

Seattle City Clerk's Office

Comptroller File

45100

FILE NO. 45199

Communication
OF
Charity Organization
Society of Seattle re.
matter of municipal
lodging house.

FILED SEP 5 1911

BY

ADDRESS

WM. J. BOTHWELL
CITY COMPTROLLER AND EX-OFFICIO CITY CLERK

BY

G. A. ... Deputy

ACTION OF THE COUNCIL

REFERRED	TO
SEP 5 1911	HBR. & PUB. GRDS.
REFERRED	TO
REPORTED	REPORT ADOPTED
REPORTED	REPORT ADOPTED
REF. FOR ORD.	C. B. ORD.
MAR 21 1913	DISPOSITION ON FILE

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

Mr. President:

Your HARBORS AND PUBLIC GROUNDS Committee

to which was referred the within

would respectfully report that we have considered the same and respectfully recommend that ON FILE

Marple
CHAIRMAN

Percy

RICHARD HAYTER
Seattle Business Property
REALTY AND INDUSTRIAL PROMOTION
709 AND 710 LOWMAN BUILDING
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
743 Central Building.

~~IND. & PUB. GRDS.~~

Sept. 1, 1911.

~~Hon. Max Wardell, Chairman~~

~~Committee on Harbors & Public Grounds,~~

To the City Council, Seattle, Washington.

Dear Sir:

MUNICIPAL LODGING HOUSE

In compliance with your request the following report is submitted in behalf of the Homeless Man committee of the Charity Organization Society of Seattle.

It is the opinion of this committee that the building now before you for consideration should be acquired by the city outright or under lease, as your judgment dictates, with the clearly expressed condition, however, that this building be used simply as a temporary lodging house. Our committee feels very strongly that this building will serve a useful purpose this year and perhaps next year as an emergency measure pending the construction of a proper sanitary municipal lodging house to be erected by the city on a site that will be more accessible than the one now under consideration.

After a detailed study of the homeless man question our committee is convinced of the necessity of a municipal lodging house in Seattle, and it therefore is appreciative of the inter-

est that the City Council is taking in this very important question. In connection with the consideration of establishing a municipal lodging house our committee begs to submit the following recommendations:

1. That a code of regulations be drawn out of the experience of similar institutions in other cities; and our committee will gladly cooperate with your committee in drawing up such regulations if you desire our assistance.

2. That a competent man who has had experience in like institutions be engaged as superintendent of the lodging house, and that a line of policy be dictated to him which will make possible the finding of employment for as many of the homeless men entrusted to his care as possible, and that every effort be made to put the men coming under his charge in a position where they may be independent of aid, either municipal or private. In other words, the operation of a lodging house should be a part of a social program for the upbuilding of character and a reclamation of such individuals as may temporarily need assistance. To do this work effectively a man with wide social experience is necessary; and he should also have competent assistants. Without these features a municipal lodging house serves only the comparatively unimportant part of housing men without lodgings.

3. That arrangements be made for a close cooperation between the superintendent of the municipal lodging house and the

City Employment Bureau with the view of obtaining work for the men who go to the lodging house. The employment bureau should also, if possible, arrange for an interchange between similar employment bureaus in other cities so that an over supply of labor in Seattle might be drawn to North Yakima or Spokane for instance if conditions warranted.

4. That the Police Department be instructed to enforce the vagrancy laws and, if necessary, to detail a plain clothes squad, thus adopting the practice of the larger Eastern cities. Such a mendicancy squad would free the principal business streets of the sort of begging that during the past winter was very offensive from the fact that in many cases passers by were practically held up by able-bodied men. To get the best results a state vagrancy law should be enacted, for it is ridiculous for the police of Tacoma to arrest men and then let them go to Seattle, and vice versa, as is now the case. This whole question is one of the most puzzling social problems, but it is now generally recognized that there should be a state law governing vagrancy and that groups of adjoining states should have uniform legislation. If the city of Seattle is prepared to undertake the responsibility of inaugurating a municipal lodging house it should conform to the best practices in other municipalities and endeavor to secure legislation that would make possible at least a considerable alleviation if not a complete solution of the vagrancy problem.

