

Mr. Sherrin.
20th Sept., 1878.

1172. Are there no baths there?—There is one bath, but it is never used. To the best of my knowledge, it is only used for the ordinary washing of linen. That was all it was used for during the whole time I was imprisoned, unless vermin was found in the clothes of some prisoner.

1173. Are the prisoners put into the cells in the clothes in which they come in?—Yes. They are generally brought in about 4 o'clock, and change their clothes, as a rule, the first thing in the morning.

1174. Are they not then washed?—No.

1175. No bath then?—They take no bath then. They simply walk from the cell into the Gaoler's room and put on prison clothes.

1176. *Mr. Rolleston.*] But there is a bath?—Yes; but it is never used. I hope none of the Committee will think that I am giving evidence from any motives of personal feeling of any kind.

The Chairman: We are glad to get any evidence outside the officers.

Witness: I am sure Cotter treated me as kindly as he possibly could; still, I think the state of things which I witnessed is one which ought not to continue. Touching this matter of cleanliness, the blankets that are in use there I believe are never washed from the time they are brought into the prison until the time comes when they are thrown away. I will tell you how I arrive at that conclusion: When Mr. Phillips came down and was taking over some provincial stores, last July twelve months, there was a clearing out of the old stores, and there were rags and tatters of blankets—so bad that you could absolutely pull them apart.

1177. *Mr. Swanson.*] Perished?—Perished, and as full of dirt as they could stick. It is not the custom to wash the blankets there, and so they pass from one to another.

1178. Might they not have been sent out to be washed?—It is a matter of common notoriety what I state.

1179. *The Chairman.*] There is a women's ward there?—Yes.

1180. Do they do the prisoners' washing?—Perhaps some of the prisoners' washing. The cook and cook's assistant wash the prisoners' shirts, trousers, and flannels, the women doing some mending.

1181. Then what was sent to the women?—I do not know.

1182. *Mr. Rolleston.*] As a matter of fact there were very few women there?—There were three at one time there—the two B—— and somebody else. I wish to point out the necessity for some alteration, because, before I was remanded to Waimate, I had some passable blankets given me, and when I came back I had at first only a bundle of ragged blankets.

1183. *Mr. Swanson.*] Were those blankets good except that they had dirt on them?—Many were like old Maori blankets you would see thrown away, nothing but dirt keeping them together.

1184. *The Chairman.*] You also speak of the maintenance of health?—Well, the maintenance of health there is almost impossible, with such a lack of ventilation and the absence of proper sanitary conditions. If a man is sick there, there is no sick-ward to put him into.

1185. Practically, were the prisoners healthy?—Yes, practically they were.

1186. To what do you attribute their health under the circumstances?—The climate, I suppose, principally. Many of the prisoners are only short-sentence men, and obtain a large amount of outdoor employment; but men who are kept there not under hard-labour sentences have not this sanitary advantage.

1187. And regularity of living?—Yes, and regularity of living. But what I wish to point out is the necessity for greater means of cleanliness being adopted.

1188. How were the privies?—They were kept clean. There was one privy for the whole of the prisoners. There were two in the yards, one kept for the warders and the other for the prisoners.

1189. Did you complain of your blankets to the Gaoler?—Yes, and got them changed.

1190. Did you get clean ones?—I got fresh ones, clean ones are not served out. The clean ones are kept in store until the old ones are worn out, and then fresh ones are issued. One of the cells is turned into a store for surplus bedding in use, and, if one of the prisoners goes out, his blanket are packed up and placed in this store-room, and the next man who comes in takes the blanket and mattress of the man who went away. I should like to say something about the matter of clothing. The same clothing is worn in summer and in winter. For instance, my chest was bad when I changed my clothes, and I had to get an extra flannel shirt to wear. However cold it may be, all that the men are allowed is a flannel under-shirt, a red serge shirt, and one of those grey twill shirts. The clothing is not enough to keep a man warm, especially in the winter. A man may get an old flannel shirt that has been worn perhaps two or three years, and that has no warmth in it; and he may also get a red serge shirt that is in the same condition, and he may suffer from cold; while another man may get clothing that is comparatively warm.

1191. If a man complains of cold, is nothing done for him?—I know I complained and got an extra shirt, but I believe it was an exceptional case.

1192. *Major Atkinson.*] Do you know of any case where a man applied for one, and did not get it?—I asked for a thicker outside shirt, and did not get it.

1193. *The Chairman.*] Were you ever cold in the cells?—Yes, very often; very cold.

1194. What do you say as to the treatment of prisoners?—I believe that all prisoners are treated alike. In all these little gaols there can be no possibility of classification whatever, and it necessarily comes very hard upon a man who is imprisoned for libel, or anything of that sort, that he has to suffer treatment just the same as if he had been convicted of any serious crime.

1195. He has to associate with the long-sentence prisoners?—Yes.

1196. Were there any long-sentence prisoners there at the time?—Only one or two. They are generally sent to Lyttelton. I noticed this: It is not the long-sentence prisoners who are the worst as a rule, but those who are constantly going and coming.

1197. Is there much communication amongst the prisoners?—They communicated with each other as they pleased in the yard at certain times.

1198. There was nothing to prevent their communicating?—No.

1199. Did you notice much communication amongst the prisoners about their future movements,