

# Holmesburg Men Don't Get a Chance, Inspector Charges

Continued from Page One

at the meetings held monthly and listen to the words of the older members of the board and be guided accordingly. That is not my plan. If I find conditions rotten in an going to say they are rotten. I believe the rules are a hardship, it is up to me to say so.

**Remedy Rests With Board**

"To my mind it rests with the board to remedy any condition that needs remedying. That is what the board should do. Nobody's word should be taken for granted. Investigate and find out for yourself. That is what I do for you. In taking the stand that I do for you, I take into consideration the fact that the men controlled by these rules have been convicted of crimes and are in prison as punishment. But does this mean that these men should be tossed into a cell, forbidden to speak to any one, denied a smoke now and then or a chew?

"Personally, I do not believe that it is possible for a criminal to redeem himself in the County Prison at Holmesburg because he doesn't get his chance. Klemm, to my mind, is the only successful method to employ in treatment of a prisoner.

"If you cage a man in a cell and if you punish him with needless hours of work, he smokes and if you deny him his food because he talked with another convict, it stands to reason that the spirit of the man is bound to be broken. With a promise of punishment for such trivial offenses hanging over him all the time, what chance has he to reform?

"On the other hand, let this fellow exchange words with others; let him smoke occasionally, let him have a musical instrument in his cell, show him the bright side of life, and he will find the first thing you find is that this convict is beginning to look forward to better things. They are human and it is up to the board of inspectors to treat them as human beings.

### Favors Prison Farm

Louis Fleischer, a brain manufacturer at 1923 Arch street, and a member of the Board of Inspectors, is enthusiastically in favor of a prison farm in the outskirts of the city.

"All I will say about the situation is this," he said today. "I am chairman of the Manufacturing Committee, you know. We should have prison farms, with properly equipped factories alongside.

"This would give the prisoners an opportunity to work on the farms, in the open air, and would give, in addition, properly equipped factories where the prisoners could work, varying their tasks. In these factories they could turn out articles required in other State institutions.

"At present our knitting machines are out of date. They are hand machines and were chosen to give employment to the largest number of prisoners possible. I really believe I am in advance of many members of the board in my ideas, however, that it requires a great deal of money to carry out the projects I have outlined."

Another advocate of the prison farm is Joseph F. M. Balducci, merchant and banker, of 928 South Eighth street.

"But what is the use when you cannot get the money necessary?" he asked.

"But let me tell you this: I know the Philadelphia prisons to be properly conducted, clean and the food good. We are not running a Hell on Earth, as you know. We couldn't, for if we did we couldn't keep people out.

"Why, during the war they had better bread than I had now. That was because the institutions had bought much good flour ahead. The bread is very good. Every now and then I take a loaf home with me and eat it. I go unexpectedly to the prisons and I pick out any loaf I please. There is no special loaf made up for me.

### Says Meat Is Good

"Then there is the question of meat. I tell you that meat is fine. You cannot believe what those convicts tell you. I recall one instance of a young man whose family I happen to know. It is a good family, but the boy got into trouble. After he got out he came to me and complained of the meat. It is rotten," he said. I replied that I knew better and that he had been misled. That he had worked in the kitchen himself and that he knew the meat was good.

"Well, he laughed and said, 'You are right, you got me this time, Mr. Balducci. Now, what are you going to do with people like that?'

"I tell you these men are liars. That is it—plain liars. I don't know what it is. It seems to be in the air, the very walls of those places, but when men get in there they will not tell the truth. Why, I go to the prisons alone. I even ride in my own automobile, so no one will know I am coming. Then I go through the whole institution. I go alone into the cells with those men. Some people ask me whether this is safe, but why shouldn't it be? I haven't done anything to those men, and I haven't put them there.

"Now, why don't these men whisper their complaints to me, if they have any. Or to any others of the prison inspectors. But they do not. I even have given orders that any prisoner who wants to talk to me is to tell a guard and the guard is to let me know at once. The guard must let me know, for if he doesn't I will find it out anyhow, and then it would be hard with him.

### Punishment Necessary

"You ask me about the punishments. Well, when a man does wrong and is convicted he is sent to jail, in the first place. If he misbehaves in jail he must be punished."

"Do you believe in solitary confinement, Mr. Balducci?"

"Men must sometimes be punished. Take two men for instance. They are arrested together, one turns State's evidence, both go to the same prison. The man who did not talk lays for the other one and beats him up at the first opportunity. Now, such a man must be punished.

