

December 31, 1908.

Gentlemen:

Herewith is submitted the customary annual report of this department for the year ended December 31st, 1908.

The following table shows the number of deaths and the death rate per one thousand population according to the annual reports since the beginning of the year 1900:

Year	Pop.	Total No. of deaths	Per. 1,000 Pop.
1900	90,426	909	10.05
1901	100,000	1143	11.43
1902	110,000	1151	10.01
1903	125,000	1240	9.89
1904	130,000	1351	9.61
1905	141,000	1454	9.05
1906	175,000	1487	8.49
1907	225,000	1660	6.25
1908	290,000	1739	7.16

This continuously low death rate is largely due to the pure water supply, to the mild and fostering climate, and to the comparative absence of poverty and overcrowding that so increases the mortality in larger and older cities, supplemented by such auxiliaries as hospital service, quarantine, vaccination, antitoxin, disinfection, ambulance

#2.

service and to the school and market inspection. With a proper garbage gathering and incinerating system and adequate milk supervision, the death rate might fall still lower.

There were                      births reported during the year 1908, an increase of                      over last year. These returns are undoubtedly incomplete, as physicians frequently forget to report and cases cared for by midwives are generally not reported.

The contagious disease reports are also probably incomplete and inaccurate.

The death reports may be relied upon as covering that part of the vital statistics accurately. During the year 1907 there were 1880 deaths. This year (1908) there were 1789 deaths reported. Not only has the death rate been lowered this year but the actual number of deaths are seventy-one less than last year notwithstanding the increased population. Of the 1789 persons whose deaths are recorded here, 180 were brought to the city from other places for      medical or operative treatment.

The appropriations for the maintenance of this department are very low as compared with the appropriations for the same departments of other cities of Portland's class. This department expended \$19,843.27 during the year 1908. The expenditures of this department have been increased over last year by the maintenance of a large number of smallpox patients due to the prevalence of that disease throughout the country and to the support of indigent families in quarantine for different contagious diseases; to the very liberal use of disinfectants after smallpox, diphtheria and other infectious diseases; to the taking of cultures in diphtheria cases and the employment of a bacteriologist to examine the same, for the purpose of detecting and preventing the spread of this disease; to the ambulance service which makes it possible for accident cases to reach the hospital without riding in the police patrol wagon and for persons suffering from contagious diseases such as diphtheria and meningitis to reach the Sanitorium without further endangering their lives by long waiting or by rough usage such as was unavoidable

cases resulted from this disease  
#3. The public is beginning to realize the danger from tuberculosis  
when patients were conveyed in the express wagon that this city provided prior to June 1st, 1906. The ambulance service has also largely done away with the use of public carriages which were often resorted to in desperation by persons suffering from contagious diseases and left infected for the use of the next occupant. Also, to the employment of public school inspectors who have detected cases of smallpox, diphtheria and scarlet fever in the schools, besides many minor ailments and hundreds of cases of common lice and who have made impossible such another occurrence as the epidemic of measles which scourged the city schools in the earlier months of 1906 when over twelve hundred cases were reported, the month of May showing 365 cases with five deaths. The expenses of the laboratory for the examination of rats and rat bounty were also defrayed out of this amount.

#### TUBERCULOSIS:

This is by far the most important and dreadful disease with which we have to contend. Its prevention is difficult <sup>and</sup> on account of its chronic nature the care of indigent cases very expensive. 174 deaths resulted from this disease during the year.

The public is beginning to realize the danger from tuberculosis and some work is being done by individuals and organizations for its care and prevention. The department is frequently called upon to fumigate rooms after the departure of patients sick with tuberculosis and houses are fumigated after deaths from this disease. There is a philanthropic movement on foot to establish a dispensary in the city for tubercular patients which should be encouraged and helped by this department. Reports of all verified cases of tuberculosis should be insisted upon so that houses and rooms may be disinfected after the departure of such patients.

## PNEUMONIA:

Next to tuberculosis this has been the most fatal disease of the year. During the year 1907 there were 130 deaths from pneumonia. This year (1908) 145 deaths have resulted from it.

## TYPHOID FEVER:

Many of the 244 cases of typhoid fever reported were contracted while away on vacations or during trips out of the city. Sixty-nine of these patients were non-residents brought to the city for treatment. There were 40 deaths this year from this disease. Last year (1907) 36 deaths resulted from it.

A large percentage of the cases which developed in the city doubtless originated from infected milk shipped from outlying districts. During the month of August a camp located on the Columbia Slough and using Columbia Slough water reported several cases of this disease. There are a great many dairies in this vicinity and with infected water so near the infection <sup>of milk</sup> might easily follow. Such infected milk being delivered to and in turn distributed by the creameries of the city, the source of these typhoid cases could never be traced. These sources of danger and death can only be reached by adequate dairy regulation and inspection.

## DIPHTHERIA:

The use of the culture as a means of diagnosing diphtheria is becoming more general and as a result reports are more complete. Where children remain away from school on account of sore throats cultures are taken before such children are permitted to return. Many of these cultures have given positive returns.

Several deaths following a diagnosis of "croup" have been investigated and found to be diphtheria. In these cases other children exposed have been immunized and cultures taken from their throats. Many of these cultures have also been positive.

CEREBRO-SPINAL MENINGITIS:

This disease became epidemic in this city during the earlier months of 1907, and the city has not been entirely free from it since that time. There have been fifteen deaths from this cause during 1908.

SMALLPOX:

The prevalence of this disease in a very mild form has been a great burden to this department during the entire year. Where a case is reported it is often found that there have been other cases so mild that the people infected have attended their work during the course of the disease.

