

4004 S. E. Pine Street,
Portland 15, Oregon.
March 16th, 1949.

Hon. James P. Davis, Director,
Division of Territories and Island Possessions,
United States Interior Department,
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Sir:

I am sorry that my letter and report of the 13th was so lengthy. In order to make it factual it became necessary to make it somewhat personal and even rather circumstantial. As I said in my last communication, things happen so fast and ideas pop so prolifically that it is hard to keep up with them and before one can get a document completed, revision is already in order. It so happened that since Monday morning a new idea has evolved. It consists of this. Mr. Coe and Dr. Thompson thought up a plan whereby the medical student is supposed to recruit a group of medical students who during their spring vacation next week are to come out and do those annual physical examinations and urinalyses on all the patients in the hospital who have not had one during 1949. Also and for the first time they are to do a blood count on all the patients in the hospital. I have no idea how much this mass production job is supposed to cost. Certainly it will be quantity, but I would not want to vouch for or guarantee the quality. However, it will probably be better this way than not at all.

Several other little things skipped my mind while I was writing the other day and I will try to pick them up now. Several of the wards could use more attendants both day and night. They have usually run short on ward help even without the additional ones which are needed. Recently a patient died in whom it was not noted that he had a massive tumor of the liver until he got along to the dying stage. Not that it would have made much difference in the final outcome, but a physical examination sooner would undoubtedly have picked up the condition and probably influenced the handling of the patient some. It has also come to my attention yesterday that soon after my departure two women attendants with the help of at least three women patients beat a woman patient with a strap, choked her with a towel, kicked her in the back and otherwise bruised her about the arms, legs and body so that she was not able to get out of bed for several days or go to meals. The tip came to me over the telephone from the outside. The patients are afraid to talk and the employees will not talk. However, a patient who is about to be discharged and who saw it told me that is what happened and that she was afraid that they were going to kill her (the patient who was beaten). I am wondering if at this late date I should take it up with the district attorney. I know who the two attendants in the case are. Reporting to the district attorney at this time in this case would be like notifying the coroner at this time in another case. The neighbors are also calling in complaining about the odors coming from the piggery. I am reminded of not being able to get along with stenographers. It would be interesting to check this with Mrs. T. L. Weaver, 4633 N. E. Halsey and Mrs. S. E. Bailey, 10320 S. E. Raymond, both of Portland, Oregon. They have been the two part time stenographers besides the incumbent. It was from

one or both of the two former that I learned that they thought that Miss Hagna was dictating them letters which should have come to my attention and which they thought I should have answered, and who were also told by her not to pay any attention to me because nobody would back me up anyway. The incumbent, while not too bad and not too difficult to get along with and who is more serious and conscientious than efficient or accurate knows where her bread is buttered. During the recent rush, she recruited another married lady friend of hers to help her with some of the ordinary clerical work, such as filing and checking, on a part time basis, and still has her around now and then, usually on Saturday, for what I wouldn't know. The latter is not even able to type, to say nothing of taking dictation. She would not be of much use to me. Returning to Miss Hagna, I am reminded that she uses the toilet and wash basin in the lavatory for employees and visitors. I have not had the temerity to inquire how her dishes and trays are sterilized on their way to and from the kitchen. That could be extended to the two tuberculosis wards with reference to the same thing.

I have also noticed that Dr. Thompson in the few follow-up notes which he has written so far is always careful to state that he concurs in the psychiatric diagnoses made by either Dr. Haskins or me. Distance is a great handicap in the paroling of patients. Mr. Coe has a small opinion of psychotherapeutic work. This perhaps for quite practical reasons. Illness and death notices are not sent out by the company. Death notices are sent by the sub-contracting undertaker.


I think that Mr. Coe's proposal that I show him everything which I might want to write to you is preposterous. In fact, a good job has been done along those lines with everything which I have ever dictated to one of their stenographers. They have told me that they had been instructed by Miss Hagna never to seal an envelope before she had read the letter and sometimes even read them over their shoulder., while they were writing them. Of course, I have written you from the privacy of my home, as I am doing now. With your permission and backing I would like to be free to put some of my recommendations or suggestions to Mr. Coe in writing and send you a copy each time. Then I would be on record. He is a hard man to talk to, because he likes to do all the talking. He does not care to listen or discuss things that he does not care to talk about. He prefers to formulate his own plans and carry out his own ideas. At best he might discuss things with his intimates. Anything from anyone like me would be "somebody trying to tell him how to run his business" and come under the heading of criticizing or griping. Nobody is going to tell him how to run his business or how patients should be cared for and treated or how a hospital should be run. From where he is looking I am not supposed to ask any questions or say anything, see, hear or know anything. In fact, he has practically told me so. No government man would be wanted around here. He might tell you that they could do a better job without. All he needs is a free hand and blank check. I believe that some time the contract could be revised to include more detailed specifications. Some medical agency might well be consulted when that takes place.

In spite of all, things have settled down and are levelling off and some progress is being made. Everything is quite congenial and sociable and fairly cooperative. When one has to practically live and work in the same room with people and eat lunch with them this is of course very desirable. It may be only the lull before the storm, however. I think when Mr. Coe comes to Washington he will try to take care of everything his way, and particularly me. I am not at all discouraged, in fact, I am quite optimistic.

I always try to maintain a sense of humor, and do not feel nearly as sad as the tone and subject matter of my letters might suggest. I have a lot of faith in the future and believe that we have begun to render better care and treatment to the Alaska patients than they have ever had before.

Again, I will appreciate your continued confidence and support in my future endeavors. Thanking you for your interest and cooperation, I am

Sincerely yours,



G. F. Keller, M. D.

Medical Supervisor.