"You may think it strange, also, that large gatherings are not permitted. Well, whenever these men get together they talk of one thing only, and that is escape. How to get out is their constant thought. It does not do.

"As for smoking, I understand it was prohibited because the habit was allowed to become a dirty one and the cells became littered. Chewing tobacco, however, is soon to be issued. It is not true that matches are not in every cell. Remember, it is not the Bellevue-Stratford, but every bunk has its mattress. All these stories about the bad condition of things are false, absolutely false."

William V. McFarath, a member of the board, and president of the Beneficial Savings Fund Society, refused to talk at all.

"You get out of my office," he ordered. "Get out. I have absolutely nothing to say, absolutely nothing. I won't talk to such a scurrilous paper."

He pointed to a copy of the EVENING PUBLIC LEDGER on his desk.

"That got there by mistake," he said hastily. "I refuse to read it. I won't say a word."

That concluded the interview with this prison inspector.

Colonel J. Warner Hutchins, retired diamond merchant, and a member of the board, was seen at the Union League. Asked about conditions at Holmesburg he poked his questioner in the ribs and laughed.

"I will come the calm after the storm," he said. "I've just returned

## Punishment Not Basis Of Judge's Sentences

"NEVER have I sentenced a man with the idea of punishing him," Judge Monaghan, of the Court of Common Pleas No. 5, said today. "When I sentence a criminal to a term of years in prison it is not to punish him for his offense, but to separate him from the rest of the community that for a time at least to prevent him from continuing his violations of the law."

"Rarely do I punish a man for his first offense, unless it be a very grave one. But when I do send a man to prison I believe he should receive such constructive training, physical and mental, that when he comes out a free man will be a much better man in every way than when he was sent to jail.

"If I ever hear of a prisoner in any of the State institutions receiving improper or rough treatment I will investigate the case and if true I will take action to remedy the condition."

### From a nine-months' trip to the Far East...

Andrew Gray, another member of the board, said that the food is better in his chair and dismissed the subject with a wave of the hand.

**Haven't Heard Any Complaints**

Frank Kilbourne, a clerk in the City Controller's office, was appointed an inspector last month. He has had no complaints against the food in his chair and dismissed the subject with a wave of the hand.

### Asks if he believed it proper to punish convicts for talking and smoking...

Charles H. Smith, a broker with offices at 303 Chestnut street and a member of the board, asked to be excused from passing any comment at a meeting of the board in July, was another who asked to be excused from comment.

"I am what you would term a baby member of the board," said Mr. Wagner, "and before chiming in with any suggestions I would like to have a chance to put my feet under the table and listen in. You see, I don't get as much time with the convicts as I would like. Come back a couple of months from now. Maybe, by that time I will have something to say."

And now comes the president of the Board of Inspectors, Dr. Joseph N. Reeves, who insists that he is also in charge of the rules and with conditions at Holmesburg.

### Dr. Reeves Satisfied

"We know exactly what is needed in the way of rules to conduct a prison and we feel that those in force are meeting the requirements," said Dr. Reeves. Dr. Reeves was seen in his office, 1010 Spruce street.

"Dr. Reeves, I represent the EVENING PUBLIC LEDGER," said the reporter. "We received complaints from convicts recently released from Holmesburg, and I came to you to get a pass to go through that prison and verify or disprove the complaints."

"Step into my office," was Dr. Reeves reply.

In his office, Dr. Reeves pondered a moment or two before passing on the application for the pass.

"No, you cannot have one," he said finally. "The Board of Inspectors will not sanction a pass to any newspaperman who is seeking news, or who might add, is trying to create a story that does not mean a thing in the world. It is the same old story. Some fellow or maybe two or three convicts who have violated our laws and have been sent to prison as punishment—complain because they did not like our rules. The first thing they do is to go to some newspaper."

"It is simply ridiculous for those convicts to say they are not receiving the very best treatment in Holmesburg. It makes me tired to talk about their alleged complaints. But as you seem to have some kind of information about the place, give me an idea as to the nature of the complaints."

### Maintains Food Is Good

Dr. Reeves was told the complaints. He listened attentively as this and that grievance was laid before him. When he was told about the food, the manner in which it was prepared and the quantity used, the physician said:

"Your figures regarding the amount of food are about correct. You tell me that a man who was a cook up there gave them to you, did he? That's gratitude for you. That fellow was given one of the very best jobs we had to give out in that prison, and the first thing that he does when he gets out is to make his way to your office and complain. What does his complaint amount to, anyway?"

