



SUPPLEMENT

To the HONGKONG GOVERNMENT GAZETTE of 22nd January, 1887.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 32.

The following Annual Report of the Superintendent of Victoria Gaol, is published for general information.

By Command,

FREDERICK STEWART,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 22nd January, 1887.

No. 17.

GAOL SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,
HONGKONG, 14th January, 1887.

COLONIAL SECRETARY,

I beg to forward herewith Annual Statistical Return of Victoria Gaol for the year 1886, and beg at the same time to offer the following few observations.

2. In my previous year's Report I submitted that in our Gaol administration we ought to be guided, as far as circumstances allow, by the long and very successful experience of English Prison administration, where a combination of deterrent and reformatory Prison discipline had resulted in a great decrease of crime and reformation of the criminal classes, and as far as the very different conditions of this Gaol admitted, it has been my endeavour, during the past year, to carry out the system which in England has proved so successful.

3. It must, however, be remembered that in the peculiar position of Hongkong, Prison administration, however excellent, can have but a very small influence in diminishing the criminal population which is not so much bred in the Colony as imported from the neighbouring Chinese Provinces, and the greater or smaller influx of which is chiefly dependent on extraneous causes. While therefore we may expect that both the deterrent and reformatory results of judicious Prison administration may have considerable effect in reducing the proportion of re-convictions, the administration of the Gaol can have only slight influence, one way or another, on the increase or diminution of the floating criminal population confined in the Gaol. If, as recommended by me last year, criminals discharged from Gaol were by legislative enactment placed under Police supervision, we should be able to have some reliable statistics as to how far habitual criminals had been reformed into industrious and honest citizens. At present we can only judge vaguely, by comparing, year by year, the percentage of re-convictions. Some improvement is shewn in this respect in 1886. On the last day of the year 32 per cent. of the prisoners in Gaol were re-convicted prisoners, as against 35 per cent. of the previous year.

SUBORDINATE STAFF.

4. The Gaol Staff, besides the Warden and Head Turnkeys, consists of first and second Class Turnkeys, all Europeans, and first and second Class Assistant Turnkeys, now mostly Europeans, but having a proportion of coloured men and natives among them. These men have all been trained in the Gaol. None of them had any previous training in Gaol discipline. But more than half the Turnkeys now on the staff, including nearly all appointed during the past year, have been trained to discipline in the Army. The conduct of the European Officers during the year has been good; they were generally zealous and painstaking, they were just and judicious in their intercourse with prisoners and contributed much to the increased discipline which is very observable among the prisoners.

5. I had occasion, in my Report for 1885, to speak unfavorably regarding the coloured and native staff. I can now report a considerable improvement in that class. The most untrustworthy among them were weeded out. Those that remain are decidedly improved. I believe they have benefited from the example of the Europeans. The undue familiarity with prisoners, so observable at first, has now disappeared and I believe that illicit dealings between Turnkeys and prisoners have altogether ceased.

PRISON BUILDINGS.

6. The Prison buildings remain in the state in which they were at the date of my last Report. The difficulties we have to contend against from overcrowding in associated wards, and from want of proper work-shops, remain as before. They have already been pointed out by me at some length, and need not be repeated. I need only again record my opinion that a really satisfactory deterrent and reformatory Prison discipline cannot be established without the introduction of the separate system and suitable work-shops.

7. On the 30th March last, I made a pressing representation to Government on the overcrowded state of the Gaol and the subject was fully enquired into by a Commission of which the Honourable E. J. ACKROYD was Chairman. Their Report, dated 1st June, 1886, submitted several recommendations, which have in part been carried out, and are, I understand, in part still under the consideration of Government, but no material relief to the congested state of the Gaol has as yet been experienced, and the danger to discipline, the danger of moral contamination, and the provocation and temptation to Prison offences which I pointed out as due to the overcrowding in associated wards, now exists in as full force as ever.

8. Notwithstanding the limited and inconvenient space, an extra loom for grass-mat making and an extra loom for coir-mat making have been put up for work during the year. This not only increases the number of prisoners instructed in industrial work, but adds to the profits of the Gaol.

PRISONERS AND THEIR DISCIPLINE.

