

2705 S. W. English Court,
Portland 1, Oregon,
February 19, 1955.

Hon. Wm. C. Strand, Director,
Office of Territories,
U. S. Interior Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Strand:

You no doubt have a copy of a Coe letter to me dated February 16, 1955. I trust that you recognize the absurdity of it. To me it is amusing. This is young Coe's reaction to having found out somehow that I asked someone to cut a couple articles out of old used newspapers that were lying around on the ward for me by way of salvaging the articles before the papers went to the incinerator. I think what really got his goat is what I might have wanted them for and whom I might have sent them to. I do not know that any of the papers from which I got clippings even belonged to Coe or the "hospital" and care less. Some employees and patients buy their own papers and the clippings which I got could just as well have come from some of those as any that Coe might have paid for if he did as he claims. I did not know that he bought any papers for the wards and do not know or am not sure now that he does beyond his claim. Everybody was interested in those articles and everybody was cutting them out. I am surprised that I even managed to get a couple. Now Coe would like to claim that I got them all. I doubt if I would want a side of their beef. It is the cheapest grade which the market can provide. In former times I have been asked to take home a few fresh vegetables or fruit in season. The story on Dr. Wietz is that he took a pint of cream home one day, but that is not the reason why he was asked to resign. He did not agree medically with Dr. Thompson most of the time and Dr. Thompson could'nt take it. Some people think that Dr. Wietz was usually right. I was also asked to have our laundry done here a long time ago. Now and then my wife has sent a few rough pieces along. Everybody else gets their laundry done here. After all, who does the work? The best of the food that comes in here goes to Thompson's and Lazelle's houses. I know that I am not entitled to anything and do not expect anything from here, but again, the patients do all the work in connection with everything that is produced or done here. Wayne Coe did not write that letter. Henry Coe did and on my copy Mrs. Mickelson signed Wyne Coe's name and initialed it. Wayne Coe was not even around on that day and has not been around since. Most of the stuff that has been going out of here lately has been Henry Coe's productions. What I was supposed to see I have gotten copies or originals of. I have been told that plenty goes out that I do not know about and do not see. I have also been told that it is a mess of lies and slander. It might also interest you to know that even though the letter was written on Wednesday and your copy went out on that day, mine was not put on my desk until Friday afternoon. That made it possible for your copy to reach you before I got mine. That is another trick of their's. How childish, petty and cheap can people get? How much longer will the Government have to do business with people like this?

With best wishes and personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

A. F. Keller

George F. Keller, M. D.

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February 16, 1955

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Dr. George F. Keller
Medical Officer
U. S. Department of the Interior
c/o Morningside Hospital
Portland 16, Oregon

Dear Doctor Keller:

The other day one of the local papers carried a story of a bill before the Congress which is of great interest to us. We wanted to have several copies of this story and, as the hospital takes about ten newspapers, felt that we would find enough here. We were surprised, however, that this particular article had been cut out of all the hospital's papers. Inquiry disclosed you had called one of our employees and requested that he cut out and place on your desk whatever copies he could get. Apart from the inconvenience of being denied the use of our property, we feel that this action of yours was improper.

It may seem that this is a trivial issue. We feel, however, that it is rather a small example of two very important principles. First of all, the hospital's property is not yours to dispose of as you wish. Common courtesy would dictate your asking, rather than taking, which is embarrassing to all who watch. Certainly we cannot allow this cavalier disregard of property, particularly in the high place such as that which you occupy. Such an example, if generally followed, would lead only to chaos. You know, of course, we would have been happy to give you enough copies, but we can't tolerate anything being taken without our being consulted.

This would, of course, be equally true if the property taken had belonged to individual employees, not the hospital.

The second principle is one which has been more trouble in the hospital situation than the first has been. This is the position in which such a request from you puts the employee involved. A request from a person in your position is

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tantamount to an order to an employee, just as would be "I would like you to get me the file on Blank, Miss Smith." An employee asked to take something for your use is being put in the position of joining in converting property which it is his normal duty to protect. He finds himself in the unfortunate position of having either to refuse your request and incur your wrath or to comply and incur the displeasure of his employer.

The difference is only in degree between this instance and one of, say, going to the cook and requesting him to put a side of beef in your car. You will recall that with a recent member of our own professional staff, this sort of impropriety greatly influenced our decision to request his resignation. We would like to have the same discretion from you as we demand from our own employees.

When Henry discussed this with you this morning, you did not appreciate the principles involved. Your final word was, "I asked for them, I got them, and that's that. That satisfies me". I am not so satisfied.

We will have to request that you consistently refrain from taking liberties with hospital property, no matter how insignificant each individual item may seem.

Sincerely,

Wayne W. Coe

cc Director, Office of Territory

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