

938. Do you know of any special attempt at reforming the prisoners, apart from the services?— *Rev. DeCastro.*
I do not.

939. Do you know anything as to the classification of the prisoners in the gaol?—The Gaoler 23rd Aug., 1878.
complains there is not sufficient room to enable him to classify the men.

940. Do you know of any ill effects arising from that?—Not of my own personal knowledge.

941. I suppose you have not seen much of the prisoners except during the performance of service?—No, unless they are ill and send for me.

FRIDAY, 30TH AUGUST, 1878.

Hon. Captain FRASER, M.L.C., examined.

*Hon. Captain
Fraser.*

30th Aug., 1878.

942. *The Chairman.*] You are a Visiting Justice at Dunedin?—Yes.

943. In your opinion, is the gaol at Dunedin convenient for discipline and classification?—It is convenient enough for discipline but not for classification.

944. Then you are unable to attempt classification?—We look to discipline more than classification.

945. Are first offenders separated from old offenders?—No. We have no classification; we look to discipline.

946. What is your opinion as to the effect of first offenders being imprisoned with old offenders?—I am of opinion that it does no harm, any more than harm arises from a young recruit joining a regiment of soldiers.

947. Do I understand you to say that in a regiment of soldiers any mischief ——?—In every prison there are different descriptions of prisoners. Some are good and some are bad, and you cannot change them. I do not believe in prison reformation. I have brought with me extracts from the opinions of some very high authorities on the subject.

948. You do not believe in prison reformation; do you believe in prison corruption?—No; I do not. There is one thing I do believe in—that is, strict discipline, to make a prison deterrent. I believe in stern discipline, to sicken people of the gaol, and prevent them coming in.

949. You believe it is not a mischievous thing to put men who happen to commit a first offence in company with men who are hardened offenders. You think it does a man no harm?—It is his misfortune.

950. You do not think it does any harm?—No.

951. Is there more than one man in a cell in the Dunedin Gaol?—No; except the case of sailors and very short-sentenced men.

952. Do I understand you to say that prisoners are only one in a cell in the Dunedin Gaol?—Yes. But what do you mean by cells? There are dormitories in which more than one sleep.

953. Do the men sleep in dormitories in the Dunedin Gaol?—Yes; sailors and short-sentenced men.

954. How many in each?—Three, four, five, and six perhaps. Forty Maori prisoners have slept there.

955. You do not object to that?—Oh, no; there is no more danger in that than in soldiers sleeping in dormitories in barracks, or sailors on board ship.

956. Do you think soldiers ought to be classed with criminals?—Human nature is very much the same, whether in the gaol, on board ship, or in the barrack.

957. Then you would not think it necessary to adapt the prison for separate confinement of prisoners?—No. That was my opinion some time ago, but I have since visited several gaols at Home, and I could not help being impressed with the idea that the work done at Pentonville and Mountjoy Prisons was not what could be called hard labour. You cannot have hard labour inside a prison, unless you employ men at crank-work, and compel them to make so many revolutions a day. I do not call the work done in a gaol otherwise hard labour.

958. Do you think crank labour advisable?—No; I think it useless torture.

959. Do you think it inadvisable to teach men a trade?—I think the best trade for them to learn is that of a navvy or agricultural labourer.

960. But all men are not suited for navvy work?—All men are suited for navvy work. It is all very well to say all men are not suited to it, but I think every man is able to learn the usual work of a navvy.

961. Do you not think it advisable that, if a man who has a trade is imprisoned, his services in his particular trade should be utilized in the gaol?—No; when a man is sent to gaol to do hard work he should do it. We in Dunedin make him do it. Of course we have shoemakers at work making and mending shoes; also carpenters and blacksmiths.

962. You do not think it is a good thing to teach a man a trade, so as to give him a means of livelihood when he comes out again?—No; it is a good thing for a man to be a good labourer, because in this colony a man can always earn a living at that.

963. Are the regulations in force in Dunedin?—Which regulations?

964. The regulations generally?—Yes.

965. Is the mark system carried out?—Yes.

966. Does it work satisfactorily?—Yes.

967. Are there any complaints as to the manner in which the marks are calculated?—Sometimes there are complaints by prisoners that they have not been fairly treated, and, of course, we inquire into these and settle them upon their merits.

968. Are there complaints as to the other part of the system by prisoners?—No; I have not heard any general complaints.

969. Are the female prisoners classified in any way?—No; we have no means of classifying them.