9. In the previous year's Report, I expressed an opinion that Chinese convicts were as amenable to discipline and disposed to be as well conducted as those of most other races. The experience of another year has confirmed me in this opinion. The number of Prison offences reported during the year has indeed been great, compared with those of English Prisons, but this, as formerly reported, is in a great measure due to the enforced association of prisoners, by day and night, at meals, at labour and in sleeping, and also, though in a less degree than formerly, to want of training and experience in Prison Officers. Yet the present year shows a slow but marked and steady improvement, as to the number and nature of Prison offences. In 1885, with an average number of 530 prisoners, 6,473 Prison offences were reported, giving an average number of something over 12 Prison offences a year for each prisoner. In 1886, with a daily average of 674 prisoners, 7,198 offences were reported giving an average number of a little over $10\frac{1}{2}$ offences a year for each prisoner. This modest though satisfactory improvement is not owing to any slackness in reporting Prison offences. For increasing strictness in this respect has been the steady rule during the year. But it is not only satisfactory to observe a reduction in the average number of Prison offences, but still more satisfactory to observe that the general experience of the results of a judicious Prison discipline have been verified in this Gaol, in so far as a much larger proportion of the offences during the past year have been committed by a smaller number of habitual offenders. On the last day of 1885 there were only 78 Chinese prisoners in Gaol who had been free of punishment for three months, while on the last day of 1886, there were 144 prisoners who had been free of Prison punishment for three months and, among these, 44 had been free of punishment for a whole year.

10. While there is a proportionate reduction, as compared with last year, of every kind of Prison offence, this reduction is most appreciable in the graver Prison offences.

11. The inveterate temptation of prisoners, in constant association, to talk is difficult to overcome. The offences under this head in 1885, were 2,132 to a daily average of 530 prisoners amounted to a small fraction above 4 offences per man per annum. In 1886 these offences were 2,659 to a daily average of 674 prisoners and amounted to a small fraction under 4 offences per man per annum.

12. The other graver offences, such as assaults, acts of violence or insubordination, obtaining tobacco or opium, show a marked diminution.

13. During the year 7 cases of insubordination towards and assaults on Officers of the Gaol were tried as against 11 cases in 1885. Of these cases 6 offenders were awarded corporal punishment and one was awarded additional imprisonment by the Police Magistrate. The cases of prisoners assaulting and fighting with each other show a fair actual and considerable proportional reduction. Nine of these cases were tried by the Superintendent and a Visiting Justice; eight of these offenders were awarded corporal punishment, and one solitary confinement. Another case, an aggravated assault with a hammer, was tried in the Supreme Court. The remaining cases of assaulting and fighting were not serious and were in fact mostly squabbles over food or work.

14. The reduction in the number of offences of having tobacco or opium is a most marked feature during the past year. This is chiefly due to the great attention and vigilance of the Prison Officers. The ingenuity of prisoners and their friends, as exercised in the efforts to pass in these narcotics, is very great, and constant vigilance is necessary.

15. In my Report for 1885, I detailed the steps adopted with this view. The tobacco introduced during the year has chiefly been brought in by the chain-gang, and by far the greater number of these offences are for secreting stumps of cigars or cigarettes picked up on the road or at work.

16. In my Report of 1885, I adverted to the risk of possible conspiracies, with so many convicts living in association. This year has not been without its experience in this respect. A conspiracy was made to set fire to the Gaol, in hopes of effecting an escape in the confusion. The attempt was frustrated, ample information having been received in time, and I am in hopes of shortly obtaining sufficient evidence to prosecute the intending incendiaries. As a full report on this subject was submitted to Government at the time, it seems unnecessary to enter into details here. The desperadoes concerned in such attempts are generally members of the Triad Society. It is very difficult to get any

information from members of this society, although it has been done before now. But Chinese prisoners who are not Triads are often not unwilling to give information, provided they are not called on to give evidence in a Court which would expose them to the vengeance of the illegal societies.

17. Prison discipline during the year 1886 has, in my opinion, made steady and satisfactory progress. I annex Returns as to Prison offences similar to those submitted last year, adding for the sake of comparison the statistics of 1884 and 1885. In the Return showing prisoners previously convicted, it will be observed that in 1886, 32 per cent. of prisoners confined on the last day of the year were old offenders as against 35 per cent. in 1885.

LABOUR ON PUBLIC WORKS AND INDUSTRIAL LABOUR.

