

on admission, it is wonderful how quickly they improve physically. The Taiaroa Heads Prison is really a sanatorium, the healthful sea-breezes and the work in the open air soon bracing the prisoners up should they feel amiss on reception. Very little food goes to waste at Taiaroa Heads Prison. D.T. cases for curative treatment, and that of lunatics under remand, often of a violent character, being sent to the Prison is very detrimental to discipline. There are no surgical conveniences for such cases, either in effective supervision or qualified attendance.

At one time it was in contemplation (and tried) to have a special voluntary service, with liturgical and musical assistance, for the benefit of Anglican Church prisoners, and a privilege to other well-conducted prisoners who might wish to attend voluntarily, but a peremptory order that only one person to conduct the service and one person as organist should be admitted prevented such an arrangement being further carried into effect; but whilst such services were held they were appreciated, and their influence felt in favour of discipline. I would respectfully suggest the ban on such matters should be removed. Surely in such a case the Gaoler might have control of internal arrangements.

The gaol chaplain is also agent to the Prisoners' Aid Society, and in his dual capacity frequently visits and has free intercourse with all Protestant prisoners regarding religious matters, and with all prisoners regarding their future on discharge from prison. He is very assiduous and helpful to prisoners on their discharge from prison, and his influence is for good. The gaol chaplain visits at Taiaroa Heads Prison occasionally, and is assisted by a clergyman who ministers on the Peninsula side of the harbour; so that almost every Sunday in the year a religious service is held at Dunedin and Taiaroa Heads Prisons. The Roman Catholic priest visits the Dunedin Prison occasionally on Sunday afternoons, and attends on such other occasions when he is notified a prisoner (R.C.) desires to see him. Occasionally a prisoner makes application to see a minister of the persuasion to which he professes to belong. Such ministers are duly informed, and invariably attend.

The rations are supplied by contract, and those issued are as laid down in ration scales—Section 117, Prison Regulations, 1883, Nos. 1B and 2B respectively. The rations are weighed and examined on reception by the receiving officer, as also by the clerk, the Gaoler, and occasionally by the Gaol Surgeon and Visiting Justices. The food is apparently good and sufficient, but frivolous complaints are sometimes made. When alterations are made in the prison regulations *re* dieting, I would respectfully suggest a reception and discharge diet, which might be continued after reception till the prisoner is sent out to labour. It might be considerably less than the present scale, and be of great advantage in dealing with short-sentence prisoners.

The conduct of the officers of the Prison is undoubtedly good, especially as regards sobriety and regularity of attendance, but I cannot say as much regarding their zeal and efficiency. I do not refer to their ability, either physically or mentally, but there seems to be lacking in some of them a desire to do their duty thoroughly—but a manifest desire to be off duty, and a spirit of indifference regarding the duties and who shall do them, so long as they can get off duty. Effective discipline is checked by there being no means of dealing with an officer who, say, is neglectful, or wanting energy in his duties, slovenly in uniform attire, or accoutrements not in good order, &c., except by reporting him to the Visiting Justices and Inspector for misconduct. In fact, the Gaoler has no power except to talk to a warder or report him as if the offence was serious—(Section 73, P.R., 1883, is quite right, but applicable only to offences of a somewhat serious nature)—causing the record of service to be filled up with a list of trifling offences, to the detriment of the warder concerned, and which might effectually bar his progress in the service. For example, some time ago warders came frequently a little late for duty, which was detrimental to discipline. I cautioned them, stating it could not be allowed, and the next warder coming late for duty would be reported. It happened—and to a good zealous officer—but I had to keep my word and reported the case, explaining circumstances to the Visiting Justices accordingly, as, say, five minutes late for duty. A fine of 6d. and a caution from them would have met the case.

I respectfully suggest that a scale of fines, as much in the interest of the warders as in the effective discipline of the service, be published, and that for petty offences the Gaoler have power over his subordinate officers to inflict such fines, the warder always having the right of appeal. Serious offences (as now) to be brought to the notice of the Visiting Justices, and all offences to the notice of the Inspector by weekly or monthly reports as directed. Careless and indifferent searching of prisoners would soon be checked by this arrangement. I would also respectfully suggest that, say, one-fourth of the warders of the prison be single men, as they then sleep in prison quarters, and are available as a reserve, as per my letter, No. 57, of the 21st June, 1900, &c.

One warder volunteered and was accepted for the Fourth South African Contingent, and four other warders were transferred to other prisons, five other warders being transferred to this Prison to fill the vacancies. An addition to this Prison staff was made in the appointment of a warder on probation and an assistant matron.

First Offenders' Probation Act.

This Act, so beneficial in its tendency, requires amending or regulating in many particulars.

Re section 8: First offences need more defining, in that some persons have been convicted and placed on probation whom it was known had been committing offences for years prior to conviction, and therefore the offence for which they were convicted was not a first offence, though it might be the first conviction. Paragraph 3, section 2, says, "whose previous character has been good," yet persons have been placed on probation who have been embezzling for years, so how could their character have been good. Because they were not found out earlier in no way affects their past character as to being good or bad.

Again, a person is arrested and placed on probation, the Probation Officer in some cases not having been called upon for a report, and in other cases not knowing to the contrary that it is