

(No. 24.)



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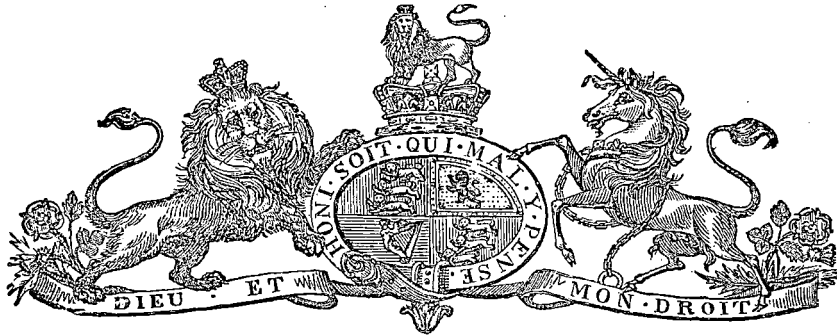
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GAOL AND POLICE OFFICE, LAUNCESTON.

MINUTES OF COMMISSION.

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Laid on the Table by Mr. Henty, and ordered by the Council to be printed,  
5 August, 1862.



*MINUTES of the Proceedings of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the State of the Gaol, Houses of Correction, and Police Office, by His Excellency the Governor's Commission, dated 1862.*

THE Commissioners met at the Office of Public Works, Launceston.

TUESDAY, 10 JUNE, 1862.

PRESENT:

THE MAYOR OF LAUNCESTON.  
JOHN CROOKES, Esq.  
HENRY DOWLING, Esq.

JAMES MACLANACHAN, Esq.  
W. S. SHARLAND, Esq.  
R. OFFICER, Esq.

1. Dr. Officer was appointed Chairman.

2. The Chairman laid on the Table the Commission signed by His Excellency the Governor; also a Letter from the Sheriff addressed to the Colonial Secretary, with a Plan of certain additions proposed to be effected in the Gaol at an estimated cost of from £1000 to £1100.

A second Plan, of an entirely new Gaol, involving an expenditure of from £6000 to £7000, was submitted to the Commissioners by the Director of Public Works.

Having carefully considered and deliberated on the various Documents submitted to them, assisted by the Director of Public Works, they proceeded to the Gaol, Houses of Correction, and Police Office, of which they made a minute inspection.

The Commissioners then adjourned until the following day, at ten o'clock.

WEDNESDAY, 11 JUNE.

Present—All the Commissioners.

The Report of the Parliamentary Committee appointed to enquire into the condition of the Launceston Gaol and Houses of Correction during the Session of 1860, with the Evidence taken before it, was read and considered.

Moved by Mr. Sharland—That the Commissioners approve of the alterations suggested by the Sheriff in his Letter to the Colonial Secretary, dated 12th April, 1862, and shown in the accompanying Plan.

Moved, as an Amendment, by Mr. Crookes, seconded by Mr. Dowling—That the defects of the existing Gaol would not be adequately removed by the alterations proposed by the Sheriff, nor by any other means that could be proposed, except by the entire demolition of the present Buildings, and the erection of a new Gaol, which should be built on the same site.

AYES.  
Mr. Crookes.  
Mr. Dowling.  
Mr. Forster.

NOES.  
Mr. Sharland.  
Mr. Maclanachan.

Amendment carried.\*

\* *Memorandum by Mayor.*—I was unavoidably absent from the Meeting of the Commissioners held on 11th June; but I respectfully beg to say that I would, had I been present, have given my vote in favor of the Amendment moved by Mr. Crookes and seconded by Mr. Dowling. Dated the 9th July, 1862.—JOHN FAWNS.

Moved by Mr. Crookes—That that portion of the octagon which was some time ago abstracted from the Female House of Correction and converted into a House of Correction for Male Offenders should be restored to its original purpose. Carried.

Moved by Mr. Crookes—That the Building and Yards now partially occupied as a Police Station should be converted into a Male House of Correction. Carried.

Moved by Mr. Dowling—That a new Police Office, of moderate dimensions, should be erected on a more convenient site, in proximity to the Court House, Gaol, and Houses of Correction; and that the present site should be reserved for sale, and the expense of the new Building defrayed from the produce. Carried.

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*To His Excellency Colonel THOMAS GORE BROWNE, C.B., Captain-General and Governor-in-Chief of the Island of Tasmania.*

SIR,

THE Commissioners appointed by Your Excellency to enquire into, and report upon, the Gaol Buildings, Houses of Correction, and Police Office at Launceston, met at the Office of Public Works, Launceston, on Tuesday, the 10th June, 1862.

A Letter from the Sheriff, dated 12th April, 1862, addressed to the Colonial Secretary, accompanied by a Plan prepared by the Director of Public Works of certain alterations and additions proposed to be effected in the Gaol, at an estimated cost of from £1000 to £1100, was laid before the Commissioners.

