HELPED THE PLAGUE

Gross Mismanagement Charged Against Dr. Reynolds

MAYOR SWIFT HITS BACK.

Tells the Doctors' Club Why Herr Is Commissioner.

Treatment of Smallpox Patients in Chicago a Disgrace to Civilization.

Mayor Swift made public yesterday charges against ex-Commissioner of Health Reynolds which were made the basis of the latter's removal from office. This action on the part of the mayor was prompted by the resolution adopted by the Doctors' Club, which met Friday evening in the Leland Hotel. The resolution referring to William R. Herr as Commissioner of Health, was answered by the mayor, who gave for publication the following letter from Dr. Warren, the physician in charge of the Smallpox Hospital, who served in that capacity all during the late epidemic.

Chicago, Ill., April 27.—William Kent, Commissioner of Public Works, Chicago, Ill.—Dear Sir: In compliance with your request at my interview with you today, I would respectfully submit to you certain facts in my possession concerning the general mismanagement of the department of health during the last two years, and more particularly certain matters relating to the very lax methods that prevailed in said department during the epidemic of smallpox of 1893-94. In the first place, when smallpox appeared in our midst in 1893 the commissioner did not seem to appreciate the gravity of the condition that faced the city; for, instead of at once taking active steps and mounting well-known methods necessary to stamp out the contagion, his policy was one of masterful inactivity, and, although repeatedly warned and advised, nothing whatever was done by him until the dread plague had obtained a firm hold upon the city, and until both publicly and privately he had received well-merited condemnation. He was literally forced by the weight of public opinion to take some action in the matter, and at this time the disease had already become "epidemic." If he had promptly met the conditions at the very outset there is no doubt that the epidemic could have been prevented, many lives saved, and the city saved about $1,000,000, for it is impossible to directly compute the loss to the city caused by such an invasion.

Commissioner Was Slow to Act.

At last, when the State Board of Health was forced to interfere, and when the State Boards of Health of neighboring States were considering seriously the advisability of placing quarantine restrictions against our city, the commissioner awoke to a realization of the fact that the department of health of Chicago had some duties to perform in connection with the sanitary state of the city. But in the meantime valuable time had been lost, several months had passed, and while the epidemic had been slow in developing, once it had acquired a start it showed evidences of strength that were really alarming. So slow, however, was the commissioner in getting the machinery of his department in motion that the State factory inspectors, after having interviewed the doctor a number of times without producing any result, were forced to treat the commissioner as if he did not exist, and, taking charge of the most thickly settled parts of the city, began and carried on most successful work, work that should have been done by the commissioner of health. Indeed, no much credit cannot be given to the State Board of Factory Inspectors, as without their decided action there is no knowing where the real would not have extended. The action of the State Board of Factory Inspectors and the proposed isolation of Chicago by the boards of health of adjoining States, are all matters of record, and can be referred to in the archives of the State of Illinois, of the State of Wisconsin, and of the State of Indiana. In this connection, I would call attention to the official report of Mrs. Florence Kelley, of the Board of Factory Inspectors, as submitted by her to the Governor of the State of Illinois a short time ago, and which report contained a most scathing denunciation of the Chicago department of health and the commissioner, not one word of which could be or has been controverted or ameliorated.

"Ward Hummers" as Assistants.

And now after his department had been subjected to just and severe criticism, and after the State authorities had been obliged to step in and attend to his duties, the commissioner began to take cognizance of what was going on. It became necessary for the commissioner to at once employ a very large force of extra men as vaccinators, disinfectors, and fumigators, and this he proceeded to do; but instead of engaging reputable men for this work he employed a lot of "ward hummers" and "saloon hangers-on." Of course I would not be understood at this time as saying that reputable and fine men were not employed, nor would I criticise the medical staff of the commissioner as a whole; but I would say that to my personal knowledge the very large majority of the "extra" men engaged were in every way unfitted for the work and were a positive disgrace to the city. I myself have personal knowledge that vaccinators, ambulance drivers, and fumigators were continually and habitually drunk. I have seen drunken ambulance drivers drive up to the smallpox hospital in such condition that they have fallen off the seat. It was not an uncommon occurrence for such driver to go to various affluent houses, load up his wagon with the sick, and then drive all around various parts of the city, going into grocteries, and with his companions indulging in drink and carousal, the unfortunate patients meanwhile lying suffering in the cart, awaiting the pleasure of their drunken master.

Of this horrible condition of affairs I frequently informed the commissioner in person and often recommended the discharge of these drivers, but without avail, and it is to me certainly miraculous that some terrible accident did not occur from this criminal carelessness and neglect.

Here I would call attention to these ambulances. In the first place there were only two ambulances and a few old carriages for the whole city, when there should have been a complete set of these for quick service in each division of the city. One of the most important elements to be considered in stamping out an epidemic of smallpox is the quick and prompt removal of the cases.

Terrible Neglect of Patients.

