

Mr. Sherrin.
20th Sept., 1878.

1231. Did you happen to have any money in your pocket when you were taken to gaol?—Every thing I had was taken from me at Waimate.

1232. What became of it?—It was given back.

1233. Where was the money kept, do you know?—When a prisoner is arrested, and has money or valuables on him, the police enter the amount of money and the description of the articles in a sheet, and when the prisoner is delivered over to the gaoler the money and his effects are handed over to the gaoler, and the gaoler gives a receipt to the police for the money. When the prisoner is set at liberty the money and his property are handed back to him.

1234. *Mr. Gisborne.*] What is done with it if the man is convicted?—Just the same way I believe.

1235. It is kept until he is discharged?—Yes; I think so.

1236. *The Chairman.*] What were you called upon to do in gaol?—Nothing.

1237. *Major Atkinson.*] Were you not called upon to keep your cell clean?—No; but I did.

1238. Did you get any advantage by it?—No; none.

1239. *The Chairman.*] Now, practically, did not the time hang more heavily upon your hands than upon any other?—No; not at all.

1240. How did you employ the time?—I read most of the day.

1241. How many books were there?—About 150 volumes. The prisoners were allowed to get books every Sunday.

1242. Were they good books?—Not many of them; about twenty or thirty volumes.

1243. Were you able to get books beyond those in the library?—None.

1244. Was there any garden about the Gaol?—Yes, a large one.

1245. Was it the Gaoler's garden, or were the vegetables grown for the Gaol?—The garden appeared to be a common garden for the use of the prisoners, Gaoler, and warder.

1246. And who worked in it?—The prisoners.

1247. Practically, did the prisoners get the benefit of it in the shape of vegetables?—I can hardly say; I would not like to go so far as that, because there is a dietary scale of so many ounces of vegetables a day.

1248. Did any of those come out of the garden?—Sometimes they did.

1249. And was that so much off the contract supply?—Yes. I presume you wish to know whether the garden produce was regarded as supplementary?

1250. Yes.—Then, no, it was not.

1251. Then it was so much economy?—Yes.

1252. You have no means of knowing whether the contractor was paid less?—I have none. I should think not, because, having nothing to do one day, I remember I copied out all the contracts.

1253. *Mr. Gisborne.*] Were you kept by yourself, or had you to mix with the other prisoners?—I was kept by myself for a couple of months during the latter portion of my imprisonment.

1254. Not before?—No.

1255. Had you to mix with felons then?—Yes.

1256. *The Chairman.*] Was any instruction of any kind given to the prisoners there?—Religious instruction once a week only.

1257. By whom?—The Rev. Mr. Harper used to come. I think he saw the prisoners there.

1258. *Mr. Rolleston.*] Did not Mr. Turnbull come there weekly?—I do not know, I am sure. I never used to attend. Our priest used to attend once a fortnight.

1259. *Mr. Swanson.*] What clergyman came there once a week that you know?—There might be a clergyman, but I never knew who he was. Our own priest came there once a fortnight.

1260. *The Chairman.*] Do you think the prisoners liked the religious services?—I do not know, I am sure.

1261. You do not know whether it had any effect upon them?—I do not know.

1262. There was no secular instruction?—None whatever. Those provisions in the regulations are ignored altogether.

1263. Were you able to form a judgment as to whether the sentences, as a rule, were likely to deter men from committing offences and coming back again?—I do not think so; because I fancy there were close upon 100 prisoners there at different times; and I may say that, in my opinion, fully 85 per cent. of all the committals and convictions took place in consequence of the men being drunk.

1264. *Mr. Tole.*] You do not mean simply the crime of drunkenness, but crimes arising from drunkenness?—Yes. I do not believe under those circumstances punishment can be a deterrent; because, when a man is drunk, he cannot be prevented from committing offences.

1265. *Mr. Swanson.*] Do not you think that a man put there for being drunk would get such a scaring that he would never come back again?—I can give you an instance. One man was imprisoned five or six times for being drunk while I was there. There is a class of men who are punished for drunkenness, and in a week or a month they are expected back again. I have known the case several times to occur where a man has been in prison, say, for forty-eight hours, and been discharged, and has come in again within forty-eight hours afterwards.

1266. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] I understand you to say that most of the grave offences had been committed in consequence of drunkenness?—I did not say "in consequence of drunkenness," but when the men were in a state of drunkenness.

1267. *Mr. Swanson.*] You were not sentenced to any hard labour?—None.

1268. I understood you to say that you did some work, kept accounts, or something?—I kept no accounts. I only did some copying that had to be sent to the Minister of Justice.

1269. Were you paid for it?—No.

1270. Is there no chance of a prisoner, by working over and above his task, as in the case like yourself, of earning any money, so that he may have a few shillings when he goes out?—None whatever.

1271. Would it not be desirable, when a man goes out of gaol, that he should have a few shillings