

Each Penitentiary has its library. The books are carefully selected by the Chaplains, a fact which guarantees the exclusion of bad or questionable publications. A librarian is chosen from among the convicts, who issues and receives back the books loaned out, and keeps an exact record of all his transactions in connection with his office. There are between 3,000 and 4,000 volumes in the library at Kingston Penitentiary, and about half that number at St. Vincent de Paul. The libraries of St. John and Halifax, have, as yet, but a very limited supply of books, having been commenced only within the last few years. An annual amount of money is appropriated by Parliament, to purchase books for the Chapels, Schools and Libraries. I believe the money to be well expended. The visitor who would be permitted to pass through the corridors and galleries, of an evening, after the cells are locked up, could easily see how much the library contributes to lighten the dreary hours of prison life, and let us hope, to improve the many hapless readers.

The sentence which consigns a criminal to the Penitentiary including hard labour, which, though technically penal, is really industrial in its character. For the ends of reformation, a lengthened period of careful training to habits of steady, useful labour is more effective than even schooling or lecturing, the latter being very soon forgotten, whilst the former tends to educate the convict to industrial habits and fitness to earn his livelihood when discharged. The various classes of work performed in the different Penitentiaries are enumerated in the returns accompanying the reports of the Wardens.

No special provision is made by law for the superannuation of any other office than the Warden, the Deputy Warden, the Accountant, and the Chaplain—the latter under special circumstances. When the subordinate officers become incapacitated for duty, a gratuity is allowed by the Government, upon the recommendation of the Minister of Justice, to meritorious officers, the amount of which is regulated by the length of service, a month's salary for every year of service is usually granted.

A large increase has taken place in our prison population in the year just closed.

The total number of convicts in the five Penitentiaries on the 31st December, 1875, was 825, of whom 27 were females; on the corresponding date, 1876, there were 1048, the females numbering 28, showing an increase of 223. They are distributed as follows:—

Kingston 703, St. Vincent de Paul 182, St. John, N.B., 74, Halifax, N.S. 74, and Manitoba 15. There were, on 31st December last, 18 female convicts at Kingston, and five in each of the Penitentiaries of St. John and Halifax.

The Wardens all agree in attributing the increase in crime to the scarcity of employment and low wages consequent upon the long-continued financial depression.

It is very gratifying to me to be able to hear favourable testimony to the zeal, efficiency and good conduct of the great majority of the officers employed in the Penitentiary service.

It became necessary to dismiss certain officers at Kingston and St. Vincent de Paul, who had been culpably remiss in the discharge of their duties, and to reprimand others at St. John, for laxity and improprieties which will be referred to further on.

The sanitary state of the Penitentiaries has been very satisfactory—the health of both officers and prisoners having been generally good.

No very serious accident occurred anywhere during the year, a fact highly creditable to the officers, as from the nature of the works and the number employed, it is evident that great precautions must have been taken and much diligence observed.

I think it proper to remark here, that there are several weak-minded convicts, especially in Kingston Penitentiary, who are unfit to undergo the ordinary course of prison discipline, and whose association with the other prisoners tends very much to increase breaches of prison rules. It would be much to the advantage of both classes that they should be kept apart, and I rejoice to think that provision may be made in the building, now in progress of restoration, for the special treatment of such eccentric prisoners.

The Wardens and Chaplains report the conduct of the convicts to have been very