

to Dunedin till the New Year, giving facilities for the prisoners' equipment being overhauled, and interviews granted with their friends.

There is no Gaoler's residence at this Prison. Prison regulation, section 71, makes it imperative for the Gaoler to reside in or near the Prison. For seventeen years a wooden cottage residence was attached to the old Prison, which, as Gaoler's quarters, was a disgrace to the age in which we live; but evidently the accommodation was considered good enough. The cottage was pulled down with the old prison-building, and the Gaoler now resides in rooms, part of the administrative offices of the new Prison. The Gaoler is married, but, having no family, the house accommodation now provided is sufficient for his requirements.

The warders of the Prison live here, there, and everywhere, except the place in which they should live—viz., in quarters near to or adjoining the Prison. At present, if an extra warder is required for any purpose on an emergency, or if an alarm should be raised, say, at night-time, the three warders on duty within the Prison are shut off from any assistance from the warders outside the Prison, as there is no one to spare to send after them, some of whom live at a very considerable distance from the Prison, and in different directions. Warders' quarters are a necessary adjunct to a properly-equipped prison, and the giving of a monetary allowance in lieu of quarters fails to meet the difficulty as regards disciplinary requirements.

When warders are unmarried they reside in prison quarters, and are available as an addition to the staff by night in case of an emergency; but single men as warders are a rarity in this Prison, and having now to take their ordinary tour of duties, they cannot be reckoned upon as any addition to the night staff.

The classification rules as regards periods of time of sentences, as amended from the 1st April, 1900 (*vide New Zealand Gazette* No. 24, of the 29th March, 1900, page 634), have been duly carried into effect at Dunedin Prison, including the periods of exercise on Sundays, &c., but it would be futile to attempt at classifying at Taiaroa Heads Prison as regards periods of exercise, &c., where the prisoners are all living in association; but in all other respects the classification rules are in full force.

Many offences were brought to the Gaoler's notice and dismissed with a caution—the caution only not always being to the efficiency of the discipline of the Prison. As I have already suggested over and over again (*vide* letter No. 79, of the 4th September last) I again suggest that Gaolers should have some power to inflict minor punishments without having to call a Visiting Justice to deal with trifling offences, but yet such offences as should not, in the interest of discipline, be passed over. If Gaolers cannot be trusted for any necessary duties incidental to their position, they should be retired and some one else appointed that can be trusted. With a monthly (or weekly, if considered necessary) return of all minor punishments inflicted by the Gaoler to the Inspector, it could easily be seen if any shadow of wrong was being done, whilst, it should be remembered, the prisoner has always a right of appeal to a Visiting Justice or Inspector. If prisons are to be deterrent, no wilful or careless act of wrong-doing by a prisoner should be passed by without a report rendered to the Gaoler; and no repeated act, after having been duly cautioned, should escape being dealt with; and for a third offence (should such occur) the services of a Visiting Justice might be necessary.

The majority of the prisoners have been employed in the defence-works at Taiaroa Heads, excavating for and erecting a concrete battery, and forming the grounds and slopes around the same. The prisoners as a rule work well, and would do better were work more continuous; but the frequent halting for plans, instructions, &c., are detrimental to the prison discipline, as also to any incitement to industry. This want of steady industry has been frequently brought to your notice. As all material—cement, sand, &c.—for concrete-work, and heavy timber and appliances have to be taken (in most cases to be carried) a considerable distance, and uphill, the work at times is quite hard enough, and progress in the work is retarded by such a method of doing it, for want of better contrivances. Some few prisoners are naturally idle, and will not work even fairly well, but under existing arrangements they can be only advised and cautioned, which in their cases are of very little effect. A sharp deterrent system of task labour is urgently needed, with power to enforce the execution thereof for such prisoners. Very little work is done within the Prison except cleaning and current repairs, by reason of all available prison labour being required on the works.

The female prisoners are fully occupied in washing and mending clothes for both divisions of the Prison, and in knitting stockings and making shirts and other underclothing.

If punishment labour is the essential of a sentence, I would respectfully suggest something like the following—viz., some system whereby if a prisoner is sentenced to, say, thirty days hard labour he should perform the specified hard labour irrespective of other arrangements, making his length of time in gaol dependent on the execution of the days of labour specified. If he does thirty days' hard labour he gets out in thirty days, *plus* Sundays, holidays, &c.; but his thirty days' hard labour may mean forty or more days to carry it into effect if, after being certified medically fit, he fails to perform the prescribed hard labour. It is a farce to say twenty-four hours' hard labour, or forty-eight hours' hard labour (say on a Friday), when the prisoner only has half a day on Saturday in which to work, and not then if he says he is unwell, or is suffering from his debauch. The performance of the labour ordered might be the essential of his liberty, and the prisoner should not be discharged (in the ordinary course) till he has completed his sentence of thirty days' actual work at hard labour. Some system on these lines would, I believe, have a very deterrent effect. Of course, it is more applicable to short sentences than to those of longer periods.

The health of the prisoners has been very good. There have been no ailments necessitating the removal of any prisoner, either male or female, to Dunedin Hospital for medical treatment during the year. All prisoners are seen by the Gaol Surgeon after admission, and by him certified as to their fitness for labour or otherwise. Considering the state and condition of some prisoners