

TERRITORY OF ALASKA

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

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December 11, 1911.

Sir:

Availing myself of the official leave of absence from the Territory granted in Department's telegram of September 23, 1911, I visited Portland, Oregon, on October 12 for the purpose of investigating conditions in the asylum maintained by The Sanitarium Company for the treatment and care of the Alaska insane. I have the honor, herewith, to submit a brief report of my inspection of the asylum. This report has been deferred in the expectation that Special Inspector Edward W. Dixon, who made the inspection with me, would send me a copy of his detailed report, upon receipt of which I should have submitted my own report in the form of a review of the Special Inspector's report. Mr. Dixon, it would appear, did not understand that I expected to receive a copy of his report. However, we had several full conferences in reference to the results of our investigation of the asylum -- which proved that we were thoroughly in agreement as to the conditions which we investigated. My own report is restricted for the most part to a general statement -- the statement of details being left to Special Inspector Dixon, who not only pursued the investigation in a most thorough and painstaking manner, but exhibited strong aptitude for this particular kind of official inquiry.

I spent four days in Portland and at the buildings of the

Sanitarium Company; but Mr. Dixon, who was charged with the duty of making a detailed inspection of the construction of the new buildings and of matters connected with the administration of the asylum, spent about two weeks in that work. After he had completed his work, Mr. Dixon met me again at Seattle where we had two or three conferences, in which the results of our inspection were thoroughly reviewed.

My own four days' inspection consisted of a thorough examination of the buildings and grounds and everything connected with the physical accommodations of the asylum; attendance upon two meals served to the patients (our presence being unannounced in advance), when an examination of the food and dining room and kitchen service was made; and personal interviews with many patients, particularly with several who had made complaints or had applied for release. The buildings I found to be well planned and constructed, as well as amply heated, lighted and ventilated. The windows and doors were unscreened, and as I noticed the presence of many flies, I spoke to Dr. Coe, of the Sanitarium Company, about this defect when I saw him in Portland. He promptly promised to have all the windows screened, and the principal doors double-screened.

The heating, lighting and ventilating of the buildings is to be especially commended. The arrangements are excellent. The invariable cleanliness of all the buildings and of every room was a matter which impressed both Inspector Dixon and myself.

The food which we saw served in the dining room or mess

hall was plain, but wholesome and well cooked and abundant in quantity. A few insane patients spoke to us in rather violent condemnation of the food, but as, upon close questioning, they extended their criticisms to the food which we had seen served and had ourselves partaken of, the criticisms appeared to be unjustified.

During my four days' visit I was accosted by several patients while walking through the wards. In nearly every case they did not speak to me for the purpose of criticising the institution or its management, but to interest me on behalf of their release. It was notable that, apparently, most of these insane patients -- even of those who are most obviously suffering from mental disease -- believe that they are sane enough to justify their release.

Several others of the patients were sent for by the physicians at Mr. Dixon's or my request and interviewed at length in the asylum office. Some of these individual interviews consumed an hour or more. I talked for a long time with Charles Van Nostrand and Frank Lagerquist, who have been in the asylum for several years, afflicted with paranoia. Friends of these men, as well as certain other persons acting, doubtlessly, from philanthropic motives, have been making persistent efforts to secure their discharge from the asylum. Both men, at the time we talked with them, conversed in a sane manner for some time, but betrayed unmistakable symptoms of insanity before the interviews were concluded. It is significant, moreover, that the sister of Van Nostrand is unwilling to assume the responsibility of her brother's discharge. This patient was at one

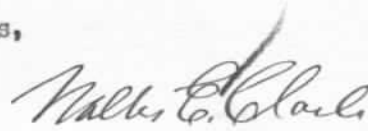
time confined as a patient in the state insane asylum of Illinois. The application of Lagerquist and others on his behalf for Lagerquist's discharge would seem to be settled adversely by a recent action in the United States District Court at Portland. Before ruling on an application for a writ of habeas corpus to require Lagerquist's discharge, a well-known alienist of Portland was appointed by the court to examine Lagerquist. The alienist reported that Lagerquist's discharge would be a menace to public safety.

I beg to call your attention to the recommendation, which will doubtlessly appear in the report of Special Inspector Dixon, that a medical board of visitors be employed to visit annually the asylum maintained by the Sanitarium Company. I heartily endorse that recommendation, which is one of the results of our joint inspection of the asylum, and of our subsequent conferences.

At the time of our inspection the number of Alaska insane under treatment was 157 -- a large gain as compared with the number one year before. If this number should be maintained, the annual expense for their care and treatment, at the rate of \$27.50 each per month, would be \$51,810 per annum. The present appropriation is only \$50,000. In my opinion Congress should be asked to increase this appropriation to \$60,000 -- especially if our recommendation that a medical board of visitors be appointed be ap-

proved.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Walter C. Clark".

Governor.

The Secretary of the Interior,

Washington, D. C.