

312. But in the presence or absence of the officers?—Sometimes in their absence, and sometimes in their presence. *Mr. Woodward.*

313. The prisoners have an opportunity of speaking in private, if they please?—Yes. If there are any complaints, they may make them privately, if they choose. 14th Aug., 1878.

314. *The Chairman.*] Do you receive many complaints?—Very few indeed.

315. *Mr. Seymour.*] How often do you visit the gaols?—Just when we are wanted; just when we think proper.

316. You have no fixed times?—No; we carefully avoid fixed times.

317. *The Chairman.*] I believe there are four Visiting Justices?—There are five nominally, but one is incapacitated from attending.

318. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Who are they?—Mr. Pearce, Major Paul, Mr. Dransfield, and myself. Mr. Lyon cannot attend, through illness.

319. *The Chairman.*] Are there many recommittals in the gaol? Do you often see the same faces in again?—Yes, among short-sentence prisoners; most painfully so amongst women. There are women who are never out of the gaol, practically. If they are let out one day, they are back again the next.

320. Those are prostitutes?—Yes; they are brought in on charges of drunkenness and vagrancy principally.

321. Are there any means of classification among the women?—Yes; we have more means of classifying women than we have in any other department. We have three separate places. Therefore the prisoners on first offences are kept by themselves altogether.

322. What is done with boys?—I can hardly say. We do the best we can with them. If there is no one in the debtors' gaol, they are kept there. I remember, when a Commission was sitting on this subject, I was asked by the Chairman, Judge Johnston, what we did with a boy in a particular case? I told him that we kept him in the gaoler's house. The Judge said, "Are you not aware that you are breaking the law?" I said, "I am, and I would do it again;" and the Judge said he would do the same. We always avoid sending the boys among the older prisoners, if we can possibly help it.

323. But there are no facilities afforded you in the gaol?—None at all.

324. Are there many attempts at escape?—No.

325. There was one the other day?—Yes.

325A. Has the Gaoler made any report to you about the alleged ill-treatment of the prisoner who attempted to escape by the warders?—No.

326. There was a report in one of the papers. Has there been no inquiry?—No. We were to have dealt with the prisoner for an attempt to escape had it not been for some circumstance arising to prevent us assembling. We shall do so in a day or two, and I will take care the matter is inquired into. I did not see the report in the paper; but, so far from having the matter reported to me by the Gaoler, he asked me to consider if we could not recommend the warders for some reward for their conduct in the matter.

327. What part of the treatment is, in your opinion, most irksome to the prisoners in the discipline of the gaol?—I do not remember that they make any complaints. The complaints we used to hear have disappeared under the present system. It was a grievance the number of hours the men were locked up; but that grievance has altogether disappeared under the present system.

328. Does the school work well?—Very well. Perhaps the Committee would pardon me for making a suggestion. We have made it a practice, in dealing with the prisoners, to make this school a kind of privilege. We have had several instances in which prisoners have been insubordinate, have refused to write, or to do what was told them. We say, in such cases, "Very well, you shall have no school for another month;" and that has always had a very salutary effect. When they have been locked up in the cell for a while they are very glad to return to school.

329. *Mr. Tole.*] Are all the prisoners sent to school?—Everyone; there is no distinction made at all.

330. *Hon. Mr. Gisborne.*] Are females sent?—No, not females.

331. *The Chairman.*] Would there be any benefit arising from introducing the school into the female side of the prison?—Yes; if we had the means of doing it. We have always had, unfortunately, one or two men of culture in the prison, and we have adopted the plan of making them schoolmasters. If we had women of the same class, we might do the same thing on the female side.

332. There are no schoolmasters in the gaol?—No. The man who is now acting as schoolmaster was a bank manager. He is an exceedingly well-conducted man, and manages the school very well.

333. What kind of labour is done when the prisoners are not able to go out to their work, on such occasions as a wet day?—Very little more than picking oakum.

334. Is there any difficulty in getting oakum to pick?—Yes; very considerable.

335. Would it not be an advantage if trades could be taught in the prison?—Yes, it would be very advantageous indeed, if there was any possibility of its being done. We have had one or two men learning shoemaking. Several men have learnt it in the gaol.

336. But no other trade?—No; I cannot remember any.

337. When prisoners will not work, what, in your opinion, is the best way of coercing them?—We have found it quite sufficient to give them a period of solitary confinement and reduced rations. In one instance in which a man had become refractory, and, indeed, his case seemed chronic, we just said, "Very well, you shall not work any more; you shall not go outside these walls again." Very soon he was petitioning to be allowed to go out to work.

338. Have the Municipalities or any local bodies paid for any labour?—No, not for a long period; they did at one time.

339. Practically, who are the prisoners working for now?—The hospital trustees mainly.

340. There are two gangs of men working, I believe, for those trustees?—Yes.

341. Is not some work being done for the Municipality?—It is quite likely, but I am not sure.

342. About rations. Do you consider the present scale a satisfactory one?—Yes.