Not paying any attention to this, the commissioner allowed numerous cases to remain at home and fairly rot in their beds, while the house would be imperfectly quarantined, and this happened even when the medical inspectors would be making frantic appeals to the health office to have the sick removed and the place disinfected. Such patients have been permitted to remain at home for four, five, even six days. Again, it may be remembered that during the winter seasons of this epidemic we had excessively cold weather. The ambulances and carriages were used night and day during the coldest weather, and no attempt was at any time made to warm these vehicles or properly protect the sick. For a small sum heating apparatus could have been purchased, and lives in this way could have been saved, lives that were lost by exposure owing to the commissioner's negligence or ignorance. The taking of a sick man out of his warm bedroom and the carting of him for several miles, part of the way across the open prairie, in cold weather, is not conducive to his recovery. I am prepared to verify every statement made by me as to these matters and others yet to be made note of.

Again, I would ask permission to call attention to the places where these disease-saturated vehicles were kept. These were just at the foot of Randolph street, at the lake front, along with the passenger cars, and all were witnesses to the health of the people obliged to pass by on their way to the Illinois Central and other railroad depots there situated. Again, the ambulance drivers would come to the City Hall after having removed smallpox cases, and, reeking with contagion, would walk through the corridors and invade the public offices, never taking any steps to avoid contagious spread, never even washing their hands. Attention was repeatedly called to these matters, but without avail.

The Mode of Burial.

Now, a word as to the mode of burial of the dead. Up to the month of August, 1894, those dying of smallpox at the pesthouse were put into cheap, common, pinewood boxes and placed in the morgue, where, to my personal knowledge, they were allowed to remain for as long as a week before being buried. When being removed for burial these boxes would be placed on an open cart and in the heat of the summer day dragged through the streets, had fluid fluid from the decomposing bodies oozing out of the cracks in the boxes, dripping on to the carts and leaving to the street. And yet people wondered where the smallpox contagion was coming from. This condition of affairs was protested against by me to the secretary of the commissioner and also to the commissioner himself, but the commissioner told me bread whatever to my protests, and on one occasion when I had made a most vigorous complaint the very next day a load of the same cheap, rough, pinewood boxes was shipped to the pesthouse. The law orders that such dead be buried in elm-lined coffins. It might be interesting to know how many such elm-lined coffins were paid for by the city, for the kind used were as I describe. The commissioner and his secretary cannot say that they know nothing of this, for not only did I often and often complain in person, but one day I showed the secretary one of these loads leaving the hospital in the condition I have spoken of above.

To attempt to describe the horrors of the pesthouse would require the skill of a novelist, and even then the description would fall far short of the truth. This place consisted of a shanty barracks building capable of accommodating about 200 people—but more—while during the epidemic we have had therein about 400 patients suffering from smallpox at one time.

Horrors of the Pesthouse.

In this building there were no proper arrangements for heating the building or for lighting it. The heating was accomplished by means of stoves, and in cold weather those patients near the stove would be sizzling and roasting, while at a little distance the ones farther away would be freezing from the cold. The lighting was done by a number of ordinary lamps, which endangered the safety of the inmates, as it would be easy for a sick man under the influence of delirium to overturn one of these and set fire to the barracks, as there were no means of putting out a fire, and, the nearest fire alarm box being about a mile away, once a fire would start a terrible holocaust would have been the result. Now, it certainly must be acknowledged that in a hospital intended for the care and treatment of the sick some means of procuring hot water would be a necessity. At the Chicago pesthouse the only way of getting this necessity was by hailing the water in a saddon which was out in the yard, in the open air. But one bath tub existed in this place wherein we could give the patients about to be discharged a disinfectant or medicated bath, and then after purification the person would have to pass through the ward before he could leave, again infecting himself and clothing. On account of the horrible state of the pesthouse, due to the commissioner's neglect, 182 patients died of complications due to said neglect, and as the law of our State allows the sum of $5,000 for "killing" a human being by carelessness or neglect, you can easily see that 182 times $5,000 would make rather a neat little amount of money.

Often Complained to Dr. Reynolds.

Concerning all these matters I continually made complaint to the commissioner, but he never paid the slightest attention to me or my complaints. The unfortunates out at the pesthouse are cut away from all communication with the outside world, and the only way by which their friends can hear as to their condition is by means of the telephone system. After the Twenty-Second street electric cars began to run, on account of the proximity of the wires, it became impossible for me or the hospital to get connection with the city or hear well what was being said. This was a great hardship to the hospital inmates and to their sorrowing friends. I repeatedly requested the commissioner to attend to these various matters, calling his attention personally to them sevralim, until at last one day when I was more than usually in earnest at his refusal to give relief, and spoke very strongly to him, he told me he was sick at the whole affair and that I could "go plump to ——."

