

PENITENTIARIES OF THE DOMINION.

The first annual report of the Directors of the Penitentiaries of the Dominion of Canada was presented to Parliament during last session, and printed during the recess. It consequently contains the latest information of which we are in possession, although it gives only a report of the calendar year 1868. It is of interest, too, as being the first report of the Directors of the Penitentiaries of the Dominion, and describing the state in which they then were. The Board consisted of Mr. Ferres, chairman (since dead), and Messrs. O'Neill and Tasse.

The Penitentiaries of the Dominion are the following :

Kingston Penitentiary.....	Kingston, Ont.
St. John.....	New Brunswick.
Halifax.....	Nova Scotia,

and Rockwood Asylum, attached to the Kingston Penitentiary.

The Directors point out a number of improvements that ought to be made in the management of these institutions, the principal of which, in as far as practicable, have been carried out. They report that the new act 31 Vic., cap 75, which repeals all other acts, and embodies all the laws applying to Penitentiaries, has worked well; and that especially it has had a gratifying effect in giving convicts the privilege of earning a remission of a portion of their sentences, by industry and good conduct, to the extent of five days per month, as well as the privilege of being able to work, in over hours, for the benefit of themselves or their families. They state that the beneficial effects of this humane provision were immediate; and they expect still further gratifying results.

We are furnished with the following tabulated statement of the movement of convicts in the Dominion Penitentiaries for the calendar year 1868 :—

INSTITUTION.	Remaining at 1st Jan., 1869		Received during 1868.		Total in 1868.		Discharged.		Died.		Remaining at 31st December 1868.		Total Remaining.
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	
Kingston.....	824	63	215	24	1044	87	252	26	20	1	772	60	832
From Rockwood.....			2										
Total.....	824	63	220	24	1044	87	252	26	20	1	772	60	832
St. John :													
Convicts 20 years and upwards..	26	1	9	2	35	3	8	11			27	2	29
Common prisoners under 2 yrs.	84	20	283	88	367	102	313	86	1		53	22	75
Halifax.....	55	3	35	2	90	5	35	3			55	2	57
Total.....	988	87	547	116	1536	203	573	116	21	1	907	86	993
Rockwood Asylum.....	110	29	50	39	160	68	14	1	13	2	133	65	198

The Board show that in the Kingston Penitentiary there had been great looseness in the management, resulting in loss to the Government, especially in the matter of contracts and purchases, the whole of which has been corrected.

There was one attempt to escape at night at Kingston, and liberate other prisoners, in which case the convict lost his life, by being shot, and order was restored.

The number of those convicts who gained especial privileges for good conduct at Kingston, was over 200.

The humane demeanour of the officials towards the convicts insisted on by the Directors, operates strongly in reconciling them to the strictness of discipline, on which the safety of the institution depends.

With respect to the St. John Penitentiary, N.B., the Directors report that it is at the same time a place of confinement for convicts, who are under sentence for life for the most heinous crimes, and for prisoners sentenced for only a few days' confinement, for the most venial offences, without any facilities whatever for the separation of these two kinds of criminals.

The Directors condemn this arrangement in the strongest terms, from a Penitentiary point of view. But they state that the number of penitentiary criminals at St. John, at the close of 1868, was only 29, while the number of petty offenders was only 75. There would be difficulty, therefore, in

* The return for Halifax Penitentiary does not state, separately, the number of convicts under sentence for two years and upwards, and of common prisoners for less than two years; but the Directors, at their visit on 2nd December last, found them to be as follows: Convicts, males, 38; females, 0; common, males, 21; females, 2.—Total, 59 and 2.