

GOVERNMENT NOTIFICATION.—No. 140.

The following Annual Report of the Superintendent of Victoria Gaol for 1887, which was laid before the Legislative Council on the 27th instant, is published for general information.

By Command,

FREDERICK STEWART,
Colonial Secretary.

Colonial Secretary's Office, Hongkong, 31st March, 1888.

No. 22.

GAOL SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,

HONGKONG, 24th January, 1888.

COLONIAL SECRETARY,

I beg to forward herewith Annual Statistical Return of Victoria Gaol for the year 1887.

2. As I was absent from the Colony for nine months of the year, it seems to me proper to limit as much as possible any observations on last year's work, and it will be more satisfactory to annex hereto, copy of an interim report submitted by Mr. MITCHELL-INNES, who acted for me during my absence and to attach hereto the same Returns *A.*, *B.*, *C.*, *D.*, and *E.* for 1887 as were submitted by me in the previous year; to the first four of which are annexed for the sake of comparison similar Returns of the three previous years.

3. There is only one change to report during the past year. A reduction in the Prison diet, recommended by the Gaol Commission Report of 1st June, 1886, was introduced in the beginning of the year with the sanction of the Home Government. This change was followed as had been anticipated by an attempt at mutiny on the part of the prisoners which was promptly suppressed by the energetic action of Mr. JONES, Chief Warden, and of Mr. MITCHELL-INNES to whom as superintendent summary powers of Corporal punishment had been restored with a special view to this contingency.

4. Although the average number of prisoners during the year has been less than in the previous year, it will be observed that the number of offences has largely increased. This is chiefly owing to increased stringency in the reporting and punishing the offence of talking, an offence which will be greatly diminished as soon as the separate system is introduced.

5. In the matter of industrial work there is a considerable diminution of profits as compared with the previous year. This is chiefly owing to want of storage room which necessitated in January last the sale by auction of all the oakum and rattan manufactures at a heavy loss.

6. As regards Prison Buildings I think I need hardly add a word to my previous report. I despair of establishing a really satisfactory deterrent and reformatory prison discipline until the separate system is introduced.

7. There is however one grain of comfort. There seems some evidence that increased prison discipline and reductions in diet have caused habitual criminals to make the discovery that Victoria Gaol is no longer quite such a comfortable residence of ease and repose which it was supposed to be, and that prisoners who have had later experience of Gaol seem more disposed to avoid it. If we examine Return *D.* we find that on the 31st December, 1885, 35 per cent. of the prisoners in Gaol were old offenders, on 31st December, 1886, this number was reduced to 32 per cent., while on the same date in 1887 the percentage of old offenders was only 24.

8. There is one point already referred to by Mr. MITCHELL-INNES in his report which I would urgently press on the consideration of Government. The subordinate officers of the Gaol are very hard worked (12 hours duty in the 24) and very poorly paid, the lowest rank only getting \$25 per month which compares very poorly with European Police or Dock Yard Police the lowest rank of which receive \$40 a month. This presses very hardly especially on the married man who cannot get a room near the Gaol under \$8 or \$9 a month. The result is that subordinate officers of the Gaol are constantly on the look-out for other employment. There is a continual change of subordinate officials and consequently there is always a large number of officials imperfectly instructed in and still learning their duties to the detriment of discipline and order. I consider a revision of the scale of remuneration of subordinate officers is very urgent.

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

HONGKONG, 11th October, 1887.

SIR,—In accordance with the direction of His Excellency the late Acting Governor General CAMERON, I have the honour to transmit a report on the Gaol from 19th January, 1887, to 11th August, 1887, the period during which it was under my control. The report would have been sent in earlier had it not been for the time taken in preparing the return which accompanies it.

2. During my tenure of office I followed in general the lines laid down by General GORDON, any divergence therefrom being, as a rule, in the direction of increased stringency. That this course was the correct one will, I think, be admitted when the difficulty of rendering imprisonment deterrent to the Chinese, for whom it means, good rations, sufficient clothing and two holidays a week instead of miserable food, scanty rags and unremitting labour is considered. Thus following the system in force in naval prisons, all offences, however slight, have been reported and punished. This has naturally caused a large increase in the number of petty offences recorded, but I do not consider the reports to be a satisfactory criterion of the state of the Gaol, which I believe to have continued steadily to improve.

3. When I took command of the Gaol I found that an outbreak was expected on account of the reduction in rations recently effected. That that expectation was well founded, was proved by the occurrence of a strike and among the chain gang and some of the other prisoners on the morning of the 31st of January. Fortunately by the prompt action taken by the Warden and Chief Warders and with the assistance of the European Prisoners who volunteered to assist, the mutineers were locked up in their cells before the disturbance had led to bloodshed, but the outbreak seemed to me to prove that a sharp lesson was required in order to maintain discipline in the Gaol and to shew the prisoners that combined action would not be met by the punishment of a few only but of all, I therefore caused 69 of the mutineers to be whipped. The punishment proved most successful in the Gaol, and I may mention incidentally that the number of prisoners fell from 658 to 585 and that the Captain Superintendent of Police remarked, as I am informed of the quiet state of the town after its infliction.

