

me. During his trial he expressed sincere regret for his conduct, stating that he had let me down. I put him on his honour. I referred the case to higher authority, and the case was apparently shelved. This man's conduct had been bad before his internment. I have a record of twenty-four convictions against him."

Major Matheson narrates the man's subsequent history, and I see no reason to doubt the narrative. One feature of it shows how embarrassing the conduct of the prisoners must at times have proved. A squad leader had been refused a hearing by his squad when all the squad leaders were ordered to read a document prepared by the Commander. It then became necessary for this squad to elect another leader. The squad elected this man, a well-known offender against the law, and Major Matheson very properly refused to recognize this election.

Jacob Blinn: This is one of the men about whose case so much has been said in the course of the inquiry. He has been at sea, and has resided thirteen years in New Zealand. He gave his evidence in a mild voice which would be very likely to carry conviction until a little more was known of his character. He narrated in the same way the fact that he had twice received sentences—five years in each case—for housebreaking. One of his grievances against Major Matheson is that he spoke of him as a criminal. His character may be further gauged by a subsequent incident. He was in hospital in 1918. There he was found to have stolen articles, which were found secreted in his locker. His tastes are various. He was charged with stealing a watch, a pair of scissors, a fountain pen, and (I think) a pocket-camera. After his examination before me he was taken before the Magistrate and sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

If this man's narrative could be relied on it would tend to prove charges of ill treatment against certain of the guards now no longer available as witnesses. I am certain that no jury would act on this evidence, and I cannot do so, as I consider him unworthy of credit. His evil influence has been, I think, far-reaching. He is referred to by Commander von Luckner, from which I infer that Erdmann became friendly with him and that in all probability he is the real author of the extravagant impressions of Somes Island which have been reproduced in the Commander's letter. His narrative is of enormous length, and when referring to his own punishment he states his own version of what occurred, without showing the slightest wrong on his own part.

So far as his narrative affects the proceedings and conduct of men now absent I cannot accept it. To do so would be to accept the narrative of a man whom I regard as untrustworthy, against men who are not here to answer for themselves.

He came to the island on the 13th May, 1915, and was one of those punished for offences against discipline by being put to physical exercises at a place called "Culture Bay," so often mentioned in the course of the inquiry. He was also punished by detention in the place usually referred to as "the klink." His breaches of discipline must have been serious, as he was sentenced to ninety days' fatigue.

I see no reason to suppose that this man was picked out for ill treatment or was punished for anything but what he had brought upon himself. Nor do I find any reason to think that when he says he was knocked about it represented anything more than what he had rendered necessary.

When in Wellington Hospital he was reported to be bleeding from the penis, and this he attributed to ill treatment. The Medical Superintendent reported, "I have examined his urethra and bladder thoroughly without finding any trace of bleeding. In my opinion, he wilfully produces bleeding by passing something into his urethra. A soft rubber catheter was found in his pocket recently, apparently appropriated by him from the ward stock; this may have been used to produce the urethral bleeding. The last few days he has been insubordinate, smoking out of hours and refusing to stop when so instructed by the nurse. I have had this man under observation for some time, and believe he is a malingerer."

This is a very strong statement; but it refers to a man who was capable of making the imputation that this man made—namely, that the authorities had concealed the articles he was charged with stealing and had put them into his locker to trump up a charge against him. The Hospital people had not the remotest reason for so doing.