

WORK AFTER GAOL

Judge President On Difficulties

EX-CONVICT'S CASE

PRISONERS' AID SOCIETY NO USE

"Sunday Times" Correspondent

Capetown, Saturday.

"IT is no use turning men out of gaol on to the streets expecting them to find work for themselves. The question is one that should be tackled."

Mr. Justice Gardiner, Judge-President, made these remarks when sentencing Solomon Smit, coloured labourer, at the criminal sessions on two counts of housebreaking and theft.

On Wednesday Smit had pleaded guilty to the charge, but said that his efforts to find work after he came out of gaol last time had been fruitless.

Yesterday the Judge-President said that in the reports there was nothing to show that Smit had made any effort to obtain employment since his previous discharge from gaol. The problem of finding employment for ex-prisoners was one of the greatest difficulties in the administration of criminal justice.

He was informed that there were opportunities of work on farms. The Prisons Department should keep a record of men who had accepted or rejected work on farms. He did not know whether time might not come when the State should provide some temporary kind of work.

Former Convict's Letter

A man who was discharged from the Central Prison, Pretoria, writes to the Press that Mr. Justice Gardiner's remarks on discharged prisoners being unable to find work are only too true. He says: "Three months ago I was discharged from the Central Prison, Pretoria, after serving a short term. It was my first offence. My wife being in Capetown, I came here, and I was also employed here up till the time of my arrest.

"I am an ex-service man, and my employer, the head of a large catering concern in this town, told the detective in charge of my case that I was a very satisfactory employe.

"After my discharge I came back to Capetown with high hopes of putting the past behind me. I interviewed my late employer and placed all the facts before him and asked him whether he would employ me again. I appealed to him as man to man to give me a fresh start.

"He replied that I would have the first vacancy. I went home to my wife full of hopes. Since that time he has given employment to four or five men and passed me over.

"I have walked the streets daily looking for work without success. The Prisoners' Aid Society is a useless institution and should be abolished and the work taken over by the State. How many European ex-prisoners who are not tradesmen have been found work by this society in the past two years?

"To-day I am a desperate man, facing the future without a ray of hope."

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