

The following changes have taken place, owing to the resignations of the Roman Catholic Chaplain:—Accountant, steward and the engineer.

Of the minor officers, eleven were taken on, six resigned, three discharged and one dismissed. These changes are to be regretted, as the initiation to work of new hands causes considerable anxiety and worry to the superiors in the endeavor to maintain discipline. In a new country, such as Manitoba, where opportunities for personal advancement are constantly being offered to the class of men who are fitted to fill the position of guards, some extra inducements must be offered in order to retain services of efficient officials.

I am fully satisfied that if the system (or some such system) to which I made reference in my Report of last year was adopted, viz: that of "pensioning for long and faithful service on the part of the staff, and also in the event of injury, some recognized system of relief be afforded," that the Penitentiary service would be greatly the gainer. From my own experience in such matters, extending over a period of thirteen years in the Manitoba Penitentiary, from the date of its organization, I speak by the book, when I say that it is owing to the impossibility of my being able to offer any inducement for prolonged service, that in many cases the positions of keepers and guards have been looked upon by the men seeking the employment, as merely the means of tiding over a temporary difficulty, whilst seeking more remunerative occupations.

Had the conference of Wardens, as suggested by you, been held, much good would, I am satisfied, have resulted, and this very question of the better providing for the staff been satisfactorily disposed of by some means similar to that suggested in my last Annual Report.

Not only do I concur as to the advisability of holding this conference of Wardens, but would go further, believing that an annual or biennial visitation by the heads of our own institutions, to institutions similar to their own in other parts of the Dominion of Canada and the Continent, would lead to great and practical benefit.

CONVICTS.

Generally the conduct of the convicts has been orderly.

On the 2nd of December, the Chief Keeper made a report, from which I now give an extract:—

"Convict No. 16 (Gardin) reported that convict No. 14 (Faut) had spoken to him in regard to making an attempt to escape, and in the following manner:—"There being only eight guards about the prison he said they could take the whistle (which is used for signalling) from the guard on prison duty, gag him, and that the guard on basement duty could be served in the same way."

From the information given by convict No. 16, it was thought that more were implicated in the scheme. This being the first information I had, I could not place any convict in irons or in any way administer punishment on the mere statement of a fellow prisoner, but was forced into the position of awaiting the issue. Making necessary preparations meanwhile to checkmate any attempt which might be made for a revolt, I tried several plans, but failed to get to the bottom of the plot. My last resort being that of placing a convict having my confidence amongst those I suspected. This I did with beneficial result. This convict reported to the Chief Keeper, on the 8th December, that about 3 p.m. that day a break was to be made by the convicts working in the basement. At the dinner hour I had the officers paraded at my office, when I fully and carefully explained the position in which the prison stood, particularly in regard to the guards on duty in the basement and prison proper. I informed them that, as doubtless (should the revolt take place) that the convicts would first endeavor to disarm them and take possession of their weapons. In order to avoid probable trouble, I had the powder extracted from the cartridges, replacing the bullets, and further guaranteed them every possible protection against injury. At 2:30 p.m. on that day, I ordered the outside gangs to be