

MORNINGSIDE HOSPITAL
THE SANITARIUM CO.
PORTLAND, OREGON



THE NEW WILLARD

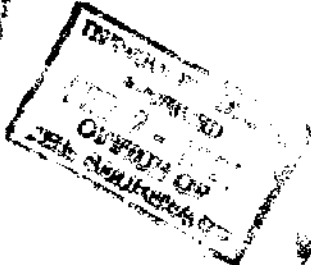
WASHINGTON



WILLARD'S HOTEL COMPANY,
FRANK S. LIGHT, PRESIDENT

February 7, 1921

*97-10
Riggs*



Hon. John Barton Payne,
Secretary of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.

S i r:

Permit me to acknowledge receipt of certain correspondence to you from Judge Frederick Brown of the District Court at Valdez, Alaska, touching the question of the care of the criminal insane for Alaska. Judge Brown's correspondence is herewith returned.

There was received by me here in Washington at a later date a letter from Judge Brown, a copy of which is attached hereto and which covers the subject as therein stated.

The only difference in the two communications so far as the matter appears to the writer are copies of two telegrams as follows included to me:

"Juneau, Alaska, Dec. 31, 1920.

Brown, Judge,
Valdez

Following from Congressman Johnson "Volstead promises consideration Alaska Insane bill soon. Shall make sincere effort to pass before March 4th."

Riggs, Governor"

"June Alaska, Dec. 30, 1920.

Brown, Judge
Valdez.

Secretary of Interior has no authority to permit dangerous insane to any place other than Morningside. At my request Representative Johnson of Washington last year introduced bill giving Secretary such authority and advises that bill is in good position.

Riggs, Governor."

and also that no copy of the Judge's letter to yourself was included with the other copies of correspondence sent to me. I have taken the liberty of making a copy of the Judge's letter to you under date of December 30th, and am returning herewith all the papers sent to you by Judge Brown.

In the correspondence had with Judge Brown by me permit me to call attention to the following paragraph:

(To Judge Brown) ²

"Portland April 15, 1917

"You will note what the Superintendent of the State Asylum with its 1400 insane persons has to say on this subject (the reception and mixing of the criminal insane with the other inmates of a hospital for mental patients) on page 48 of the Report, which is the cry of protest everywhere, a protest made especially for the welfare of the remaining patients. The fact appears to be in some of these cases the officers of the Department of Justice have been at their wits end to know what to do with an incorrigible and have taken the Morningside route to get them out of the territory. Here they are our greatest mischief makers, sane or insane they stir up strife. They embarrass ourselves and Interior Department by correspondence from other patients and themselves. They organize break outs. They compel us to keep patients from outside parole of advantage to the patients and the peace and the comfort of the institution, through seditious and evil arguments disseminated among a class of people otherwise pursuing a contented course toward recovery if free from such influences. They advise the patients to refrain from exercise and work, moderate and kindly though the requirements at Morningside are, under direction of the Interior Department."

H. W. C."

Again emphasizing the foregoing statement let me concur in the request of Judge Brown in his letter to you of December 30th, 1920 in which I quote him:

"I respectfully urge that immediate steps be taken to remedy so outrageous a situation."

As to the patients referred to in the voluminous correspondence, I might say that Walter Stoker had again recovered and we were planning upon his return to Alaska into the charge of the Judge subject to the approval of the Department when he eloped, since when we have heard nothing from him. His elopement was on October 13, 1917. Being an eloping patient with an indictment hanging over him in Alaska he did not return there. It is course not my province to inquire, although I may wonder, as to what Judge Brown would have done with this man then sane, although cleared of the criminal charge on account of insanity, had he been returned to Alaska. As to Peter Canavera, I do not consider him in the criminal insane class at all. I do not know what the facts are but Canavera stated he owned some mining property adjoining the Kennicott Mining property, and that as he could get no satisfaction from the Courts in the matter he blew up a water pipe belonging to such company which crossed his property without permission.

