

Health Department report- Possible contagious disease hospital

The Morning Call

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THE HEALTH OF THE CITY

It Received Much Attention From
the Mayor in His Message.

DR. CAWLEY'S SUGGESTIONS

They Are Fully Endorsed by His
Honor—Allentown Lost an Important
Industry Because of a
Lack of Sewerage System.

In his annual message Mayor Schadt spoke as follows in reference to the health department:

"Dr. M. F. Cawley, our efficient health officer, under date of December 21, says: 'I am of the opinion, however, that we have had less cases of contagious diseases, and less typhoid fever than last year. We have but one case quarantined at present. The water supply seems to have been of good quality, or we would have had more cases of sickness of water-born origin. We have had 176 families quarantined on account of contagious diseases. More than five thousand inspections have been made on account of nuisances and about the same number of nuisances have been abated through this department. We have not made a complete house-to-house inspection this year, though a large part of the city was closely inspected. The disposal of sewage and garbage is most primitive, the former seriously threatening our present water supply. For the want of activity in this direction our present invaluable and delightful water supply may be ruined. Some parts of the city are in a filthy and unsanitary condition owing to the want of a sewerage system. The soil is of such a nature that no receptacle for it can be made, nor is there any means of carrying it off. The time has come to remedy this; there is one or more sewers that carry house sewage into the public streams, which is clearly a violation of the law, as well as neighborly kindness. It would be well for this department to establish a bacteriological laboratory, and

pay more attention to milk inspection and analysis. A contagious disease hospital could be established by councils and conducted by the Allentown Hospital Association without much expense.'

"I concur most heartily in Dr. Cawley's opinion that the time has come for this city to adopt some sanitary system for the disposal of house sewage. For a century the filth of Allentown has been deposited in twelve-foot earth closets or drained into crevices in the earth, called sinks, its course in which no man can trace, but where in all human probability it lies, a reeking mass of corruption, which in due course of time will develop and become the cause of contagious diseases, to the virulence of whose onslaught thousands of our people may become victims. So long as our city does not have a sewerage system it will lack one of the points in regard to which inquiry is first made by the stranger intending to settle with us. To my positive personal knowledge, the owner of the City button works, an industry which promised employment to hundreds of our people and which was established here at an expenditure of many thousand dollars, left our city because we had no proper sewerage and because he feared the corruption lying below the surface and its possible effect upon his children, the absence of a sewerage system caused him to give up his business here and return to New York city, from which he had come with his family. I am glad to observe that thoughtful men are beginning to appreciate the importance of proper sewerage, and that you on November 8th, appointed a commission consisting of the mayor, C. W. Laros, chairman of select council; C. Frank Stahler, chairman of common council; George Roth, chairman of sanitary committee; James F. Gallagher, chairman of the board of health; J. Howard Martz, city engineer, and Dr. M. F. Cawley, health officer, to gather data relative to the establishment of a system of house sewerage, the probable cost of its construction and operation, the rentals to be paid by property owners, and to report all information gathered with the most feasible plan for sewerage. The commission is now engaged in the work of collecting this information and it will not be proper

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plaints made were that the stench arising from these garbage and rubbish heaps rendered the air almost unbearable at times. The regulations in brief required permission from the owner to be first obtained before any dumping of matter; the separation of ground

and ashes from oyster shells, decaying vegetable matter, flesh or bones; the burning of all paper and rubbish of a combustible nature; the burying of all vegetable and animal matter at least eighteen inches beneath the surface, and the spreading of ground, rubbish, or clean ashes, evenly. These regulations have in the main been observed and the complaints have accordingly ceased.

"The removal of ashes and garbage should be carried on by the city either under contract, or through its highway department, and I recommend the adoption of an ordinance to this effect.

"The city's garbage and the night soil removed from cesspools are at present dumped upon Kline's Island, and there exposed to sun, air and rain, whose beneficent influences are expected in the course of time to change it into a valuable fertilizer. During the process of slow transformation, every gentle southern breeze or rain-laden eastern wind wafts the sickening odors or corruption, arising from the noisome garbage heaps, into the lungs of our patient citizens in the lower wards. Fire is one of nature's two great purifiers. All the garbage should be incinerated, and for that purpose I recommend the establishment and maintenance of a garbage crematory, upon the most modern lines."