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The Morning Call

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THE CITY'S HEALTH

The Report of the Board of Health
to City Councils.

THE NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS

**A Hospital for People Suffering From
Contagious Diseases Needed—
Officer Dickenshied's Re-
port in Full.**

The Board of Health presented its annual report to Councils last evening. Following is an abstract of it:

* * * During the past year the board had little difficulty in enforcing the ordinances and rules, and, although the number of nuisances complained of has been large, the citizens, with a few exceptions, have shown a disposition to lend their assistance in abating the same. In only three instances was it necessary to resort to law to secure the enforcement of the ordinances and rules. The physicians, clergymen and undertakers aided cheerfully in recording the vital statistics. * * *

"The quarantine rule * * * greatly assisted us in checking the epidemic of diphtheria. * * * We believe the results obtained have fully justified the enforcement of this rule."

The board then refers to the necessity of a hospital for contagious diseases. The report goes on: "We believe that such an institution is an absolute necessity. We believe that a hospital large enough for all ordinary emergencies can be constructed and equipped at a sum not exceeding \$3000 and that the expense of maintaining the same, when not in use, would be very small, probably not more than \$500 per year. When an epidemic occurs or should cases of contagious diseases occur in our hotels or boarding houses or in the houses of citizens who could not properly care for such cases we could at once have them removed to the hospital." * * *

The garbage question is also considered and the board believes that the erection of a garbage crematory is necessary and recommends the establishment of one. A complete system of sewerage is necessary for the maintenance of health and the protection of the water supply. The present system of sinks and cesspools is very dangerous and the board believes that it is a more frequent source of disease than is supposed. As a sewerage system will cost a great amount of money and the financial condition of the treasury will not permit of its establishment at once, the work will have to be done gradually until the entire system is complete. In conclusion, the report says: "We believe that the subject should be very carefully considered and that a definite plan and system be adopted; that Councils, from year to year, appropriate a sufficient sum of money to complete a part of the work in that part of the city which requires it most and in this manner gradually develop the system until the whole city is carefully drained."

The report is signed by Silas A. Lentz, H. H. Herbst, James F. Gallagher, John L. Moyer and C. S. Martin.

Following is the report of Health Officer E. H. Dickonshied, which was presented to the Board of Health on Monday evening and submitted to Councils last evening:
To the Board of Health of the city of Allentown.

GENTLEMEN:—In submitting my first annual report, I am gratified to be able to state that our community has continued to enjoy, during the past year, reasonable freedom from any serious epidemic. During the early part of the past summer, the board had pamphlets printed, which gave directions for the care of infants. These were distributed to all families having children under two years of age. With an increased population, all things being equal, a larger number of deaths caused by cholera infantum might naturally be expected. On the contrary, there have been 33 per cent. less deaths than last year. This proves that the public has taken advantage of the information given.

During the summer months your attention was called to the number of typhoid fever cases scattered about the city. These were most numerous in the vicinity of Chew and Jordan streets. Last July an inspection was made on Chew, Jordan, Oak and Elliger streets, where the greatest number of cases were. Two-thirds of those who were in the habit of drinking Elliger spring water were taken sick with typhoid fever. This spring is no doubt polluted by the cesspools on Jordan street. Our city water supply was examined and found pure. Also the milk supply of all families having typhoid fever was reported and found not to be at fault. A cause for many of our cases in other parts of the city may be found in the patient's own home owing to defective plumbing put into houses either through ignorance or a desire to have all the modern conveniences for as small a cost as possible. The Master Plumbers' Association is an organization which is taking steps to remedy this evil and should be encouraged in every manner possible, as only the best of plumbing should be allowed in our houses.

Considering the climatic conditions and the poor sanitary arrangements of a great many of our houses. It is surprising that we did not have a larger number of typhoid cases.

We had no sooner commenced to see less of typhoid fever than we had diphtheria. By the fifteenth of September it became evident that some more stringent measures were necessary. A rule was then passed requiring all infected houses to be quarantined. This was a hardship for the quarantined families, but there is no doubt but that it has lessened the number of cases we otherwise would have had under the old system.

Everything possible under the circumstances has been done to relieve the suffering and inconvenience caused by the new regulations.

Our experience this year in dealing with diphtheria and scarlet fever involving, as it did, not only the quarantining of every house where cases of those diseases existed, but also, in many of the cases, the supporting of whole families while thus in quarantine, has demonstrated that it would be better in every way for the city to own a suitable building to which all such cases could be at once removed for treatment. The cost of such a building and the maintenance of it would be very small in comparison to the benefits derived.

SANITARY INSPECTION.

On the 7th of October you appointed a Sanitary Inspector. This step was not taken until the work of the department required it. Since we have had an Inspector, it has been demonstrated that, while in performance of quarantine duties,

he has caused the abatement of numerous nuisances that otherwise would not have reached the board. Owing to the increased population of the city, it has become impossible for the Health Officer to properly investigate and compel the abatement of all nuisances reported to this department. If the office of Sanitary Inspector was made a permanent one the work of the department could be performed in a more satisfactory manner.

SEWERAGE.

The Penn street sewer has improved that neighborhood very much. The system should be extended throughout the city. It would be a protection to the water supply. Which, under the present system, is almost certain to become polluted sooner or later.

GARBAGE SYSTEM.

With the collection very little fault can be found, but it is disposed of in a very crude manner. It is dumped on some field outside of the city limits and plowed under. This has been a cause of complaint all summer on account of the stench arising from it. We have no right to subject people living in the surrounding country to anything we would not tolerate in our own midst. To remedy this a garbage crematory should be built.

In conclusion, I would say that if we had a building in which contagious diseases could be isolated and treated, complete sewerage systems and garbage crematory and permanently paved streets we would be going in the right direction towards becoming a model city.

To this has been appended a number of tables giving the vital statistics, the houses quarantined and the nuisances abated. Thanking you for your uniform kindness during the past year, I am

Respectfully,

E. H. DICKENSHED,
Health Officer.

He also reported: 521 deaths, 805 births, 238 marriages, 274 cases diphtheria reported, 40 cases measles, 13 mumps, 49 scarlet fever, 337 typhoid fever, 9 chicken pox. In 1895 the death rate is 14 31-35; last year 14½.