4. I note with satisfaction that acting on my recommendation; the Government has ordered fifty more cranks for the use of the Gaol. This form of punishment is much disliked by the Chinese to whom it is much more distasteful than shot drill or oakum picking.

5. The chain gang has been increased from 47 to nearly 100, it being found that the cost to the Surveyor General of a gang of the latter strength was very little in excess of that of one half its size. The gang has been usefully employed of late in cutting down the hill at the new Police Barrack opposite Green Island.

6. The want of accommodation still makes itself severely felt in the Gaol. Isolation is very distasteful to the Chinese, but it can only be practised at present to a very limited extent, there being only 198 cells for an average of 607. The sleeping in association is, I consider, specially objectionable. The female prison is most unsatisfactory there being only two rooms for at times, twenty prisoners thus entailing the association of petty offenders with hardened criminals.

7. The Gaol Staff is in a fairly satisfactory condition, the substitution of European for coloured warders being productive of good results; it is however difficult to induce steady reliable men to undertake or if undertaken to continue the hard and monotonous work of warders (the hours being from 6 to 6) for the very poor pay at present offered (\$25 a month, without food, rising to \$60). The constant changes which result interfere seriously with the effectiveness of the staff, as new men in addition to learning their duties as warders, have to pick up a modicum of Chinese in order to be of much use. To assist them in doing this, I have made for their use a small book containing the more ordinary expressions in use in the Gaol in low class Cantonese, which I trust may be found of use.

8. Taking into consideration the central position of the Gaol, the continual changes in the staff, the fact of the prisoners being constantly in association, and the mild nature of their punishment as compared with those to which they are accustomed in their own country, I consider that their conduct has been on the whole satisfactory, and this I attribute in a great measure to the knowledge by them that no infraction of the Gaol rules, however slight would be excused. The health of the prisoners has, in view of the miserable condition of many of them on admittance been good.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

N. G. MITCHELL-INNES,
Late Acting Superintendent.

The Hon. FREDERICK STEWART, LL.D.,
Colonial Secretary.

(A.)

VICTORIA GAOL.

Return of Reports for talking, &c., in the years 1884, 1885, 1886, and 1887.

MONTH.	1884. Daily average number in Prison, 552.	1885. Daily average number in Prison, 530.	1886. Daily average number in Prison, 674.	1887. Daily average number in Prison, 584.
January,	14	55	119	146
February,	17	25	135	75
March,	32	44	248	97
April,	24	23	330	408
May,	31	252	197	963
June,	70	362	298	918
July,	77	289	297	500
August,	72	344	232	530
September,	50	254	318	558
October,	64	174	209	429
November,	35	148	183	184
December,	43	162	93	113
Total,	529	2,132	2,659	4,921

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

(B.)

Return of Offences reported of Prisoners fighting with or assaulting each other, for the years 1884, 1885, 1886 and 1887.

MONTH.	1884. Daily average number in Prison, 552.	1885. Daily average number in Prison, 530.	1886. Daily average number in Prison, 674.	1887. Daily average number in Prison, 584.
January,	22	28	14	21
February,	16	18	15	20
March,	23	18	17	11
April,	26	29	32	29
May,	29	6	31	41
June,	24	22	19	33
July,	19	27	13	31
August,	24	13	13	39
September,	30	12	8	26
October,	14	13	17	27
November,	21	8	9	18
December,	22	10	7	10
Total,	270	204	195	306

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

(C.)

Return of Offences reported of Prisoners having Tobacco, for the years 1884, 1885, 1886 and 1887.

MONTH.	1884. Daily average number in Prison, 552.	1885. Daily average number in Prison, 530.	1886. Daily average number in Prison, 674.	1887. Daily average number in Prison, 584.
January,	65	74	28	14
February,	76	78	16	10
March,	47	82	14	20
April,	52	133	11	27
May,	66	106	7	39
June,	60	61	15	34
July,	72	52	9	57
August,	69	47	11	40
September,	82	17	31	58
October,	50	23	17	71
November,	41	15	30	32
December,	39	21	23	33
Total,	719	709	212	435

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

(D.)

Comparative Return of Prisoners confined in Victoria Gaol on the 31st December, 1886, and 31st December, 1887,
from 1st to 12th Convictions.

CONVICTION.	1886.	1887.
1st,	414	436
2nd,	62	30
3rd,	35	34
4th,	27	15
5th,	24	20
6th,	18	15
7th,	15	10
8th,	10	10
9th,	1	1
10th,	3	3
11th,	3	2
12th,
TOTAL,	612	576

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

(E.)

ABSTRACT OF ACCOUNT OF INDUSTRIAL LABOUR, VICTORIA GAOL, FOR THE YEAR 1887.