Much more could be said as to both these patients, but I feel that to do so would detract from the real issue involved which is the provision of quarters outside of Morningside for the care of the criminal insane of Alaska, in which I sincerely

and earnestly ^{am} cooperating with all others seeking this important attainment.

Congressman Johnson with whom I have conferred tells me that there is no possibility, due to the jam in the Senate, of getting his bill, which is H.R. 14072 into law during the present session of Congress. Congressman Johnson is very earnestly interested in this measure and feels ~~he~~ sure that he will be able to get this bill through during the next session of Congress. In the effort for such action the entire delegation from the State of Oregon and especially Congressman McArthur from Portland will heartily cooperate. In fact Mr. McArthur before Governor Riggs had given me the facts in the case, had already taken up the question with the Chairman of the Committee on Judiciary Mr. Volstead, who had promised him favorable action at the very first promising moment.

I am enclosing you herewith a copy of the Bill.

For some time the writer has been trying to arrange some temporary relief in this distressing matter with one of the state institutions in our section of the country. The files of the Department as well as the copies of letters enclosed by Judge Brown in the present instance will show that we made a strong effort to turn Stoker to Steillacom where in the State Asylum he formerly was a patient, and that in the end we only took Stoker under protest.

In the recent commitment to our institution of one Patrick J. Shannahan the criminal character of this man was so pronounced that, although I was on my way to Washington when he was received, I took the question up by wire and letter with the Board of control of the State of Oregon and was able to obtain a permit from such Board to transfer Shannahan from Morningside to the Criminal Wards at the State Asylum at Salem, Oregon, as approved by the Honorable Secretary of the Interior, in your favor of January 7, 1921. I am also informed that the courtesy of the State Board of Control of Oregon, much appreciated by me, would be extended to one or two other patients. A copy of all the correspondence in this case is in the files of your Department, and a copy also was forwarded to Governor Thomas Riggs at Juneau. This arrangement relieved the situation very greatly for the time being and until the law desired can be passed. I am making a special effort and shall continue so to do in this matter until Congressional relief shall have been attained.

Very respectfully,

Henry H. K. So Coe

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

DISTRICT COURT,
DISTRICT OF ALASKA, THIRD DIVISION,
JUDGE'S CHAMBERS,

VALDEZ. December 30, 1920.

RECEIVED
FEB 12 1921
U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

9-7-18
Grove

Hon. John Barton Payne,

Secretary of the Interior, Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

Knowing your deserved reputation for prompt and decisive action I earnestly call your attention to a matter of most grave importance to the safety and even lives of some Alaskans.

The insane from Alaska are kept at a place designated by you in accordance with the Act of February 6, 1909, 35 Stats. at Large, page 601, Sec. 7. Dangerous and even homicidal maniacs have been permitted to escape from the place selected by you (Morningside, Oregon) shortly after being placed there.

I enclose copy of the correspondence relative to this matter, from which you will see that I have used every endeavor to bring about a change but with no avail whatever. The Peter Canavera referred to in my letter of May 14, 1920 to the Attorney-General as having been committed to the Morningside asylum in April, 1919 was discharged as cured in November, 1919; immediately came to Alaska, went to the Kennecott mining property and dynamited their main pipe line, conveying water necessary for the mines and mills; was again adjudged insane and was returned to said Morningside hospital about the first of June of this year. Having heard a rumor that he had either been discharged or escaped again, I wired the superintendent at Morningside and have just received the following cable:

"Peter Canavera eloped from Morningside June 5, 1920"
Which is a very few days after he was received there again.

People up here are now in fear of his return and of further maniacal demonstrations.

I respectfully urge that immediate steps be taken to remedy so outrageous a situation.

Very respectfully,

Fred W. Brown
District Judge.

Feb 12/21
Letter to Judge Brown

FEB 12 1921 Answered