

prisoners must be put to productive work. The problem is to reduce the competition of convict labor to a minimum, and especially to reduce the proportion of prison-made goods that are sold in the open market. This problem has been ever present since productive labor was advocated.

The Kingston Penitentiary was erected in 1833-4 to take care of prisoners who had been sentenced to terms of two years or more. This was to relieve the county jails and take care of the longer term prisoners. It was urged that being brought together in this way their labor could be turned to profitable account. In the same year we find the labor interests of Kingston petitioned the Legislature that the penitentiary might be so managed as not to interfere with the manufacturers of that town, and in 1835 the labor interests of Toronto petitioned that the prisoners at Kingston might be employed in the breaking of stone instead of mercantile labor. The penitentiary continued to take care of the prisoners with upwards of two-year terms; those under that remained in the county jails down to Confederation, when we have the origin of our Central Prison.

It may not be without interest to some members of the House to know that prior to Confederation there had been a number of pronouncements from grand juries, petitions to Parliament, etc., concerning the overcrowding and the laxity of discipline in the county jails of Upper Canada, and the Legislature had been petitioned to establish central or district prisons, to which prisoners under the longer sentences might be sent, so that they might be disciplined and be put to remunerative work. At the second session after Confederation the question was taken up. In the speech it was recommended that institutions be erected in central localities to which those sentenced for periods less than two years might be transferred from the surrounding jails, to undergo their terms of punishment under a system of discipline similar to that of the penitentiary and where their labor could be utilized. A bill was introduced, which gave the Government power to build several central prisons. Sandfield Macdonald said it was the intention to build at least three—one in the centre, one east and one west, and perhaps there ought to be one for every ten or twelve counties. The bill was strongly opposed by Blake, McKellar and other Liberals on the ground that central prisons were not needed. The question has been suggested as to whether it is the duty of the Province or Dominion to defray the cost of maintaining our Central Prison, but I note that in the debate the question up to two-year sentences was treated as being one entirely between the Province and the municipalities. As between the Province and the Dominion the question was not raised. The bill was abandoned, but in the same session a bill was passed authorizing one Central Prison in Toronto, where prisoners of over six months and up to two years would be taken care of.

MONEY IN THEM.

The distinction between terms of imprisonment—two years or over to the penitentiary and under two years to the county jail—dates back in legislation to 1842; perhaps in practice dates back a little earlier. It seems to have been assumed from the first that those who built the prisons ought to pay for the maintenance of the inmates. Our Central Prison was completed and commenced business on the 1st of June, 1874, and from that date to this we have had prison labor under contract in this