

1881.  
NEW ZEALAND

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# APPOINTMENT OF INSPECTOR OF PRISONS

(CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO).

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly, by command of His Excellency.*

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No. 1.

The Hon. the COLONIAL SECRETARY to the AGENT-GENERAL.

(No. 6.)

SIR,— Colonial Secretary's Office, Wellington, 3rd January, 1880.

During the late session of Parliament a vote was taken for the appointment of an Inspector of Prisons. The Government is anxious that effect should be given to the decision of Parliament as soon as possible, and has determined to request you to place yourself in communication with the proper authorities in order to obtain a suitable officer for the purpose.

I gather from an abstract of the second annual report of the Commissioners of Prisons, which appeared in the *Times* newspaper some three or four months ago, that very considerable advance has recently been made in England in the discipline and economy of gaols, and that the whole system of gaol-management is undergoing revision, with very satisfactory results in the saving of expenditure, and also as affecting the repression of crime. The Government is desirous of obtaining the services of an officer who has a thoroughly practical acquaintance with the latest methods adopted in the prisons and penal establishments, and also in the reformatories, of Great Britain in respect of discipline, appliances, and buildings, and has himself held office in one of the best-managed penal establishments. You are aware that up to the present time the gaols in this colony have been built on no definite system, and without the advantage of a knowledge of the plans most approved in England. The time has come when considerable increase of gaol-accommodation will be required, and it is of the greatest importance that the officer to be appointed should be personally acquainted with the plans which have been adopted by the Commissioners in the new prison buildings which, I understand, have been largely erected under the scheme of consolidation entered upon by them. No officer who had not himself been engaged in carrying out the work of modern prison discipline would be likely to be capable of doing the work of organization which is now so necessary in New Zealand.

It should be expressly mentioned that the services of such officer will be generally available in connection with his department for purposes of correspondence with the gaolers from head-quarters, where he will be stationed.

The salary will not exceed £600 per annum. The usual travelling allowances will be attached to the office.

The correspondence which you yourself conducted in respect to the appointment of Dr. Skae will suggest other qualifications for the office which you would consider necessary to insist upon, and the Government will approve of similar terms of engagement to those adopted in Dr. Skae's case (Appendix to Journals, H.—46, 1876).

I may also refer you to the correspondence in your office on this subject which took place between the Colonial Government and your predecessor. The last letter from Sir W. Tyrone Power bears date the 16th November, 1876. You will observe in this correspondence that the question of a central penal establishment is raised. How far that view may be acted upon in the future will remain for Parliament to determine. I believe that later experience goes in the direction taken by Mr. Bowen in his memorandum. However this may be, you will understand that the officer appointed should be, as indicated by Mr. Bowen, a man of such education and ability, as well as practical experience, as would give weight and authority to his recommendations in reference to the system to be adopted for the future in the colony.

You will probably think it advisable to authorize the officer appointed before leaving England to spend some time in visiting any modern prisons with which he is not acquainted, and which it may be thought worth his while to see; and he should furnish himself (as I observe you have authorized in the case of Mr. Van Asche) with the latest reports, plans, &c., bearing on the subject. The same remarks would apply to reformatories, some of which should be visited.

1—H. 4A.