

RETURN

To an Address of the Legislative Assembly, calling for the Report of the Commission appointed last Session to enquire into the condition of Victoria Gaol, together with a statement showing how far the recommendations of said Report have been, or are about to be, complied with.

By Command.

GEO. A. WALKEM,
Attorney-General.

Attorney-General's Office.

28th January, 1873.

REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS APPOINTED TO INSPECT THE CONDITION OF THE VICTORIA GAOL.

To His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia.

Tuesday, the 19th March, having been appointed for the inspection of the Victoria Gaol, Messieurs Trimble, McCreight, Robson, Duck, and Hunter attended there on that day for that purpose.

The Commissioners first inspected the Cells where prisoners are confined, and beg to report on them as follows:—

Cell No. 1 is 8 feet high, 12 feet long, and 6 feet wide. Seven prisoners were, on the 19th March, and sometimes eight are, confined there. The window is 18 inches square, and the wicket 7 by 6 inches.

Cell No. 2 is 12 feet long, 8 feet high, and 5 feet wide. Five prisoners were, on the 19th March, confined in this cell, but it usually contains six prisoners. The window is 18 inches square, and the wicket 7 by 6 inches.

Cell No. 3 is 12 feet long, 8 feet high, and 6 feet wide. Five prisoners were, on the 19th March, confined in this cell; the average is six. The windows, and wicket, are of the same size as those of other cells.

Cell No. 4 is 10 feet long, 8 feet high, and 6 feet wide. The window is 13 by 18 inches, and the wicket of the same size. Four prisoners were confined here on the 19th March, but the average is five.

Cell No. 5 is 13 feet long, 8 feet high, and 6 feet wide. The window is 13 by 18 inches, and the wicket of the same size. Five prisoners were confined here on the 19th March, but the average number is six.

Cell No. 6 is 12 feet long, 8 feet wide, and the window is 18 by 18 inches. The wicket is 13 by 18 inches. Five prisoners were confined here on the 19th March, but the average number is six.

Cell No. 7 is the receiving cell, and is 13 feet long, 8 feet high, and 6 feet wide. The window is 18 by 18 inches, and the wicket is 13 by 18 inches. The number of prisoners confined in this cell, on the 19th March, was three; the average number is five or six.

Cell No. 8 is 13 feet long, 7 feet 6 inches high, and 6 feet wide. Window 18 by 18 inches; wicket 13 by 18 inches. The average number confined here is five.

Debtors' Room.—This is a large spare room, 22 feet by 15 feet, but unfit for prisoners.

The Armory room is very insecure.

There are four cells near the Armory, 7 feet square by 14 feet high. At the time of the inspection, three prisoners were in some and two in others; the average number is three. The ventilation of these cells is very bad, and should be improved.

Three meals a day are supplied to the prisoners:—

For Breakfast, 1 pint of Coffee, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of bread.

Dinner.—The prisoners are supplied with fresh meat every day, of good quality: 12 oz. (weight when uncooked) to each prisoner undergoing hard labour, and 6 oz. to prisoners not undergoing hard labour; potatoes; 1 pint soup; $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. bread; $\frac{1}{4}$ oz. tea; $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. sugar.

Supper.—1 pint tea; $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. bread; no butter.

There were 56 prisoners on the 19th March confined in the Gaol, including lunatics. The present number (May 16th) is 46, of whom 5 are lunatics, 2 being females.

The Commissioners recommend that the cesspools should have carbolic acid applied every day, and that the privies, and drains, and floors of the cells should be sprinkled therewith.

The privies should have draw-boxes on rollers. The present privy is 13 feet deep, and is emptied but once a year.

The cistern near the cells has not been used for a long time, and should be filled up to prevent the effluvia therefrom.

The cesspool, 13 feet deep, should be emptied and filled up.

The water used in the Gaol is brought from Spring Ridge, and there is in general an ample supply.

The Gaol kitchen is very good and exceedingly clean.

There were four lunatics, each in a cell by himself; two of the cells are dark and very badly ventilated.

There were two other lunatics; one confined with two Chinamen, the other with one Chinaman.

The roof of the whole brick building is out of repair.

The officers' quarters are good.

There are three female lunatics; two of them are confined in the Gaol room, which is clean and airy. These are the best quarters in the prison, except the female superintendent's. The floor wants repairing.

The whole Gaol is as clean as possible under the circumstances, and considering the small amount of space at command. It is very insecure, and without vigilant guards there would be frequent escapes.

Of late a certain number of prisoners, who would otherwise have been detained in Victoria Gaol, have been sent to New Westminster; and we should recommend the continuance of this course whenever the relative numbers in the two gaols render it advisable.

There are now five male and two female lunatics in the prison. When arrangements are completed for taking over the lunatics to the Hospital, as well as rich prisoners who are not in custody on very serious charges, or under long sentences, the accomodation in the gaol will be greatly relieved.

It may be a question with the next Legislative Assembly whether in view of the Penitentiary being erected, which will take charge of all prisoners whose sentences exceed a period of two years, any serious expense should be incurred in enlarging the gaol.

We should recommend the repair of the roof of the brick building, and the strengthening of the outside wall to prevent escapes.

JNO. ROBSON,
JAS. TRIMBLE,
JOS. HUNTER,
J. F. MCCREIGHT,
SIMEON DUOK.

Statement showing what alterations have been carried out in accordance with the recommendations made by the Commissioners appointed to inquire into and report on the condition of the Victoria Gaol.

On the 27th of September last, 20 prisoners were sent up to the Gaol at New Westminster, 20 having been previously sent up on the 29th February last.

The 7 lunatics heretofore confined in the Gaol, were removed to the Insane Assylum on the 12th October last.

A new roof has been placed on the brick portion of the Gaol, and the outer fence has been heightened four feet.

The cesspools have been filled up.

The privies have been greatly improved; draw-boxes, made of zinc, have been constructed, and placed in them, which are cleaned out twice a week.

Two urinal boxes have been made—one in the main and one in the outer yard; and two drains have been made to connect with the Bastion Street drain.

A new foundation, sills, and floor have been put to the inner building, and the earth underneath the floor has been lowered 2 feet, and ventilators placed under the floors, so that the cell floors are kept dry, and a current of air is constantly passing underneath.

Ventilators have been placed in the window of each cell of the brick portion of the building, and the inner building is now well ventilated.

The kitchen has been newly roofed, and a new foundation and sills placed under it.

The Gaoler's quarters have been enlarged, and a fire place and brick chimney erected in the inner building.

There are at present 50 prisoners in the Gaol.

GEO. A. WALKEM,
Attorney-General.

Attorney-General's Office,
27th January, 1873.