

Copy of a Letter  
addressed to the  
Lieut Gov.

S. J. E. Wilcutt  
residing  
Conrich Population

5 Oct. 1846

---

Campbell Town September  
21<sup>st</sup> 1846

Sir

In reply to the circular  
transmitted to me dated 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept.  
requesting my opinion of the state of  
the fowick population in this Island,  
founded as much as possible on my  
own observation & on facts within  
my own knowledge, I have the honor  
to state as follows -  
1<sup>st</sup> as to the Health of the fowick population -

I confine myself principally to that  
of <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>spirits</sup> in private service & I am happy  
to say it is in general very good. The  
salubrity of the climate, a sufficiency  
of good & wholesome food and very  
moderate Labour contribute to produce  
it. I have also observed, in passing  
the different Road Gangs, the very  
healthy appearance of the Men who  
have a smaller proportion of Food  
& fewer Luxuries than those in private  
Service -

2<sup>nd</sup> As to their Industry -

It is a general complaint, that  
the

The French men do less work now  
<sup>with them</sup> ~~but~~ they have adequate wages given  
to supply themselves with comfortable  
& decent clothing some luxuries  
(viz from £9 to £12 per annum) than  
those men <sup>formerly</sup> used to perform who were  
merely fed & clothed by <sup>others</sup>  
under the assignment system and  
this is true - but this difference must  
be ascribed to other circumstances.

The assigned servant usually  
according to his sentence a longer  
in the service of his master  
whose recommendation was considered  
indispensable to the convict's  
eligibility. ~~for~~ indulgence on  
the part of Government - and to any  
remission of his sentence - Industry  
& Skill in his work were therefore as well  
as good behaviour the <sup>way</sup> & means  
to emancipation - A spirit of Industry  
was created by hope, and teaching  
and habit are the requisite knowledge  
and skill - so that a Ticket of Leave man  
was in general a very useful handy  
man - at any employment <sup>to which</sup>  
he professed - The present description  
of convicts who have been merely  
trained in gangs on the roads, are  
<sup>not</sup>

not industrious generally speaking  
they have felt no interest in their task  
& have learned to do as little as  
possible - I ~~have~~ <sup>run into</sup> at this moment  
the case of a labourer to whom I paid  
47 per week with comfortable  
loadings extra rations 10 1/2 Meat 10 1/2  
flour (20%) wheat flour, Soap, 2 of Tea  
1 of sugar: milk vegetables a discretion  
who left me to go to a probation hiring  
depot - His mans duty was to drive  
a team of Bullocks 6 hours from  
8 to 2 - 1 hour for dinner and job  
till evening -

As to their Moral and intellectual  
culture -

Being beyond the <sup>requisite</sup> distance  
from a place of worship - I have always  
assembled my servants & family  
once on Sunday to hear the Church  
Service - and a sermon read - the  
business of a Stock Farm seldom  
permitted more - but they could go  
to the Church or Chapel if they wished  
& such as could read had books  
lent and the weekly newspapers -

As to their improvement in religious  
knowledge and habits -

Some appear to improve & others not  
I think they are in general more  
sober, and pay more regard to  
outward decency than formerly

As to their ordinary Occupations -

These vary with the Employments  
The men in the Country are occupied  
with the various duties of Shepherds  
Ploughmen, Carters, reapers, & the  
women servants as Cooks, Housemaids,  
Nursemaids &c - -

The Extent of their daily average  
Labour -

The average time throughout  
the year is about 10 hours exclusive  
of Meal times - for the Men - and  
Domestic Servants of each sex the  
same as in England -

The Extent of their daily average Leisure -

In winter it is ~~being~~ being four or five  
hours in the Evening - in Summer  
two or three hours after work which  
closes at 7<sup>o</sup> Clock -

The use made of that leisure -

Chiefly Smoking occasionally reading  
or amusing themselves in a dissolatory  
way - Often roaming abroad without  
permission and sometimes committing  
depredations on their Masters property  
or that of his neighbours -

Their Physical & moral condition  
is miserably bad - The system of  
confining & herding large bodies  
of the same sex together for such long  
periods is in my opinion unatural  
& has produced unatural results  
I conceive the familiarity with  
Crime -

Crime of various kinds which must  
 be the result of dwelling with a  
 number of other criminals, must  
 tend towards a greater inoculation  
 of bad habits - and evil practices  
 in those who possess them and spread  
 those evils among the heretofore  
 uninitiated - Under the Apprenticeship  
 System the Settlers always preferred  
 taking a forward Servant direct  
 from the Ship - to one who had been  
 in the Government Gaols - I  
 consider the earliest possible dispersion  
 of the forward as they arrive in  
 the colony amongst the free people  
 as the <sup>most effectual</sup> ~~only natural~~ means of  
 reforming them and the wider  
 their dispersion, the more effectual  
 the means would be - I Any Plan by  
 which Offences might first be adequately  
 punished in England, and the Convicts  
 by both sides - be sent out as Apprentices to  
 all the <sup>Settlements</sup> colonies - to be apprenticed for  
 a longer or shorter period, to be fixed in  
 the indent, <sup>but</sup> leaving the Exile a choice  
 of Master & ~~of~~ profession or Impayment  
 in the first instance, would I think work  
 well - The apprenticeship I think necessary.

for two terms - just that the Exile  
may serve a trade or some useful  
employment - required in the Colony  
the majority of persons transported  
being ignorant thereof -

I think all the Australian  
Colonies would be glad to receive  
Exiles on these terms - and that  
they might thus be absorbed into  
Society with less danger & expense  
than by the present System - Let  
the punishment take place in the Country  
where the offence has been committed to  
deter others from crime - and let the Criminal  
who has made atonement be transported to  
a new Country to <sup>lead a new life</sup> ~~some other habit~~

From an experience of twenty three  
years in the Colony during which time I had  
had many armed Servants. ~~I have wanted~~  
~~to state that~~ I served under the Probation  
System - ~~and~~ I feel warranted in stating  
that those men who have remained in  
my service for the longest term have done  
the best after they got their freedom - Having  
learned to be useful & acquired a Character  
they have been readily employed by

Others - & many of them come back to see  
in a matter of choice. This is the case  
also with the <sup>MS</sup> Servants of other Masters.

The Men seem to feel an attachment  
to the Service of the ~~Masters~~ Master they  
had spent four or five years  
with - from their first arrival in the  
Colony - & especially where good conduct  
on the one part - and just & kind  
Treatment on the other - had cemented the  
Conception of Master & Servant -