18. A chain-gang of prisoners has been working during the year under the orders of the Surveyor General on Public Works. It has generally consisted of about 60 men. During the year 1885 and in previous years the work of the chain-gang had not given satisfaction. The men had been allowed extra food, and had not apparently been kept to much hard work by the officers in charge. In consequence of the recommendation of a Committee, Government directed the issue of extra food to be discontinued on the 26th June last. The system hitherto in force, of changing the officers in charge of the chain-gang monthly, appeared to me unsuitable and tending to careless supervision. I therefore directed the Head Turnkey in charge and his first assistant, to be kept on this duty for six months at a time and made them responsible for a proper amount of work being done. The result has been satisfactory. The Surveyor General has assured me that during the past year the work done by the chain-gang has been satisfactory and valuable.

19. The other industrial work carried on in the Gaol has, on the whole, been as satisfactory as the limited space for work-shops would allow. Considering the great advantage of teaching trades to the criminal class, it is very desirable that facilities should be afforded for the extension of industrial labour.

20. I append an abstract showing the actual profits or savings to Government in ten different industries carried on in the Gaol. The total profit during the year amounts to \$3,849.66.

21. I have also recently commenced a new industry. Instead of purchasing the tin plates and mugs for the prisoners' food and tea, I procured old kerosine oil tins and commenced making the plates and mugs in Gaol. In next Annual Report this will be shown as a profitable industry.

22. I will only offer a few short remarks on prison industry.

23. OAKUM—has, like in the previous year, been the most profitable industry, but it has the drawback, that in doing this work the prisoners cannot be said to be learning a trade. The demand is also limited and the storage of picked oakum is dangerous. The surplus now on hand will therefore shortly be sold by auction.

24. COIR YARN.—Another loom has been started during the year and the work has gone on well; the output has been more than doubled and the profit nearly doubled.

25. RATTAN WORK.—This work has been steadily progressing, but the sale has as yet been limited.

26. NET-MAKING.—This work is only carried on when orders are received. The amount of work done has been less than in the previous year.

27. GRASS-MAT MAKING.—Another loom has been added and the work done during the year was more than triple that of the previous year.

28. WASHING.—A strict account of this industry has been kept this year, for the first time, and it appears that, charging for washing at only half the usual rate in Hongkong (one cent per piece) a very profitable saving has been realised.

29. CARPENTERING—is almost entirely confined to work done for the Gaol.

30. TAILORS' SHOP.—The work in this shop has been considerably extended. The summer clothing of the Gaol Officers was, this year, made up in the Gaol, but under considerable difficulties, and a certain amount of free labour from outside had to be hired to complete the work. I do not think this should be tried again, unless the officer in charge understood the business of tailoring.

31. SHOE-MAKING.—This trade has been very successfully enlarged. All the boots and shoes for Prison Officers have been made and very well made in this shop at a saving of about half a dollar on each pair.

32. PRINTING—has been done for Public Offices and some money has been realised for book-binding.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

33. The most important suggestion I have to offer is one which I repeatedly made, viz.: that immediate steps should be taken to introduce the separate system at least as regards long sentence prisoners, and to increase the space for work-shops and industrial labour. Unless this is done, no really

efficient deterrent and reformatory Gaol discipline can be established on a firm basis. As the building of a new Gaol seems unlikely to be undertaken for some time, I can only repeat my suggestion of last year that short sentence prisoners, that is, men sentenced to 6 months and under, should be removed to some other building, or perhaps to a hulk; this would leave space enough in Victoria Gaol to accommodate long sentence prisoners on the separate system, and also give more space for industrial work.

34. I would also repeat my suggestion that habitual criminals and others who have earned remission of sentence should be placed by legislative enactment (as in England) under Police supervision, so that, if found returning to a criminal career, they might at once be sent back by the Magistrates to prison.

35. While the Gaol is as now so greatly overcrowded, I think the Government might take into consideration the case of the large number of prisoners mostly belonging to the criminal classes who are confined for want of finding security for good behaviour. I am not allowed to make these men work. They are well fed and live comfortably in associated idleness. I brought this subject to notice in paragraph 21 of my Report for 1885. I am sorry to say, I believe many of these men rather like their sentence and will not find security even when able to do so. And it seems an incongruity that while honest destitutes who are provided with food and lodging in Gaol are compelled to do a daily task of work, the criminal security men are freed from the obligation of performing any labour whatever beyond cleaning their own cells. 479 men were imprisoned during the year for want of finding security.

