

in his pocket, so that he may be able to get a living, and not have recourse to stealing?—It was the custom, I heard, of the Provincial Government to give necessitous prisoners a small amount of money when their time expired; but I was told by the Gaoler that after the provinces ceased to exist there was no provision made for such purposes, and prisoners had to shift for themselves. Mr. Sherrin.
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1272. That was not the drift of the question I asked. I wished to know whether there was any provision by which an industrious man, that would hit out for himself, to earn a little money, to be given to him on his being released from gaol?—None whatever.

1273. And you think it would be desirable to give him that opportunity?—Yes; but his very kind of employment precludes his doing anything. Twenty or thirty men go out in the morning, and are kept digging all day; and unless you gave them task-work they could not earn anything extra.

1274. What do you think would be the best means, where a man is convicted the first time, to treat him, so that when he completed his sentence and got out he would not be likely to come back?—To keep such fellows by themselves; I think classification and inspection would be the best means.

The witness was thanked for his attendance and withdrew.

Mr. ROLLESTON, M.H.R., in attendance, and examined.

1275. *The Chairman.*] Mr. Rolleston, we wish to take your evidence, because we know you have had a great deal of experience as Superintendent and as Visiting Justice. In the first place, with regard to the position of the Gaols of Christchurch and Lyttelton, and the materials of which they are constructed, what is your opinion about them; do you think the positions are satisfactory?—I think so. I think they answer well for the purpose of local gaols, and they are very fairly situated. As to the materials, I initiated the system of building them of concrete, by prison labour. The work was gone on with year by year upon a plan prepared by the architect, and as much was done in the year as could be got through. On that system the Gaols of Christchurch and Lyttelton have become, in point of building, very fair for their purpose. Mr. Rolleston.
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1276. Are there any means of classification?—Not what there should be, but in Lyttelton now I think there are at least seventy or eighty single cells.

1277. If the long-sentence men were drafted out—the penal-servitude men—there would be sufficient accommodation for the short-sentence men to be placed under a system of classification?—For a limited number, for 120 prisoners, perhaps.

1278. Have you noticed whether the mark-system works satisfactorily?—The mark-system was recently initiated, during the last three years, and, as far as I can judge, it has worked satisfactorily.

1279. Of course, in order to work it fairly, strict classification is required?—Yes.

1280. Do you consider that skilled inspection is necessary or advisable?—I think it is requisite. With the object of getting skilled inspection, I was instrumental in bringing from Home a gaoler whom I always looked upon in the light of an inspector of the three gaols at Lyttelton, Christchurch, and Timaru; and I am satisfied that no system of Visiting Justices, who do not possess the technical knowledge, can be thoroughly satisfactory. I have been a Visiting Justice myself for a number of years, and I have felt that, with considerable advantages over the general run of Justices, it was impossible for any man who did not possess the necessary technical knowledge to carry on a thoroughly satisfactory system of inspection.

1281. It would be impossible for the Visiting Justices to detect any misconduct, unless the officers of the gaol divulged it?—Speaking generally, yes. I think you will bear me out. At one time in Addington Gaol it took some two years to discover that the Gaoler and his wife were in a sort of collusion with the prisoners. As Visiting Justice, I used to go regularly on Sundays to the Addington Gaol. It was the day when the prisoners were all present, and I gave them an opportunity to say what they wished. I paraded the prisoners both male and female, and asked them whether they had any complaints. Now and then there were complaints, but only such as were indicative of nothing more than temporary dissatisfaction, and one did not feel that one had arrived at any very satisfactory decision in all cases. One saw that the thing was going on pretty right on the whole—that was all; and I always thought that unless you had reliable officers the Visiting Justices would be nowhere.

1282. *The Chairman.*] Do you not notice that practically all over the colony there is a prevailing impression that where the gaoler is a first-rate officer the management of the gaol is satisfactory?—I should like to express my opinion with regard to the system I tried to initiate in Canterbury. There ought there to be groups of gaols inspected by the Gaoler at Lyttelton. In respect to Christchurch and Timaru, you want a man of that character constantly inspecting, and the subsidiary gaols ought to report through principal gaoler.

1283. As a rule, do you not think it better that the Inspector should be independent of the management of any gaol himself?—I think the General Inspector's office should be entirely independent of that system altogether, but these small gaols ought to be in constant communication with the larger gaol. For instance, there was a case at one time which I am quite satisfied the Gaoler and the Visiting Justice of the smaller gaol quite misapprehended. It was in my power to remove a man who was making constant complaints, and was down in the books month after month for solitary confinement, which was enough to drive any man out of his mind. I removed the man to Lyttelton. When it was under contemplation to have him flogged, I was informed by the Medical Officer of Lyttelton Gaol that if the man had been flogged he would have died under the lash.

1284. How did he behave there?—Very fairly. I should like to say, with regard to the women's gaol that is in Canterbury, my impression is that, with regard to these female prisoners, they are nearly all, or 90 per cent., of the prostitute class; and, unless there is some system of providing for them when they come out, they are absolutely certain to fall back into their old way of life. They have no alternative; they have simply fallen through prostitution and drink, and their case is utterly hopeless. They have no opportunity for reform in that state, and they ought to be given some opportunity for reform. I do not know whether I may get on record my view as to what ought to be done. I think a system of reformatories might be worked in on something like the plan I recommended the other day in the House in regard to institutions for the dumb and deaf, and industrial schools. These people