

SEWAGE.

The sewage of the penitentiary discharges into a small stream at the bottom of the ravine crossing the penitentiary farm, and is conveyed into the Back River, about one mile below the penitentiary. In the summer season this stream becomes almost dry, when along its whole length, after receiving the sewage, it becomes very offensive. The horses and cattle on the adjoining farms below the penitentiary have access to the stream, and there are serious complaints by the owner of the property as to the damage he claims to have sustained year after year by his cattle drinking the water, so seriously polluted, as in a number of instances to have caused death to a number of them. This nuisance should be immediately abated, as there was no necessity for such a system of sewage construction. It would not be difficult to make a sewer to the river by a more direct route, and thus remove what has been a serious cause for legitimate complaint in the neighbourhood.

In addition to this sewage the contents of the cell buckets have to be disposed of daily, and this is done by emptying them through a pipe in the wall into a car which carries the contents to a compost heap situated on the farm some distance from the prison proper, but yet so close to both the prison and the village, as to be not only unsightly, but extremely offensive at times, and possibly injurious to health. In this connection it might be well for the prison authorities to consider the advisability of introducing a system similar to that in operation in other public institutions, whereby all this sewage could be utilized for the purpose of improving the farm.

OFFICERS.

There are on the disciplinary staff, 39 keepers and guards, a ratio of 1 to $9\frac{3}{4}$ convicts. This number can be reduced without endangering the safe-keeping of the convicts, and should be reduced to a ratio not exceeding 1 to 12 of the convict population. In the state prisons of New York State the number of keepers and guards is limited by law to a ratio of 1 to 14 convicts. In some of the state prisons, notably the Auburn State Prison, the full number allowed is not employed. From this it would appear the provision made by law is ample for the administration of this class of persons. At the Dannemora, N.Y., State Prison the convicts are employed on the public roads, in some cases long distances from the prison, and also on the streets of the village of Dannemora, in maintaining a system of waterworks erected and operated by the prison. Such an employment of the convicts is similar to the employment of the convict on the farm and in the stone quarry at this penitentiary, and with a proper disposition of keepers and guards, and with judicious management, the number certainly should not exceed a ratio of 1 to 12 of the convicts.

Since the opening of the inquiry several officers have been retired or dismissed, thus facilitating the work of reduction and reorganization. In this latter work care should be taken not to employ any officer who is not sufficiently familiar with the English and French languages as to be able to give their commands and instructions intelligibly in both. We found several officers and a large number of prisoners who could speak but one language, and from the information received from reliable sources it was evident that much unnecessary friction arose between these officers and prisoners as a result. The difficulty becomes aggravated in the case of an instructor who is not able to impart to some of the convicts under his charge, the instructions necessary to enable him to learn the trade at which he is employed, or to carry out the orders given him. A case in point is that of the shoemaker instructor, who can speak scarcely any English, and in consequence cannot properly direct the work of several convicts under him who understand nothing of the French language. There is another matter of importance to which attention should be paid in making future appointments, namely, the education of the applicants. The Commissioners were surprised to find that no less than nine of the officers, some of whom held important positions, such as the engineer, a gate keeper and instructor, are unable to read and write notwithstanding that it is expressly required that all officers shall be able to do both, and that there are several others who can write but little and that