

supplied. Those assigned to private employers, are sent to the interior under the charge of a constable or overseer.

They build their own huts, and the climate being very fine, require but little shelter. The hours of labour are from six to six, and the quantity of labour exacted from them is about two-thirds of what would be required in England. They are treated in all respects as if they were free, and no restraint is imposed, except that they cannot leave their masters, who, when they have no further use for them, return them to the government to be reassigned.

When on ticket of leave, they may reside in any place they choose to select.

The convict's time of probation depends upon the original term of his sentence; but on a commission of crime within the colony, it begins from his last conviction. For refractory conduct, they may be taken to the nearest magistrate, who orders punishment on the oath of the master. The magistrate has also power to send them to the nearest chain-gang employed on public works. Here they are worked in irons, and kept on scanty food for a limited period, after which they may be returned to their masters. If badly treated, the convict may have the affair investigated, but redress comes slowly.

One of the great evils of the system is, that many of the convicts on arriving are assigned to persons in Sydney and other towns, the consequence of which is that they are exposed to the contaminations and temptations that are likely to beset them in those thickly-peopled places, and this too only a few months after their conviction in the mother country. This influence removes all hopes of reform, and they are usually soon found among the criminals of New South Wales.

All persons who are landholders may receive convicts as assigned servants, in the proportion of one to every three hundred and twenty acres, but no one proprietor can have in his employ more than seventy-five convicts.

Written application for labourers is made to the Board of Assignment, and the applicants must bind themselves to keep the assigned convict for at least one month, and to furnish him with food and clothing agreeably to the government regulations, which are as follows, viz.:

The weekly rations consist of twelve pounds of wheat, or nine pounds of seconds flour; or, in lieu thereof, at the discretion of the master, three pounds of maize meal, and nine pounds of wheat, or seven pounds of seconds flour; with seven pounds of beef or mutton, and four pounds of corned pork, two ounces of salt, and two ounces of soap.

The clothing for a year is as follows, viz.: two frocks or jackets,