36. The overcrowding of the Gaol might also be to some extent reduced, if other punishment than imprisonment could be found for the persons now imprisoned for gambling. 399 men have been committed to prison for this offence during the year. The great majority of these men do not belong to the criminal classes. They are mostly hard-working men, rice pounders, and coal porters. They overcrowd the Gaol; they are neither deterred from gambling by imprisonment nor are they improved. It is too much to be feared that many of them are deteriorated and corrupted by compulsory and constant association with the criminal classes they meet in Gaol.

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

(A.)

VICTORIA GAOL.

Return of Reports for talking, &c., in the years 1884, 1885 and 1886.

MONTH.	1884. Daily average number in Prison, 552.	1885. Daily average number in Prison, 530.	1886. Daily average number in Prison, 674.
January,	14	55	119
February,	17	25	135
March,	32	44	248
April,	24	23	330
May,	31	252	197
June,	70	362	298
July,	77	289	297
August,	72	344	232
September,	50	254	318
October,	64	174	209
November,	35	148	183
December,	43	162	93
Total,	529	2,132	2,659

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

(B.)

Return of Offences reported of Prisoners fighting with or assaulting each other, for the years 1884, 1885 and 1886.

MONTH.	1884. Daily average number in Prison, 552.	1885. Daily average number in Prison, 530.	1886. Daily average number in Prison, 674.
January,	22	28	14
February,	16	18	15
March,	23	18	17
April,	26	29	32
May,	29	6	31
June,	24	22	19
July,	19	27	13
August,	24	13	13
September,	30	12	8
October,	14	13	17
November,	21	8	9
December,	22	10	7
Total,	270	204	195

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

(C.)

Return of Offences reported of Prisoners having Tobacco, for the years 1884, 1885 and 1886.

MONTH.	1884. Daily average number in Prison, 552.	1885. Daily average number in Prison, 530.	1886. Daily average number in Prison, 674.
January,	65	74	28
February,	76	78	16
March,	47	82	14
April,	52	133	11
May,	66	106	7
June,	60	61	15
July,	72	52	9
August,	69	47	11
September,	82	17	31
October,	50	23	17
November,	41	15	30
December,	39	21	23
Total,	719	709	212

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

(D.)

Comparative Return of Prisoners confined in Victoria Gaol on the 31st December, 1885, and 31st December, 1886, from 1st to 12th Convictions.

CONVICTION.	1885.	1886.
1st,	375	414
2nd,	41	62
3rd,	29	35
4th,	30	27
5th,	28	24
6th,	23	18
7th,	20	15
8th,	16	10
9th,	4	1
10th,	2	3
11th,	4	3
12th,	1	...
TOTAL,	573	612

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

(E.)

ABSTRACT OF ACCOUNT OF INDUSTRIAL LABOUR, VICTORIA GAOL, FOR THE YEAR 1886.

Dr.		OAKUM.		Cr.	
1886.	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1886, ...	\$ 11.05	1886.	By Oakum sold during the year,	\$ 2,055.25
	„ Cost of Paper Stuff purchased during the year,	1,259.56		„ Stock on hand, 31st Dec., 1886,—	...
	Profit during the year,	1,238.74		Paper Stuff,	454.10
	Profit during the year,	1,238.74		Oakum,	454.10
	Total,.....\$	2,509.35		Total,.....\$	2,509.35
COIR YARN.					
1886.	To Stock on hand, 1st Jan., 1886, ...	\$ 13.86	1886.	By Matting sold during the year,	\$ 954.58
	„ Material purchased during the year,	1,332.45		„ Issue for Prison use during the year,	7.68
	Profit,.....	447.02		„ Stock on hand, 31st Dec., 1886,—	792.18
	Profit,.....	447.02		Material, 13,203 lbs.,.....	38.89
	Profit,.....	447.02		Manufactured,	38.89
	Total,.....\$	1,793.33		Total,.....\$	1,793.33
RATTAN WORK.					
1886.	To Stock on hand, 1st Jan., 1886, ...	\$158.70	1886.	By Chairs, &c., sold during the year,	\$ 349.20
	„ Cost of Material purchased during the year,	321.22		„ Fenders sold,.....	50.70
	Profit,—.....	149.49		„ Articles made for Gaol use,.....	51.03
	Profit,—.....	149.49		„ Stock on hand, 31st Dec., 1886,—	10.98
	Profit,—.....	149.49		Material,	167.50
	Profit,—.....	149.49		Chairs, &c.,	167.50
	Total,.....\$	629.41		Total,.....\$	629.41
NET MAKING.					
1886.	To Stock on hand, 1st Jan., 1886,	1886.	By Value of Nets sold during the year,	\$64.40
	„ Cost of Material purchased during the year,	\$41.35		„ Issue for Gaol use,	23.60
	Profit,.....	54.07		„ Stock on hand, 31st Dec., 1886,—	3.20
	Profit,.....	54.07		Twine, 8 lbs.,.....	-0.87
	Profit,.....	54.07		Wax,	3.35
	Profit,.....	54.07		2 Nets,	3.35
	Total,.....\$	95.42		Total,.....\$	95.42
GRASS MATTING.					
1886.	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1886, ...	\$ 14.34	1886.	By Issue for Prison use during the year,	\$ 57.10
	„ Material purchased during the year,	135.87		„ Matting sold during the year,	96.09
	Profit,.....	46.64		„ Stock on hand, 31st December, 1886,—	9.77
	Profit,.....	46.64		Grass,372 lbs.,	.39
	Profit,.....	46.64		Hemp, 6½ lbs.,	33.50
	Profit,.....	46.64		Manufactured, 223 yds.,	33.50
	Total,.....\$	196.85		Total,.....\$	196.85
WASHING.					
1886.	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1886,	1886.	By Value of Washing done during the year, Prison Clothing, at 1 cent a piece,.....	\$ 1,180.67
	„ Material purchased during the year,	\$ 387.05		„ Stock on hand, 31st December, 1886,—	26.25
	Profit,.....	821.67		Soap,350 lbs.	1.80
	Profit,.....	821.67		Coals, 3 cwt.	1.80
	Profit,.....	821.67		Total,.....\$	1,208.72
	Total,.....\$	1,208.72		Total,.....\$	1,208.72

