

OTHER DEFECTS.

Several other matters were discussed, such as an ablution-stand and improved baths. I assume that Lieut.-Colonel Holmes will refer to this in his sanitary report.

HUTMENT.

There was a great deal of complaint about the draughty character of the hutment devoted to prisoners of war. This was inspected by the same official who arranged about the water-supply. I already had evidence that it was, as a dwellinghouse, fully equal to the hutments at Sling Camp. Mr. Seddon informs me that it is fully equal to those at Trentham. Being situated on the top of a hill, however, in a very windy situation, he advises that it will be rendered more comfortable and not less sanitary if the opening for ventilation on the exposed side is reduced. It was arranged that this should be attended to.

19. RECREATION AND OCCUPATION.

The unpleasant feature of an inquiry like this is that the person undertaking it has put before him the grievances of those who have grievances, and these in the most acute form. It is certain that no measure has been spared by those interested in putting forward the cause of the complainants to make life at *Somes Island* appear in the worst light. I spent twenty-two days on the island, and it often seemed to me that the sombre picture so persistently presented to me was contradicted by the smiling faces and the healthful jovial air of the men themselves.

It is undeniable that, apart from any exceptional treatment, many men must suffer in spirits, and in consequence in health, from mere detention, with all its consequences, such as separation from friends, anxiety about worldly affairs, privation of accustomed occupation, compulsion to follow a distasteful life, monotony of food and occupation, sexual repression, and many other forms of discomfort. In spite of all these drawbacks I must say that the general appearance of the men indicates good health and condition. I have been accustomed to review a large number of detained subjects of higher average age than these, and to form a fair opinion as to their general condition from a cursory inspection such as I have had of these men. Looking at them in this way I am satisfied that they do not present the appearance of being underfed, nor do they in general present a dispirited appearance.

It must be conceded that some have probably suffered in health from their mere detention; on the other hand, I am satisfied that insistence on regular and cleanly habits, abstinence from intoxicants, and regular feeding has in many cases brought improved health. As the men are properly and necessarily detained in the interests of the State, they must be treated in the mass, and (subject to individual treatment for ailments, and similar treatment in anticipation of ailments where that is feasible) should be allowed as much personal liberty to the individual as is consistent with safety and the maintenance of discipline.

In this camp, subject to fatigue duty, which has hitherto absorbed about one hour per diem of the outdoor time of able-bodied prisoners, they have had the whole day in which to occupy themselves as they think fit or to amuse themselves. Fishing has been carried on extensively from the shores of the island by a large number of men, and this has afforded them considerable variety from the monotony of the ordinary food, and has given them healthy occupation. Various kinds of useful and ornamental work have been carried out—making carved and inlaid boxes, models of ships, and artistic work. On the occasion of one of my visits the men collected these objects for my inspection, and I was struck with the great ingenuity and the artistic talent displayed, especially as some of them informed me that they had had no kind of tuition and were not tradesmen.

Many small huts have been built round the coast by parties of friends clubbing together for this purpose. A gymnasium has been instituted by the men themselves. Some who have applied for the privilege have had small pieces of land for private gardens allotted to them.