A second Plan, of an entirely new Gaol, involving an expenditure of from £6,000 to £7,000, was also submitted to them by the Director of Public Works.

The Commissioners made a minute and careful inspection of the Gaol, Houses of Correction, and Police Office. They also had before them the Report of the Parliamentary Committee appointed to enquire into the state of the Launceston Gaol during the Session of 1860, together with a copy of the Evidence on which that Report was founded.

The Commissioners are of opinion, after careful personal inspection, that the numerous and serious defects of the existing Gaol Buildings, as described by the Sheriff and by the Witnesses examined before the Parliamentary Committee, and embodied in their Report, have not been exaggerated, and that the plan and construction of the present Gaol are so inherently bad as not to admit of being adequately remedied by the alterations proposed in the Plan submitted by the Sheriff; nor by any other alterations that could be proposed, except by their entire demolition, and the erection of a new Gaol on the same site—which the Commissioners consider sufficiently ample for the purpose.

On their visit to the Female House of Correction, the Commissioners found that Establishment injuriously over crowded; and learned that it is always more or less in that condition.

A considerable portion of the accommodation originally provided for this part of the Institution was some years ago abstracted from it, and converted into a Male House of Correction.

The Commissioners are of opinion that the apartments thus abstracted should be restored to their original purpose, and the male offenders elsewhere accommodated.

The adjoining Buildings, now used temporarily as a Police Station, offer sufficient space and accommodation for a Male House of Correction, and could, at a moderate outlay, be fitted up and rendered quite suitable for that purpose.

The Commissioners found the Police Office to consist of an old dilapidated Building, very inconveniently situated. It is, besides, very damp, and dangerous to the health of those whose duties are performed within its walls.

The Commissioners consider it unworthy of any expensive repairs, and therefore recommend that the large and valuable site on which the existing Building stands should be sold, and a portion of the proceeds devoted to the erection of a new Office of a suitable character (including Police Station in lieu of the Buildings proposed to be taken into the Male House of Correction,) in a more convenient situation, and as near as possible to the Court House, Gaol, and Houses of Correction.

To this Report the Commissioners append:—

- 1st. Minutes of the Meetings of the Commissioners held on the 10th and 11th June, 1862.
- 2nd. The Sheriff's Letter to the Colonial Secretary, dated 12th April, 1862.
- 3rd. Plans of alterations in the existing Gaol recommended by the Sheriff.
- 4th. Plan of a new Gaol, prepared by the Director of Public Works.
- 5th. Copy of the Report of the Parliamentary Committee, and of the Evidence taken before that Committee on the subject of Gaol at Launceston.

R. OFFICER, *Chairman of Commissioners.*

*Committee Room, 22 July, 1862.*

*Sheriff's Office, 12th April, 1862.*

SIR,

At different times, I have taken occasion to call the attention of the Government to the absolute necessity of some improvement being effected in the Gaol at Launceston; and, on the 20th September, 1860, I forwarded a Plan for alterations and additions proposed by the Director of Public Works, of which the cost was £1600.

On my visit to the Gaol in February last, I went over the whole Buildings with the Director of Public Works; and, in accordance with my suggestions, that Officer has prepared a new Plan, which I now submit for the consideration of the Government, with my earnest recommendation that it may be adopted.

This Plan provides for the separation and proper sleeping and messing accommodation of four classes of prisoners; viz.—

1. Prisoners under examination.
2. Prisoners awaiting trial.
3. Prisoners under sentence; and
4. Prisoners under sentence of death.

With regard to the latter, two new Cells of proper dimensions are provided, and complete separation from any other prisoners.

I believe that the present Plan, if adopted, will be found to render the Gaol free from any serious objection. The cost of carrying out the Plan is estimated at £1067, including a charge of £75 for gas-fittings. And, from conversations which I have had with the Director of Public Works, I have reason for supposing that, by working up some of the old materials which can be rendered available by his Department, the actual cost will be below that amount.

I deem it quite unnecessary to repeat my representation as to the present most unsatisfactory state of the Gaol accommodation, as I know that the Government are already in possession of full information upon the subject. I would only express my opinion that some improvement is most imperatively called for, and that I have now proposed the lowest amount of expenditure at which it can be effected.

I think it right to add, that the Plan I have suggested provides proper accommodation for 47 men, as follows:—

Under examination .....	24
Committed .....	15
Under sentence .....	8

exclusive of four light Cells, two dark Cells, and the two Condemned Cells. The men who are committed in default of bail may be, in my opinion, without any objection, placed in the yard allotted to men under examination.

I have the honor to be,  
Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W. NAIRN.

*The Hon. the Colonial Secretary.*