heard of it.

707. Would it not in your opinion be advisable to teach prisoners trades?—I think it would be a very good thing, so that when they went out they would be able to earn a living. Of course it would be no use teaching the confirmed criminals trades; but men who were in for the first time, if they were kept separate from the hardened offenders and taught trades it would no doubt have a good influence on them, and tend to enable them to earn an honest living on leaving the gaol.

708. In your opinion is it necessary or advisable that long-sentence prisoners should be provided for in a separate establishment?—I think so, if the colony could afford the money. It is, to my mind, a question of money.

709. Have you any recommendation to make, from your knowledge of the colony, as to the best site for such an establishment, if it were determined to have one?—Yes; I think such a place as Soames' Island, here in Wellington Harbour.

710. What would you employ them at there?—That would be the only difficulty. Perhaps they might work at trades, their productions to be used in Government departments.

711. That is the great difficulty in choosing a place. You are of course aware that the discipline varies in the different gaols in the colony?—Yes.

712. That in some places, notwithstanding the Visiting Justices, it is relaxed, and in others it is severer?—Yes; when I was a member of the Government I made a point of visiting the gaol at every place to which I went, and I saw great differences. In some places there was practically no discipline.

713. So with punishment. You are aware that a sentence for a good length of time is not the same punishment in one place as it is in another?—Certainly it is not.

714. Is it, in your opinion, possible to secure uniformity of discipline without inspection—skilled inspection?—I should think not. My impression is that, if you want uniformity, you must have one skilled inspector.

715. Are you aware how stores are checked in the various prisons now that the Stores Department is done away with?—They used to be checked by the Provincial Government when I was a Visiting Justice; but I cannot say how it is done now. Under the old system there was no chance of anything going wrong.

716. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] How were they checked by the Provincial Government; you had no Store Department?—Yes, we had. The clerk to the Superintendent had charge of the Store Department. We did not have an elaborate system of branding. Of course we had the letters "H.M.G., Otago," with the broad arrow.

717. Is not that branding?—That was done in the gaol itself. I mean to say we did not have a Colonel Gorton's branding establishment.

718. *The Chairman.*] The question of stores in gaols, now that the Store Department is done away with, is important, and I want to know how the Provincial Government checked the stores?—There was no difficulty. Officers had to account for what stores they had. They had a storeroom in the gaol, and so many shirts, so many trousers, &c., were put in, and the officers had to account for all that went out.