

Rev. Father
Kerrigan.
21st Aug., 1878.

785. *Mr. Tole.*] How often have you been at this gaol in Wellington? I ask because it was stated to the Committee the other day that a Roman Catholic priest seldom visited the gaol since Father O'Rielly became so infirm.—Well, I can answer that, because I happen to have looked at the book before coming here. I find that Father Petit Jean visited regularly for a long time, till July, 1875, and since then Father Kearney visited often till of late.

786. Is there any priest here who now is in the habit of visiting the prison?—Father Kearney began to visit the prison in August, 1875, and from that time till September, 1877, visited pretty regularly. The number of visits during that time were sixty-six. That is nearly every Sunday available, because a clergyman cannot well visit every Sunday. He has other duties to call him away. Ever since 21st April last I have visited, having made in all about twelve visits. The time devoted to instruction every visit would be about twenty-five minutes.

787. *Mr. Swanson.*] You said, in effect, just now that some prisoners had called on you for assistance, and had complained they could not get work?—Yes; they told me so.

788. Do you think it desirable that the rules of the prison should be so modified that these men should be put to task-work, and any one showing special energy should be allowed a few shillings by way of encouragement, which would enable him to look about for a day or two on coming out of gaol?—I think anything that would provide them with some means would be a step in the right direction. There ought to be some fund.

789. I mean for them to earn it?—I think it would be a good thing.

790. They might think more of the money if it were earned by them?—Yes.

791. You spoke just now of a chapel, or something of the sort, in the gaol. If a place were made, would it be available for all clergymen?—It could be made in that way. There could be a hall which might be open to be used by all denominations; but there could be a little place apart specially for the use of the Roman Catholic priest attending the gaol—a place where no one but himself could go—an altar, just as there is at Home.

792. *Mr. Tole.*] That would not be much bigger than a cupboard, I suppose?—No.

793. *Mr. Swanson.*] Some other denominations use altars, do they not?—No, I think not.

794. *Major Atkinson.*—Have you had any experience of prisons in any other country?—No.

795. In visiting prisoners, has it struck you that if they were being badly used by the warders they would be sure to tell you?—I think they would. They generally complain to the priest if anything is wrong.

796. *Mr. Swanson.*] Could you suggest to the Committee any means of making gaol punishment deterrent—make things so unpleasant for prisoners, that they would not be inclined to come back in a hurry; because the Committee find that prisoners continually go back to the gaols, and do not seem to be at all scared?—That is a question which requires a good deal of consideration. Certainly I cannot give an off-hand answer.

797. *The Chairman.*] Have you any other suggestion to make?—I think if clergymen wished to see prisoners on week days they should be allowed to do so. I mean this: Supposing I wished to see a prisoner on religious matters at, say, 2 o'clock in the day, I could not, because the gaol officials say they have no power to keep a man in from work for such a purpose; but I may see him in the evening. In the evening, very probably, it may be inconvenient for me to attend the gaol; therefore I cannot see him at all. I think if I sent notice that next day I would like to see such a man or men, the gaoler should be empowered to keep them in. I believe the officers would be anxious to do that if they could, but they tell me they cannot.

798. *Mr. Swanson.*] You mean to speak to them on religious subjects?—Yes.

799. Not as to grievances?—No, I never go into that sort of thing. Merely to speak to them on religious matters, and give them advice and encouragement.

800. Could not that be done on Sunday?—Sometimes I cannot get to the gaol on Sundays. I am simply speaking of what might happen.

THURSDAY, 22nd AUGUST, 1878.

DR. JOHNSTON, M.D., in attendance, and examined.

Dr. Johnston.
22nd Aug., 1878.

801. *The Chairman.*] You are in medical attendance at the gaol here?—Yes.

802. Do you consider that the gaol is in a healthy situation?—Yes, I do.

803. Do you find that the size of the rooms and cells affect the health of the prisoners?—No, I cannot say that I do. There is no infirmary—no convenience for the care of the sick.

804. What is done with them?—They are just put into the ordinary cell. There is no special attendance in any shape or form.

805. *Hon. Mr. Fox.*] Is there no special attendance when they are put into the cell?—No; the ordinary warders. Sometimes there is very heavy work. Within the last six weeks I have had three men and one woman suffering from a violent form of *delirium tremens*, each one being in a separate cell, without any special nurses, or convenience, or accommodation of any kind. The gaol is now becoming a large establishment. Of course the work has greatly increased; but no medical attendant has ever been appointed. The work has gradually crept on, but I have attended there for many years. When I first attended there there was nothing to do; but I have received no appointment.

806. Have you received no salary in respect of it?—No salary; I was told to go when under the Provincial Government. I went, of course, and medicines were always sent up from the hospital here.

807. Of course you bring medicines now from the hospital store?—Yes; I also obtained a medicine chest from an immigrant ship. That eases it somewhat.

808. *The Chairman.*] Is there no other medical attendance besides your own?—No.

809. You never had any serious surgical case there?—No; I remember on one or two occasions, some years ago, I got an order for a patient to be removed to the hospital; but that is a process which it is difficult to get done. You cannot move a man without a special order from the Supreme Court.