Dr.	OAKUM.		Cr.		
1887.	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1887,	\$ 454.10	1887.	By Oakum sold during the year,	\$ 933.58
	„ Cost of Paper Stuff purchased } during the year,	927.50		„ Oakum issued for Gaol Hospital } use,	10.00
	Profit,	557.88		„ Stock on hand, 31st December, 1887,—	
				Paper Stuff,
				Oakum,	995.90
	Total,	\$ 1,939.48		Total,	\$ 1,939.48

Dr.		COIR YARN.		Cr.	
1887.	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1887, ..	\$ 831.07	1887.	By Matting sold during the year,	\$ 769.45
	„ Cost of Material purchased during } the year,	289.16		„ Issue for Prison use during the } year,	84.09
	Profit,.....	353.31		„ Stock on hand, 31st December, 1887,—	
				Manufactured,	14.00
				Material,.....	606.00
	Total,.....\$	1,473.54		Total,.....\$	1,473.54

RATTAN WORK.					
1887.	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1887, ..	\$178.48	1887.	By Chairs, &c., sold during the year,...	\$ 83.88
	„ Cost of Material purchased during } the year,	48.78		„ Articles made for Gaol use,	10.44
				„ Stock on hand, 31st December, 1887,—	
				Manufactured Articles, \$26.80	
				Material,..... 12.24	
				Loss,.....	39.04
	Total,.....\$	227.26		Total,.....\$	93.90
				Total,.....\$	227.26

NET MAKING.					
1887.	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1887, ..	\$ 7.42	1887.	By Nets sold during the year,	\$213.10
	„ Cost of Material purchased during } the year,	187.47		„ Nets made for Gaol use,	88.40
	Profit,.....	106.61		„ Stock on hand, 31st December, } 1887,.....	...
	Total,.....\$	301.50		Total,.....\$	301.50

GRASS MATTING.					
1887.	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1887, ..	\$ 43.66	1887.	By Issue for Prison use during the } year,	\$ 28.03
	„ Cost of Material purchased during } the year,	91.90		„ Matting sold during the year,	101.44
	Profit,.....	5.91		„ Stock on hand, 31st December, 1887,—	
				Manufactured, 50 yds.,.....	7.00
				Material,.....	5.00
	Total,.....\$	141.47		Total,.....\$	141.47

WASHING.					
1887.	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1887, ..	\$ 28.05	1887.	By Value of Washing done during } the year, Prison Clothing, at } 1 cent a piece,	\$1,195.21
	„ Cost of Material purchased during } the year,	374.57		„ Stock on hand, 31st December, } 1887,.....	...
	Profit,.....	792.59		Total,.....\$	1,195.21
	Total,.....\$	1,195.21		Total,.....\$	1,195.21

SHOE-MAKING.					
1887	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1887, ..	\$ 65.17	1887.	By Estimated value of Shoes supplied } to Prisoners, and Repairs,	\$ 72.41
	„ Cost of Material purchased during } the year,	713.31		„ Two Issues—Summer and Winter } Uniform, Shoes to Prison Of- } ficers,	285.00
	Profit,.....	23.41		„ Sale to Prison Officers, &c.,	241.60
				„ Stock on hand, 31st December, 1887,—	
				Material and value of new } Shoes,.....	202.88
	Total,.....\$	801.89		Total,.....\$	801.89

<i>Dr.</i>		PRINTING AND BOOK-BINDING.		<i>Cr.</i>	
1887.	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1887, ..	\$ 7.30	1887.	By Estimated value of Printing done } for Public Offices during the } year, (187,558 forms),..... } ,, Cost of Material for printing and } bookbinding, purchased during } the year, } Profit,.....	\$ 907.75 14.17 61.97
		47.53		,, Stock on hand, 31st December, 1887,— Book-binding Material, &c.,	17.47
		946.53			
	Total,.....\$	1,001.36		Total,.....\$	1,001.36

TAILORS' SHOP.

1887.	To Stock on hand, 1st January, 1887, ..	\$ 400.73	1887.	By Value of Prisoners' Clothing made } during the year, } ,, Work done for Officers, Police, } &c., and charged,..... } ,, Stock on hand, 31st December, 1887,— Flannel, Canvas, &c., Made-up Canvas Suits, } Flannel Shirts, &c.,... }	\$ 807.82 116.28 168.25 208.83
	Profit,.....	58.94			
	Total,.....\$	1,301.18		Total,.....\$	1,301.18

CARPENTERS' SHOP.

1887.	To Value of Stock on hand, 1st January, 1887,.....	\$ 47.50	1887.	By Value of Articles made for Gaol } use, } ,, Work done for Officers and } charged for, } ,, Stock on hand, 31st December, 1887,— Material, Wood, &c.,..... Value of manufactured } Articles, }	\$151.78 58.75 2.14 13.48
	Profit,.....	28.91			
	Total,.....\$	226.15		Total,.....\$	226.15

RECAPITULATION.

1887.	PROFITS.	\$	1887.	LOSS.	\$
	Oakum,	557.88		Rattan Work,	93.90
	Coir Yarn,	353.31		Surplus,.....	2,780.19
	Net-making,	106.61			
	Grass Matting,.....	5.91			
	Washing,	792.59			
	Shoe-making,	23.41			
	Printing and Book-binding,	946.53			
	Tailoring,	58.94			
	Carpentering,	28.91			
	Total,.....\$	2,874.09		Total,.....\$	2,874.09

To Profit, \$2,780.19

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

Victoria Gaol Office, Hongkong, 24th January, 1888.