

THE GAOL QUESTION.

Coun. Connolly Sums Up The Matter From His Point Of View.

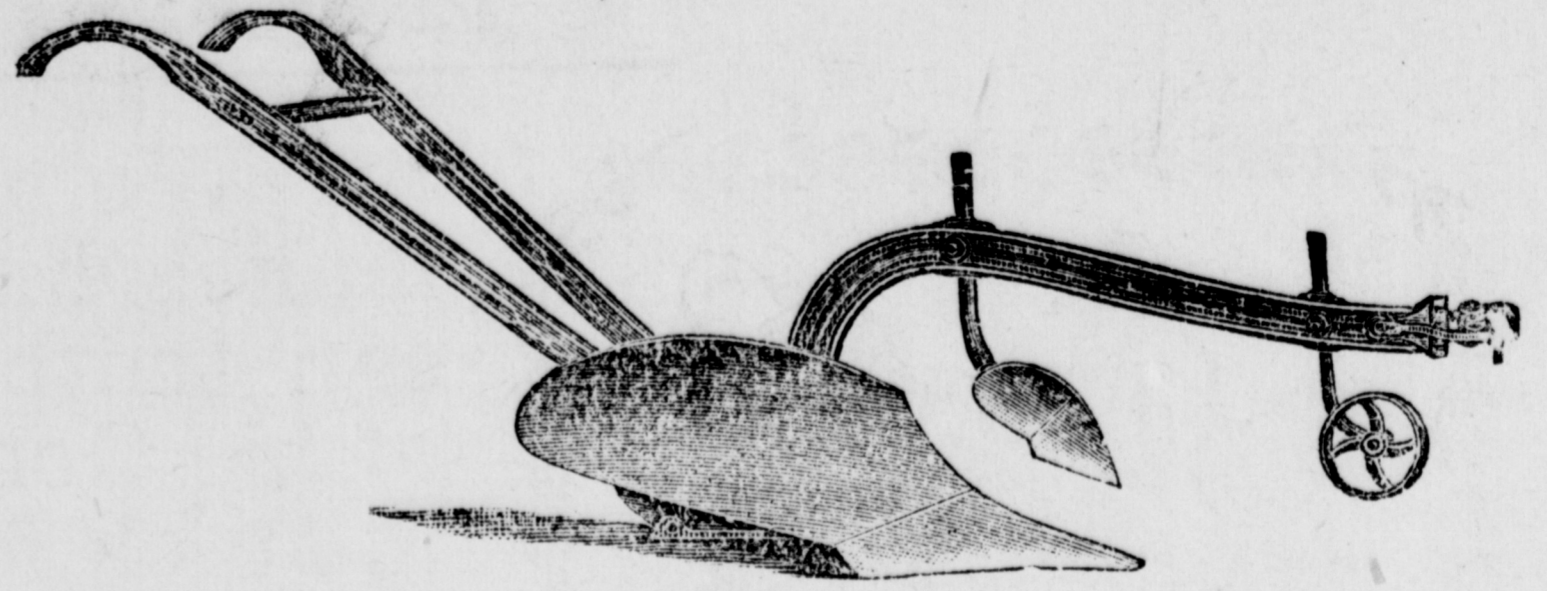
Taken from Dispatch by request.

To the Editor of the Dispatch:

Please allow me space in your paper to make some remarks about the much talked of Gaol question, and in doing so I wish to make some reference to your editorial in Dispatch of Oct. 26, (headed Work for the Lawyers.) It is evident that from your writing you see things differently from what I do, and I want to give your readers my views of the matters referred to, and if you wish to criticise my views, all right. I rather invite discussion. You say that the Gaol question has advanced adverse to the Town, and whether this means that the Gaol will be taken further from the Town is a matter of conjecture. That would imply that there had been, or was or was about to be a move made to take the Gaol further from the Town. Mr. Editor do you know of any such a move being made? Has any person or persons asked that the Gaol be taken further from the Town. I have no knowledge of anything of the kind being done. Just look around and make inquiry and I think you will find that the conjecture about the Gaol being taken further from the Town originated in the brain of some of the Woodstock men after the June meeting of the Council and was propagated for the purpose of influencing councillors in the lower part of the county or rather as a scare, that if they did not turn now and vote for Woodstock at a special meeting of the council that would be called, the chances were that in a short time the Gaol and Court-house would be taken further from them. This scheme had the desired effect on some of the councillors that it was worked on, with others it failed, but it worked well enough to give Woodstock Town a majority vote at the special meeting. The Injunction has decided that the government of the province having selected a site and established it for the Gaol and Court-house, at that place they must remain, very good. We think that is good judgement and good common sense as well. You say in the article referred to the matter of location rests with the county council. The judge has decided it does not, and we should be very thankful too that it does not have that power to snap a matter like this on the people who have no means of helping themselves. Let us suppose, for argument sake that the Council have that power, and there was no power that could stop them, and they had gone on, and built the New Gaol in Town and as their aim was, had it completed before next election, and at next election of councillors enough new men were elected that were opposed to having the Gaol built in town, or suppose the majority of the council would say the new gaol is too far from the court-house and would decide by a majority to repair the old gaol or build a new one at the court-house or they might build new buildings in any part of the county just as there might be a chance of getting a majority, and tax the people to pay for them and according to your idea of the power of the council they could do this thing and no power could hinder. I think we are very fortunate that all power is not vested in the municipality. Again the injunction was granted because the county cannot borrow money from the banks without special legislation. We would here ask why borrow money from the banks, what rate of interest do the banks charge? It is more than three per cent. We were told at the special meeting that we could get the money to build the gaol at 3 per cent. and when the statement was questioned we were told that the man that had the money to let at that rate of interest was then in the court-house. A few days later from a report of a meeting of the new gaol committee we learn that the parties that had the money to let at 3 per cent. were in England. We were told a great many things at the special meeting that we believe were told to mislead for the purpose

of accomplishing the object for which that was called. You say also that a new gaol must be built or extensive repairs must be put on the old one unless all the presentations of committees, grand juries and medical men be utterly ignored. Now I wish to say right here that no committee of the council, no grand jury, no authorized medical board has ever condemned the old gaol or recommended that a new gaol be built. The grand jury to which the matter was referred to in the month of April last. On that jury was quite a number of gentlemen from the town, also doctors from the town. After the jury had examined the gaol they recommended certain repairs. A suggestion was made by some of the jurors to condemn the gaol and recommend the building of a new one in the town. This suggestion received so few supporters that it was dropped, even men on the jury from the town opposed it because the buildings were so good and it would be putting unnecessary expense on the county. Now the repairs recommended were not very extensive or costly as we will show. At the June meeting of the council the committee in charge of the county buildings in a report in conjunction with the grand jury's report recommending certain repairs on gaol, the committee stated that in making up their estimates of cost according to plan presented they had with them a competent architect and mechanic and after adding \$1.25 for overseeing the work, \$1.50 for unforeseen expenses the whole amount of the cost according to their estimates would be \$1628.86. Not very costly or extensive you see. Why was not the recommendation of the committee and the grand jury carried out. Allow me to tell you when the report of the committee was taken up the chairman of the committee (who was Coun. Henderson, Woodstock), said in view of the fact that the county was in debt to the Bank for more than \$9000 he thought it would not be wise at the present time to go into the full extent of the repairs recommended. He therefore would move that the sanitary condition of the gaol be attended to at an expenditure not to exceed \$300 (the committee's estimate for this work was \$218.86). We will leave it for any of your readers to say if it was not the most natural thing for the council to do to support the motion made by the chairman of the committee when he represented to the councillors that the county was so heavily in debt and the work proposed to be done did not in any way affect the balance of repairs recommended being done at any other time. It might be well right here to say that a competent mechanic took the plans and specifications gotten up by the committee and offered to give bonds and good security to complete the whole repairs recommended by the committee in a good and workman like manner to the satisfaction of the council for the sum of one thousand dollars. This information was given to the council at the special meeting but it fell on their ears as on the ears of the deaf, they had a purpose in view at that meeting and that purpose must be carried out whatever might be the cost before October, 1899.

The Court House, we are told by judges, lawyers and reporters, whose calling requires them to visit all the court houses in the province, that for comfort and convenience and appearance our court house is second to none, but the Editor of the Dispatch seems to think there is a good deal wrong even with our fine court house. I will agree with you, Mr. Editor, if there are rooms not used and they are needed for the court officials, that they should be made so that they could be used, but I hardly think they are necessary, or would be used for that class, loafers and smokers might occupy them, if they were finished. I do not think the court house is responsible for all or any of the colds that the people have in the country. It is true that we have not a magnificent stone and brick court house with a large cellar and heated by a furnace in the town of Woodstock costing some thirty or forty thousand, you might feel safer in it, but I would take cold just as quick. The matter at a recent court referred to where parties had no room in the court house and had to



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