CARPENTERS' SHOP.

1886.	To Value of Stock on hand, 1st January, 1886,	\$ 4.55	1886.	By Value of Articles made for Gaol use,	\$139.16
	„ Cost of Material purchased during the year,	208.50		„ Work done for Officers, &c., and charged for,	40.73
	Profit,	14.34		„ Stock on hand 31st December, 1886,—	
				Material, Wood, &c.,	14.45
				Value of manufactured Articles,	33.05
	Total,	\$ 227.39		Total,	\$ 227.39

TAILORS' SHOP.

1886.	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1886, Flannel,	\$ 405.00	1886.	By Value of Prisoners Clothing made during the year, (including Officers' Summer Uniform Suits,)	\$ 1,497.22
	„ Material purchased during the year,	1,352.17		„ Work done for Officers, Police, &c., and charged,	107.35
	Profit,	248.13		„ Stock on hand, 31st December, 1886,—	
				Flannel, Canvas, &c., ...	191.27
				Made-up Canvas Suits, } Flannel Shirts, &c., }	209.46
	Total,	\$ 2,005.30		Total,	\$ 2,005.30

SHOEMAKERS' SHOP.

1886.	To Stock on hand, 1st Jan., 1886, Material, &c.,	\$ 62.35	1886.	By Estimated value of Shoes supplied to Prisoners and Repairs, } Two Issues,—Summer and Winter,—Uniform, Shoes to Prison Officers,	\$ 74.60
	„ Cost of Material purchased during the year,	619.18		„ Sale to Prison Officers, &c.,	265.50
	Profit,	50.16		„ Stock on hand, 31st December, 1886,—	326.42
				Material and value of new Shoes and Sandals,	65.17
	Total,	\$ 731.69		Total,	\$ 731.69

PRINTING AND BOOK-BINDING.

1886.	To Stock on hand, 1st Jan., 1886, Printing Ink,	\$ 1.00	1886.	By Estimated value of Printing done for Public Offices during the year, (112,943 forms),	\$752.50
	„ Printing and Book-binding Material purchased during the year,	32.40		„ Cash received for Books bound, ...	23.00
	Profit,	779.40		„ Work done for Gaol use, (Book-binding),	30.00
				„ Stock on hand, 31st December, 1886,—	
				Book-binding Material, ...	7.30
	Total,	\$ 812.80		Total,	\$ 812.80

PROFITS.

Oakum,	\$1,238.74
Coir Yarn,	447.02
Rattan Work,	149.49
Net Making,	54.07
Grass Matting,	46.64
Washing,	821.67
Carpentering,	14.34
Tailoring,	248.13
Shoemaking,	50.16
Printing and Book-binding,	779.40
Total,	\$3,849.66

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

Victoria Gaol Office, Hongkong, 14th January, 1887.