Tired out by his indifference, I at last invited Dr. St. John, a prominent physician of this city, out to the pesthouse, as I would have a professional witness as to the horrors there. This I did in my character to get better accommodations for the sick and suffering and also for my own protection. The doctor was surprised at seeing the state of affairs and wrote a letter to the commissioner, which letter was published in the dress some time in the early summer of '94, and caused with comment in the city newspapers both editorially and otherwise, that Dr. Reynolds was forced to do something to relieve the hospital.

Sick Absolutely Neglected.

I need not call your attention to certain details of the hospital mismanagement, but say that to every way the place and its sick inmates were absolutely neglected, and this by the official whose duty it was to protect the interests of all concerned. As example, at no time was there sufficient clothing for the hospital inmates, in condemning the hospital and the mismanagement of the commissioner of health, I desire to say that the one bright spot in this collection of horrors was the good and efficient nursing done by the sister nurses. These women gave most excellent service and worked night and day for the patients, indeed, I have known them to be at work in the wards for thirty-six hours hand running. Just as the epidemic was about over the commissioner at enormous expense and without having any plans drawn up, built a new hospital shed on Union avenue and Forty-Fourth place. This new hospital was a rough shed, but enough money was used in building it to have erected a permanent and substantial structure. Immediately following the election a few days ago of our present mayor this building was, at the order of the commissioner, destroyed by fire, thereby removing all chances of an investigation as to its cost or fitness for the service to which it was used.

This epidemic began in the spring or early summer of '94, and if careful attention had been given to sanitary work by this time the city should certainly be free from smallpox. But is it? At this day there are about forty cases now under treatment at the pesthouse and new cases are being reported every day. Today smallpox exists in Chicago, whereas in previous epidemics the disease would have entirely disappeared at a corresponding period. The fact is that Dr. Reynolds, the present commissioner of health, has shown himself to be absolutely incompetent, and until for such a position, and in proof of my statement I would refer to the management of the epidemic and to the facts I have referred to, every one of which can be proven. Very respectfully,

H. S. WARREN, M. D.,
Physician in Charge of the Smallpox Hospital.

In reference to the action of the Doctors' Club, Mayor Swift said:

"I thought it best to go slow in this matter after the charges had been made against Dr. Reynolds. I thought it better to keep such matters quiet than to make public charges of such a serious nature. I can say this, that one of the doctors who spoke at the meeting last night and was foremost in the criticism of my action in the selection of Mr. Herr, was himself an applicant for the position, and Mr. Herr came with him to this office as many as twenty times trying to get me to appoint this same doctor as commissioner of health. Upon examination with physicians I was advised that to whom a proper man is held the position. After due consideration I then determined upon Mr. Herr, after having consulted with Dr. Hamilton, who he promised me that he would lend every assistance in his power to aid the work in the branch of the department that attended to the sanitary condition of the city."

PAY-ROLL STUFFERS INDICTED.

Thirteen of the City Hall Pensioners Must Stand Trial.

Just before adjournment yesterday the grand jury took up the pay-roll investigation. The jury returned "true bills" against the following, charging them with conspiracy to defraud the city out of $100,000: Thomas Cronk, Thomas F. White, Patrick Chambers, Fred Kelly, Thomas Sweeney, Edward Melvin, Peter Field, James Weir, Thomas Vonachek, William Dorman, L. Weiz, Frank Simmons, James McLaughlin.

There are five indictments, several of the men being indicted jointly. The men further indicted were employed as foremen and timekeepers in the water-pipe extension and street and alley departments of the city.

COUNTY TREASURER'S REPORT.

Accounts of Money Received During the Past Six Months.

County Treasurer Kochersperger has completed his semi-annual report for the six months ending June 1. He will submit the same to the county board at its meeting tomorrow afternoon. The following is the showing made by the office during the first six months of Mr. Kochersperger's term:

TREASURER'S DEPARTMENT.
Commission Account.

	Dr.
To balance Dec. 2, 1894	$ [illegible]
To commissions received since	[illegible]
Total	[illegible]
By amount credited general account	[illegible]
By paid treasurer's salary	[illegible]
By balance	[illegible]
Total	$13,[illegible]
To balance June 1, 1895	[illegible]

COLLECTOR'S DEPARTMENT.
Commission Account.

	Cr.
By paid clerk hire	[illegible]
For which there are commissions to cover since	[illegible]

COST ACCOUNT.

	Dr.
To balance Dec. 2, 1894	[illegible]
To amount received since	[illegible]
Total	[illegible]
	Cr.
By amount credited in every fund since	[illegible]
By balance	[illegible]
Total	[illegible]
To balance June 1, 1895	[illegible]

BREAKFAST IN CHICAGO,
Supper in Pittsburg-Bay View.

It is possible to do the same day by taking the "West Michigan Flyer" from M. C. R. R. Station at 12:01 a. m., with buffet parlor car, arriving Traverse City 4:50 p. m., Charlevoix 6:20, Petoskey-Bay View 7 p. m.

Night train, with sleeper, leaves at 5 p. m., arriving at points early next morning.