In cases where physicians are called it is usually at the beginning of the disease and the diagnosis is "La Grippe." Later, when the patient is feeling so well that he is at work, perhaps less than a half dozen pustules appear. A case developed recently at the Portland Women's Union which was diagnosed as "stomach trouble" and treated as such for ten days by a member of our State Board of Medical Examiners. Two cases developed from this exposure among the unvaccinated boarders.

Other cities along the Coast have been having similar trouble with this disease. The vaccination of school children has been strictly enforced in some of these cities. An effort to enforce the State Law requiring school children to be vaccinated is being resisted in Seattle and there is a test case now pending the decision of the Supreme Court of the State of Washington.

Vaccination is being evaded in many of the schools of this city for the reason that the State Law provides for vaccination during an epidemic of smallpox only.

Such is the protection afforded by this precaution that the presence of a vaccination scar is almost proof that an eruption is not smallpox.

Several months ago this department addressed a circular letter to all the larger laundries and many of the large business houses of the city urging the enforcement of vaccination among employees. From two firms only have we received assurance that these instructions have been followed and these firms have experienced the inconvenience of the disease. Vaccination is a protection of which every person and firm may take advantage. Those who neglect this precaution should not complain if they find themselves in quarantine.

During the year 134 persons were treated and maintained at the smallpox hospital. About 99 per cent of expense incurred through this disease is directly chargeable to the unvaccinated.

#### SCARLET FEVER AND MEASLES:

For several years past the number of scarlet fever cases have been few and this malady has given but little trouble during the year, so there must be a large crop of susceptibles ready for the reaper at present. During the closing weeks of the year cases of this disease developed in a certain district. The school in this district has been repeatedly inspected since that time and at this writing the inspector reports the finding of a case in school in the scaling stage. This is the most contagious period of the disease.

In 1906 measles swept through the schools of the city. In 1907 great inconvenience was suffered from mumps. To these diseases there are, therefore, a great many immunes but no such immunity exists in regard to scarlet fever.

#### BUBONIC PLAGUE:

During the later months of the year 1907 and the earlier months of 1908 every city along the Pacific Coast was in imminent danger from bubonic plague. Fortunately no cases developed in Portland. No new cases have been reported from any of the Pacific Coast cities of late. The disease is undoubtedly still in existence and may break out again at any time. Being primarily a disease of animals, rodents particularly,

it is well nigh impossible to secure accurate information concerning it.

#### SCHOOL INSPECTION:

While this department was aware of the great need of school inspection the returns are far more important than was anticipated. Cases of smallpox, diphtheria, scarlet fever, chickenpox and whooping cough have been found and excluded from the schools. There were also many cases of itch and other contagious skin diseases besides a large number of non-contagious cases, many of which have been remedied. There were 359 children with pediculosis (lice). Most of these cases have been cleaned up but in visiting the homes of some of these children the nurse finds it almost impossible to remedy the trouble for the reason that the other members of the families to which they belong have vermin.

Had these school inspections been in effect during the earlier months of the year the epidemic of smallpox which occurred in one of the school districts would unquestionably have been avoided and the city saved great expense and inconvenience thereby.

The following is a resolution passed by the Multnomah Teachers' Institute at their last meeting:

"Whereas; medical inspection in schools has been systematically undertaken in Portland this year for the first time, and whereas such inspection tends to remove the danger of exposure to contagious diseases as well as to direct the attention of parents to physical disabilities of their children which might have escaped their notice and which prevents the child's best advancement in school, Be it Resolved, that we favor a systematic inspection by skilled medical inspectors.

C. H. Higgins, Ch."

While sundry special work with special employees has been authorized under the direction of the Health Board during the past eighteen months the general staff of this department has not been increased for the past six years or more.

In January 1903 the Health Board appointed three physicians for the work of this department and with the exception of a few months the same number have been in the service ever since. Three employees

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are still doing this work, although the remarkable growth of the city has increased the duties many fold.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The ambulance service is prompt and efficient. It has been of great value to the sick and injured of the city and in the interests of suffering humanity it is to be hoped that before long an emergency ward, surgical dressing room and certain "first aid" conveniences may be maintained in connection with the police station.

The need of a chemical laboratory is increasing and will continue to increase with the growth of the city. Under present conditions it is impossible to obtain an analysis of foods suspected of being impure or adulterated. Cold storage foods embalmed in their own juices and several others besides, freezine hamburger steaks and chemically preserved oysters, etc., are fairly safe from detection and will continue to be so until the city has a chemist.

Most of the "nuisance" complaints to this office arise from the careless and improper keeping of animals within the city limits. To minimize the nuisance to themselves, many people place their stables, barns, chicken coops and so forth on the remotest corner of their lots, which cheerful arrangement often brings them directly under the windows of their neighbors who very justly protest.

An ordinance providing for proper drainage and disposition of manure from stables is badly needed. Manure piles are unsightly, offensive and a breeding place for flies. If persons maintaining stables and barns were compelled to provide manure rooms there would be fewer nuisances arising from this cause.

This department has persistently called the attention of the city to the crying need for a modern garbage collecting and incinerating system. Our lamentable condition in this respect is so well known that



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to mention it in this report is superfluous.

#### DAIRY INSPECTION:

An adequate dairy inspection is one of the most urgent needs of Portland. Dairymen should be licensed to do business in the city and the issuance of such license should depend upon the conditions under which milk is produced. Some of the creameries in the city make an effort to supply clean milk; but the fault is with the dairies and must be corrected there.

Without inspection, the "sanitary" milk bottle is a farce. The label "sanitary" guarantees nothing. Such a bottle may have been sterilized before filling, or it may have been left beside the bedside of a person with an infectious disease, used as a drinking cup, collected, rinsed out, and passed along to the next customer with a fresh "sanitary" label attached.