

SAYS HE IS UNFIT.

DR. REYNOLDS ARRAIGNED FOR MIS-MANAGEMENT WHEN IN OFFICE.

Former Health Commissioner Is Charged by Dr. Warren with Permitting the Spread of Smallpox and Causing Many Deaths—One Hundred and Fifty-nine Patients, He Says, Died of Neglect—Doctors' Resolutions Bring Out the Report—New Health Ordinance.

Some of the reasons why Dr. Reynolds was removed from the position of Health Commissioner were made public by Mayor Swift yesterday. They were given in a report received a couple of months ago, which was written by Dr. H. S. Warren, the physician in charge of the smallpox hospital. It is probable the public would never have known the real cause for the action of the Mayor had it not been for the action of the Doctors' club Friday evening in passing resolutions degrading the removal of Dr. Reynolds and the placing of a layman in charge of the Health Department to be an insult to the medical profession and the public. If the real facts were known, it is intimated, it would develop that politics had something to do with the action of the Doctors' club. It is asserted the plan to place the doctors on record was carefully worked up and was interpreted by persons for political motives.

The report made by Dr. Warren is as follows:

Chicago, April 23, 1895.—William Kent, Commissioner of Public Works, Chicago—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 bad methods that prevailed in said department during the epidemic of smallpox of '93 and '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 adopting well-known methods necessary to stamp out the contagion, his policy was one of stamp-out 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.

Forced by Public Opinion.

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 condition as the very outset there is no doubt but 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.

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 development, 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, too much credit cannot be given to the State Board of Factory Inspectors, as without their decided action there is no knowing where the pest 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.

Mrs. Keller's Report.

In this connection I would call attention to the official report of Mrs. Florence Keller 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 contradicted.

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 bummers" 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 criticize 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 danger 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 drivers to go to various afflicted houses, load up his wagon with the sick, and then drive all around various parts of the city, going into grogeries and with his companions indulging in drink and carousals, the unfortunate patients meantime lying suffering in the cart, awaiting the pleasure of their drunken master.

Horrible Condition of Affairs.

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 ridiculous that some terrible accident did not occur from this criminal carelessness and neglect.

Here I would call attention to those ambulances. In the first place there were only two ambulances and a few old creaking cabs 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.

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, and 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 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 carrying 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 out of.

Maintains a Public Menace.

Again, I would ask permission to call attention to the places where these disease-saturated vehicles were kept. These were kept at the foot of Broadway street, at the lake front, along with the rearing carts, and all were sources 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 recovered 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.

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 workhouse were put into cheap, common, pine-wood 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, foul, filthy fluid from the decomposing bodies oozing out of the cracks in the boxes, dropping onto the carts and thence to the street. And yet people wondered when the smallpox contagion was coming from them. This condition of affairs was protested against by me to the secretary of the Commissioner and also to the Commissioner himself, but the Commissioner paid no heed 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, common, pine-wood boxes was shipped to the pesthouse. The law orders that such dead be buried in zinc-lined coffins. It might be interesting to know how many such zinc-lined coffins are sold here by the city, for the kind used were not only inferior, but they were not even zinc-lined. 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 those loads leaving the hospital in the condition I have spoken of above.

Horrors of the Pesthouse.

An 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—not more—while during the epidemic we have had therein about 400 patients suffering from smallpox at one time.

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 these patients near the stoves would be sitting and roasting, while at the same 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 there 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 boiling the water in a caldron which was out in the yard in the open air. But one bathtub existed in this place where one could give the patients about to be discharged a disinfectant or medicated bath, and even after purification the persons would have to pass through the ward before they could leave, again infecting himself and others. On account of the horrible state of the pesthouse, due to the Commissioner's neglect, 150 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 150 times \$5,000 would make rather a neat little amount of money.

No Attention to Complainants.

Concerning all these matters I continually made complaint to the Commissioner, but he never paid the slightest attention to me or my complainants. The unfortunates out at the pesthouse were 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 car line began to run, on account of the proximity of the wires it became impossible for us at the hospital to get connection with the city or hear 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 several times, until at last one day, when I was more than usually earnest at his refusal to give relief, and spoke very strongly to him, he told me he was sick of the whole affair and that I could "go please to h—."

Tired out by his intonation I at last invited Dr. St. John, a prominent physician of this city, out to the pesthouse, so I would have a professional witness as to the horrors there. This I did in my endeavor 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 press some time in the early summer of '94 and caused much comment in the city newspapers, both editorially and otherwise, that Dr. Reynolds was forced to do something to relieve the hospital.

Patients Are Neglected.

I need not call your attention to certain details of the hospital mismanagement, but say that in 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. An 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 band running.

Just as the epidemic was about over the Commissioner, at enormous expense and without having any plan drawn up, built a new hospital on Ogden 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 erection—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 in which it was used.

This epidemic began in the spring or early summer of 1893, and if careful attention had been given to sanitary work by this time the city should certainly be free from smallpox. What is it? At this day there are about forty cases now under treatment at the pest-house, and now 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, Dr. Reynolds, the present Commissioner of Health, has shown himself to be absolutely incompetent and unfit 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 proved. Very respectfully,

H. S. WARREN, M. D.,

Physician in Charge of the Smallpox Hospital.

The only comment which Health Commissioner Kerr had to make on the action of the Doctors' club was to call attention to the statements of the principal speakers as reported in the morning newspapers, "as compared with New York, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and San Francisco the City of Chicago is yet a village in regard to such matters," and the Health Department has been everything but a model during all the years in which it has been under the control of medical men. He said if these things are true it would seem time to make a change. The point is made by Mr. Kerr's friends that Geo. John D. Stephenson, an eminent lawyer of St. Louis, is said to have made an ideal Commissioner of Health.

Mayor Swift refused to make public the ordinance referred to by Dr. Hamilton on the ground that he had not read it. It is said it does not provide that a physician shall be at the head of the department, and it is asserted on good authority Mayor Swift has no intention of making a change.