

FILE NO. 54854

Communication
OF
Health Commissioner
in re conditions at
Emergency Hospital.

FILED JAN 6 1914

BY

ADDRESS

H. W. CARROLL
CITY COMPTROLLER AND EX-OFFICIO CITY CLERK

BY

G. A. Coulter, DEPUTY

ACTION OF THE COUNCIL

REFERRED

JAN 6 1914

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REPORTED

REF. FOR ORD.

FEB 24 1914

TO

FINANCE

TO

REPORT ADOPTED

REPORT ADOPTED

C. B.

ORD.

DISPOSITION

ON FILE

REPORT OF COMMITTEE

Mr. President:

Your

FINANCE

to which was referred the within

Communication

Committee

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

it be placed on file

CHAIRMAN

Samuel H. Davis

Also

The City of Seattle

Washington

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND SANITATION

January 5th, 1914.

To the Honorable City Council,
City of Seattle.

Gentlemen:

I desire to call your attention to certain conditions existing in the City Emergency Hospital.

For several months the work in the Hospital Division has been gradually growing heavier. The hospital originally intended as an emergency hospital only, has been forced from time to time to extend assistance to those suffering from many difficulties other than those generally considered emergency cases. Thus the hospital has taken care of many cases of insanity, delirium tremens, acute and chronic alcoholism, as well as very many cases of ordinary illnesses and surgical troubles among the poor of this city.

The Out-Patient Division has increased more than 100% I believe within the past six months and we are treating about 1000 cases monthly in this division. It is to be understood ^{also} that these cases visit the hospital several times each month.

This building you will remember was built largely out of bond money provided by the people for an Emergency Hospital, City Jail and Municipal Court purposes.

Many nights every single bed is occupied and we have crowded patients into every conceivable place. Today

it can no longer be considered as an Emergency Hospital, because if we were to have a considerable accident we would not be able to provide necessary beds. Understand, however, at this time nearly all cases in the hospital are strictly emergency.

Any department in the city government suffers if its offices are not all in the same building. It is impossible for me, and would be impossible for anyone else, to administer the affairs of this department as successfully with part of its men in one building and part in another, as it would be if they were under one single roof. If the city is to take care of its emergency sick and injured, it will be absolutely necessary to afford the hospital more space. We are at this time refusing admittance to some cases which, for humanity's sake at least, should have care.

The Health Department, including the Hospital should have another floor in the City Hall and release the space now occupied in the Prefontaine Building. For Hospital space alone we can use every inch of at least one half floor. An emergency hospital, in a city the size of Seattle, should have in reserve every minute of the day not less than twenty (20) beds. At the time of the Colman Dock disaster, we had nearly sixty-five (65) patients brought to the hospital within about 20 minutes. During the Armory accident, when the balcony railing gave way, many people were sent to this hospital. During a wreck which occurred on the Renton Valley line, about three years ago, there were seventeen (17) people brought, at one time and within five minutes, to this hospital. And just recently, many firemen, overcome with gas during the fire at the Timesplant, were brought to this hospital. Hundreds of smaller accidents have demanded from one to

five beds in the past few years. You can all readily understand the necessity of more space. It will be more economical for the city if the entire department is placed in one building. Of course the medical department cannot be removed from its own building so it would seem wise, if it is your desire, that the hospital facilities be enlarged, to provide for the housing of the entire department in the City Hall, and use space vacated for other purposes.

In conclusion, I wish to call your attention to the advisability of providing an alcoholic ward. Without an alcoholic ward into which the police can bring all drunken men and women, there will be occasional deaths in the jail and possibly at the time of death there will be no physician in attendance. Many chronic drunkards die suddenly and unexpectedly on account of diseased arteries, heart or other vital organs. This has always occurred in this and other cities and will continue so long as men continue to abuse themselves to the same degree. We cannot take into the hospital the ordinary drunken prisoner, unless we turn into the streets just that number of men who are sick and injured in the ordinary discharge of life's duties. During the month of December, 1913, our physicians made 817 police calls. This was more, by 500, than were made in the entire year of 1908 and gives an idea of the amount of work properly demanded by the Police Department. With an alcoholic ward much anxiety will be removed from the shoulders of the Chief of Police and of the Commissioner of Health. As it is today, men are going to die occasionally in the jail, no matter how closely they are attended. I am not speaking now of the injuries which have been neglected in the jail on account of any fault of the Health or

We had been able to fairly well provide for the sick and injured by the removal of the nurses from their old dormitory to the new. This space is well crowded at the present time and relief must be afforded.

Believing that now, the beginning of the New Year, is the proper time to bring this matter to your attention and on account of the necessity of our refusing admittance to several cases during the past few days I trust it may have your immediate attention.

Most respectfully,

COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH.

JEC/B