"The food served in that prison is good. Why, there is never a time that I go up there that I don't take a piece of the bread and eat it. You talk about burnt rice and bread for breakfast. What is the matter with that? Burnt rice is the best we can afford. You don't think we could afford to give these convicts coffee at twenty-five to thirty cents a pound, do you?"

"The bread is perfectly all right, too. The moon meal is substantial and is prepared in a manner that needs the approval of the board. The supper of bread and coco shells is all right. You know we are not abundantly supplied with funds."

"Let me call your attention to the fact that Council keeps very close watch on the money appropriated to the County Prison. We prepare the budget, and in that we must outline just what is needed for this and that item. If we should happen to run short in our four fund and had something left in another item, before we could transfer that money we must get the consent of Council. Also remember that if we should happen to have a little more left at the end of the fiscal year it must be returned to the city."

"That may be, Dr. Reeves, but suppose Council could be prevailed upon to provide more money. Would you, as president of the board, be willing to advocate a change in the rules that would mean more and better food, and also provide some kind of recreation that would take the men out of solitary confinement?"

"No," was the answer. "The men

## SHOPLIFT SUSPECTS FREED

Lack of Evidence Against Annie Smith and Bertie Gross

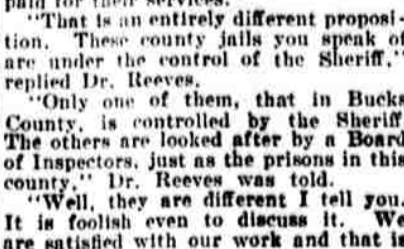
Annie Smith and Bertie Gross, both of Shunk street near Nineteenth, arrested last Friday on suspicion of larceny, were discharged by Magistrate Renshaw in Central Station for lack of evidence.

The girls had been arrested as they came from a store by detectives who suspected that they had been on a shoplifting tour. Miss Smith has a long prison record in connection with such activity and Miss Gross is now out of jail on probation, having been sentenced on a larceny charge.

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### Should Be Punished

"When a man is convicted and sent to prison he is sent there for punishment. He should be treated accordingly. When we get him for his term of imprisonment, we do what we feel is best for him. Maybe he is a prisoner of such type that he should be given solitary confinement. There are men caught in acts that are not in their mind the fact that the man getting it deserves it—that he is a menace to society."

### It is true that there are a number of men doing solitary confinement at Holmesburg...

"It is true that there are a number of men doing solitary confinement at Holmesburg, and it is equally true that there are a number who are given employment which carries with it certain privileges. We cannot find work for all of them, and some of them do not want to work. They would much prefer being locked up in solitary idleness.

"We do not allow those in separate confinement to talk and we do not allow them to smoke. They are not allowed to do this because it is against the rules of the prisons, and rules are made to be obeyed.

"Perhaps it is a hardship to deny a man his tobacco, but it is the rule and must be respected. Only the other day I was at Holmesburg and went into a cell. There was a Bible on the table, and I glanced through it. In the lounge the food tobacco and cigarette papers. I was hurt, as this cell was occupied by a man enjoying privileges as a runner. I should have punished him, but I did not. He broke the rules, but I decided to give him another chance.

"I might say that I am not opposed so much to the use of tobacco as I am to the violation of the rule which prohibits its use in prison.

"The rule prohibiting talking is a good reason. At least the Board of Inspectors believes that it is, and for that reason insists that it be enforced. The public does not know why the rules complained of were made, simply because the public does not know just what is necessary for the proper running of a penal institution.

"If the rules needed changing we would not hesitate to change them, but they do not, and, with one exception that of allowing the convicts the use of chewing tobacco, they will not be amended. Chewing tobacco will be allowed January 1."

### Says Rules Are Not Harsh

When Dr. Reeves was asked about the penalty of twenty-four footless hours if a man in solitary confinement were found talking or smoking, he admitted that such was the practice.

"These rules may appear harsh," he said, "but they are not. Of course, those who are controlled by them, because they are criminals, believe they are unduly severe, but they are exactly what is required to conduct an institution where all classes of criminals would not hesitate to change them, but they do not, and, with one exception that of allowing the convicts the use of chewing tobacco, they will not be amended. Chewing tobacco will be allowed January 1."

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