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CANADA'S GREATEST PRISON.

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THE Kingston Penitentiary of to-day stands in the front rank of the Penal Institutions of the world. Situated at the foot of Lake Ontario, at the entrance to the mighty St. Lawrence, its natural position is most picturesque, and unsurpassed by that of any other public institution on the continent.

ITS ESTABLISHMENT.

In 1834 Royal consent was obtained and a bill passed authorizing the construction of a Penitentiary. The following year, a wooden structure enclosed in a palisade wall was built. In June of this year six men were incarcerated for larceny, and in October three women arrived to serve terms for similar offences. At the close of the first year fifty-two men and three women were confined in the Penitentiary. In those early days the men were employed in breaking stone, which was used on the roads of the district.

From this date improvements in the buildings etc. began to be made. In 1845 the present wall surrounding the institution was built. It encloses eleven acres of ground, is twenty-five feet high and is constructed of limestone quarried on the property. The northern group of buildings containing the Deputy Warden's residence, cells,

dome, offices, chapels, dining-hall, kitchen, female prison, library and hospital, were also built at this time, and like the wall are constructed of the native limestone.

At that time when the penitentiary was first gaining magnitude it was also used as a military prison and was conducted on military principles, the keepers and guards being chosen from the regiments then stationed at Kingston.

The first warden was Mr. H. Smith, and the workings of the institution were controlled by a board of inspectors. The treatment of prisoners was very severe and the cat-o'-nine-tails played an important part in the punishment of refractory convicts. This in fact, continued until more recent years and it was not until the appointment of the late John Creighton, as warden, that more humane principles of government were instituted to any extent.

THE FENIAN PRISONERS.

Perhaps the most turbulent times in the history of the Institution were the years that followed the Fenian Raid of 1866, when the Fenian prisoners captured at Ridgeway were incarcerated there. Many of these men were the most troublesome ever confined in the Penitentiary.