

To the Grand Jury of the Court of Oyer & Terminer for the District of  
Montreal. Session 25<sup>th</sup> October 1821

The following Representation is respectfully made by  
Peter Holt keeper of the Common Gaol of the said District

The undersigned having had the care of the  
said Gaol since the Month of May last has found the  
same very inadequate for the increasing number of Prisoners  
that have been lodged therein, who under its present construction  
and arrangement it is impossible, properly to Classify.

By personal inspection the Grand Jury will  
perceive the crowded state of the Wards, in which, from necessity,  
prisoners are indiscriminately confined, without its being prac-  
-ta cable to separate properly the juvenile and unpracticed  
offender, from the old and hardened delinquent; the persons  
confined upon suspicion alone, from those who are under  
Conviction and suffering imprisonment for Crime; those charged  
with petty assaults from those to be tried for Robbery or Murder;  
prisoners of a quiet, well behaved and proper demeanour from  
such as are turbulent, refractory, or dangerous; and affording not  
even opportunities for separating the sexes, the sick from the well, or  
the insane from those who are in their sound mind.

It is impossible for the Gaoler to do his duty with  
to the Public, or to the Prisoners under his Charge, without more extensive  
means of a comodation, and greater room for establishing those distine-  
-tions amongst prisoners which are so obviously indispensable for  
the sake of Morality, Justice, Humanity, & even safe Custody.  
For instance its impossible to coerce insane prisoners so as to prevent  
their making disturbances in the night, and several instances can  
be adduced of their having attempted to set the Gaol on fire, such  
disturbances of course alarm the Sentries, and when investigated  
prove perhaps to be nothing but the Ravings of a Madman.



Hence it follows that afterwards similar disturbances may be, and are, not noticed, under the idea that they proceed from the same Cause, and thus plans and contrivances may be carried into effect for effecting escapes or riots.

As that part of the prison that is at present used as a common Gaol is thus much too confined and very inadequate for that purpose; the Gaoler respectfully represents that the lower part of the prison, at present used as a House of Correction, ought to be restored to its original use, and reunited to the Common Gaol whereby not only greater space for lodging the Prisoners will be obtained.

If the whole building was thus devoted to its original purpose, the Gaoler is confident he could discharge his duty far more satisfactory to himself, with greater advantage to the Public, and with more consideration towards the prisoners.

Now that the Case he conceives he should be able so to manage as to keep distant

- 1 Convicts under sentence of Imprisonment
- 2 Persons charged upon suspicion of grave Crimes
- 3 Those for smaller and less atrocious offences
- 4 Persons committed for want of bail for Common Assaults
- 5 Boys under 16 years of Age
- 6 Girls under 14 years of Age
- 7 Other Female Prisoners
- 8 more extensive accomodation for Debtors
- 9 The sick, which, however, under the Blessing of Divine Providence, he hopes his attention to the Cleanliness & Ventilation of the Prison will prevent from ever being a numerous Class & lastly
- 10 The insane should the practice still continue of sending persons of that description to the Common Gaol, which he humbly hopes, may entirely be totally discontinued.



And also to make such other subdivisions and distinctions as the cases, the ages, the behaviour, and the Condition in life of the respective persons of each class may seem to require.

Upon these Considerations the undersigned earnestly and respectfully trusts that the Grand Jury will recommend the above to the Consideration of the Court of Government, of the Country at large and offers to be examined on the subject before the Grand Jury, if they think proper to require it.

I am Gentlemen your obed<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

Montreal 7<sup>th</sup> November 1821

Peter Holt  
Gaoler



1821  
Representation  
of the School of  
Montreal for  
Sept Division ward  
in Spring 1821  
classifying names

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