

criminal intentions, or anything of that sort?—Nothing at all. I would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that, after a man has been imprisoned six or eight months, and receives no communication from the outer world, he is comparatively dazed when he gets his liberty again; he does not know what to do. Mr. Sherrin.
20th Sept., 1878.

1200. Do you mean in six months?—It had that effect upon me.

1201. *Mr. Swanson.*] You were behind the times?—Yes. I may perhaps be trenching upon objectionable ground, but I would like to draw the attention of the Committee to this question: Whether it is absolutely necessary that a man in prison should be so much debarred from obtaining information from outside. It necessarily unfits him for work when he goes out.

1202. Do you mean what would be the great harm of the prisoners seeing newspapers?

1203. *Mr. Tole.*] Do you not think that these privations are a proper deterrent from crime?—I do not think so. They have constant accessions every week, and the man who comes in tells everybody that has passed up to that time; and the next week another comes, and so on; and the inmates are kept *au fait* with what is going on outside.

1204. It would be very comfortable if the prisoners got newspapers every morning?—What I wish to draw the attention of the Committee to is this: That after a man has been isolated for a long time, he is, to some extent, at a loss to know what to do when he gets out of prison.

1205. *Mr. Swanson.*] He is all abroad?—Yes; and I expect that has been the reason that steps have been taken at Home to look after prisoners when they come out of gaol.

1206. *The Chairman.*] The dietary scale is the next thing?—Well, there were complaints about the quality of the food.

1207. Were they justified?—At times they were.

1208. Supposing the rations to have been fairly served, were they sufficient?—The scale was quite sufficient, but the quality was often not good.

1209. Were complaints made by the prisoners about this?—Certainly.

1210. And what was done, did the Gaoler take any steps?—Occasionally; the meat got better for a few days, and then it would return to the old state of things.

1211. Do you know who was the contractor there?—I do not.

1212. Do you know whether the Gaoler or the warders dealt with the contractor for their own private supplies?—I do not.

1213. *Mr. Swanson.*] Did the Gaoler or warders get their own rations from the contractor?—I cannot say.

1214. *The Chairman.*] You say the prisoners complained, and then the quality of the rations improved, but afterwards went back again. Now, on the average, during the time you were there, was the quality of the rations bad or good?—I should say half the time the meat was good. The potatoes were very bad at times, almost rotten, absolutely.

1215. Did the Gaoler take any notice or any steps when a complaint was made that the potatoes were rotten?—Yes. I believe in every case where the men complained, and where inspection was asked for, bad food was the cause.

1216. Practically, you say there was no inspection while you were there?—I saw no person there from the outside except Colonel Brett, who came through the prison one day, with the exception of Mr. Phillips, the Lyttelton Gaoler.

1217. You have alluded to the cost of management?—At one time there were only twelve or thirteen prisoners there, and there were three warders, a Gaoler, and a Matron.

1218. You say again, during another part of the time you were there, there were thirty-four or thirty-five prisoners there?—Yes.

1219. *Mr. Rolleston.*] They were only awaiting the sitting of the Court when there was that number?—Either waiting for the sitting of the Supreme Court, or when the Court had just concluded its business.

1220. The long-sentence men were sent to Lyttelton?—Yes.

1221. *The Chairman.*] What labour were the men put to?—I believe they had been employed for two years in digging out some fish-pond at the hospital or domain.

Mr. Rolleston.] It is a domain; they were cutting roads there and generally keeping it in order.

Witness.] I heard them talk about being employed in some fish-pond, but I fancy if this matter of inspection were put right all the other things would follow.

1222. *The Chairman.*] Now, in your opinion, is skilled inspection necessary?—Certainly; a man not connected with the department at all, save as an Inspector of Gaols.

1223. And you say, you consider there is no classification?—None there whatever.

1224. *Mr. Rolleston.*] Do you consider there were any of the prisoners who could properly be said to belong to the criminal classes?—Yes; I know there were. Some of the prisoners there, I was aware, had been convicted in Australia twenty years ago.

1225. *The Chairman.*] Were the regulations posted up in the Gaol?—Yes.

1226. And was the mark-system properly carried out?—I think it was; but I had nothing to do with the mark-system. I know there was a plate and a ticket in it, and every Monday morning so many marks were put on the ticket.

1227. Were there any attempts to escape while you were there?—Yes, one.

1228. And did the man get away?—It was a man called Tole. He attempted to escape when they were going away from the Supreme Court. Speaking of classification, although I may be referring to a personal matter, I may say that I felt it rather hard, being handcuffed and taken about the streets before all the people.

1229. Were you handcuffed?—Yes, I was; handcuffed to a fellow that got ten years.

1230. What had he been doing?—Stealing from a dwelling. I felt that rather hard. There was another matter: When the prisoners were awaiting trial at Timaru they were taken into a little cell and locked up during the whole of the day. It was a room perhaps about half the size of this. They were taken to the Court, and then sent back there again.