-4-

5. That a farm colony be instituted for the care of vagrants in connection with the municipal lodging house. Unless some such plan is adopted the lodging house will draw to Seattle an undesirable class of vagrants, not only from the State of Washington but from the adjoining states of Oregon and California, and perhaps from even more remote places. It is inevitable that every attempt made to relieve personal distress by way of material aid brings with it evils of its own. What a free lodging house carelessly managed will do was clearly shown when a temporary shelter was erected in New York some years ago by a sympathetic institution, which also offered one cent meals. This institution centered in New York perhaps the largest number of panhandlers, hoboes and holdup men that was ever congregated in any American city. These men were drawn to New York from all parts of the country on the widespread information of free beds and practically free meals. It was a period of hard times and every other near by city apparently made the effort to relieve its own conditions by shipping its vagrant class to New York. Our committee at this time will not go into the matter of the farm colony further than to suggest that such an institution could be started on land owned by the city, preferably well outside of the city limits, at very little expense inasmuch as most of the work, even erection of buildings, could be done by the vagrants committed to the farm. Such institutions in other cities have been practically self-supporting. They serve the purpose of a work test and they offer

a kind of work that least interferes with legitimate enterprise and best affords a healthy life and one that has a marked influence on upbuilding character and independence. Roughly speaking, any inmate of the municipal lodging house who within three days cannot find a self-supporting job should be sent to the farm colony, not for a definite term but until the man can find work. At a later time our committee will gladly discuss the farm colony question in as much detail as your committee desires.

6. That arrangements be made to secure the return to their legal residence of any men who are non-residents of the city of Seattle, providing that the authorities or the men's relatives or friends will take care of them on their return. It is quite noticeable that men who have been injured in some occupation outside of Seattle, or who have become dependent on the authorities of some other part of the state, are more and more drifting to Seattle. This state of affairs is perfectly natural, but efforts should be made as long as existing laws are in effect to relieve the tax payers of the city of Seattle from the care of dependants which properly belong in other counties and perhaps other states. This statement will not affect the great majority of inmates of the municipal lodging house for the reason that, while they may not have a legal residence in Seattle, they are without legal responsibilities in other communities. But the deterrent influence of an indefinite stay at the farm colony accompanied by real manual

labor will soon be widespread and will have the effect of keeping out of Seattle many of the professional vagrant class which so closely border on the petty thieving and holdup class. Information of this character travels faster than any one not a student of these problems can imagine; and our committee is quite convinced that the inauguration of a municipal lodging house by the city of Seattle will soon be known through the underground telegraph in all parts of our territory. Coupled with it, however, the information should go forth that any man who wants a free bed is also liable to be committed as a vagrant to a farm colony where he will be made to work.

Regarding the adaptability of the building under consideration for use as a temporary municipal lodging house, our committee makes the following suggestions:

1. That adequate bathing facilities be arranged for in the basement of the building. Shower baths are probably the best for the purpose, but there should be also a certain number of tub baths for those who need a complete soaking. In some institutions it is the practice for attendants to hose down particularly offensive individuals, and usually every inmate is inspected by an attendant before night clothing is issued. The toilet arrangements should be taken from the lodging house proper and put in the basement, where they will be under the supervision of an attendant day and night. The men's clothing should be sterilized while they are in bed; and the clothing should not be allowed in the bed rooms.

2. It would be advisable to take from the individual bed rooms the present wash basins for the reason that such accommodations would not be understood and would probably be very much abused. Besides, the city would probably be able to secure for this plumbing and these fixtures a sum of money which could go towards the additional equipment necessary.

3. A common room should be arranged for where the man can have the use of newspapers and other reading matter, and where they can play games and write letters. This reading and lounging room could well be put in the basement also.

4. It would be necessary to include in the basement a kitchen and dining room, where the simple elements of a meal can be prepared and eaten.

In conclusion, our committee again wishes to express its appreciation of your interest in this question, and begs to assure you that it will do all in its power to help you secure the approval of the tax payers of the city in undertaking the successful operation of a municipal lodging house, but we particularly urge you to give earnest consideration to its almost essential corollary - a farm colony.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Hayter

Leo Kohn

Homeless Man Committee of the
Charity Organization Society of Seattle