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BIOLOGICAL LIBRARY

ARMY MEDICAL LIBRARY NEEDS NEW BUILDING

SOMEWHAT apart from the row of magnificent new government offices in the nation's capital stands a rather decrepit old red brick building. To its dingy halls come the world's foremost medical scholars. They come to consult and examine medico-literary treasures that can be found nowhere else. They come to delve into the history and tradition of medicine, to search for valuable information that will contribute to human welfare. And in seeking and finding this material, they gain not merely knowledge, but inspiration.

In this venerable structure, erected in 1887, is housed the Army Medical Library and Museum. Here is the largest collection of medical books in existence, nearly a million volumes. Here are 450 of the only 600 known medical incunabula, including more first editions than in any other library. Here are ancient documents, one dating from 1467, and numerous rare manuscripts of inestimable value.

This priceless collection of medical literature deserves better quarters. So inadequate is the present building that many books must be stored in the basement. Manuscripts, records, and books that are irreplaceable are exposed to the danger of fire and the hazards of dust, dirt, and decay.

In 1919 a site for a new building for this notable library and museum was acquired on the grounds of the Army Medical Center in Washington. Despite numerous requests and recommendations, Congress has never seen fit to make the necessary appropriation for a suitable edifice. At the last session of Congress, a building costing $3,750,000 was authorized, but no funds were actually appropriated for the purpose.

This relatively modest appropriation must be made by the present Congress. When the War Department has requested the funds, if it has not already done so, every physician and sanitarian should actively support this important measure.

The Army Medical Library and its indispensable *Index* were once characterized by the late Dr. William H. Welch as America's greatest contribution to medical science. Although established in 1836, the development of this library and of its outstanding services were due largely to the genius of Dr. John Shaw

Billings, one of the founders and early presidents of the American Public Health Association.

This Association urges, therefore, favorable consideration by Congress of an adequate appropriation for the world's foremost library devoted to medicine and public health, in order that this leading scientific institution may be provided with proper facilities for its invaluable collection of medical literature, and also so that it may serve physicians, scientists, and public health workers even more efficiently than in the past.

REFERENCE

A.J.P.H.. 26:930 (Sept.), 1936.

HENRY F. VAUGHAN, DR.P.H.—AN APPRECIATION

IT is seldom that a health officer is more signally honored than was Dr. Henry F. Vaughan of Detroit at the testimonial dinner on January 12, under the auspices of the Detroit Department of Health. Dr. Vaughan has completed twenty-five years of service in the Department, first as an employee of the Division of Sanitation and, since 1918, as Commissioner of Health.

The group which participated in this recognition was significant, not only because of its size—1,050 people were assembled in the Masonic Temple for dinner—but because of the great variety of local individuals and organizations which were represented as a testimonial to the leadership of Dr. Vaughan during his quarter century of service. An illuminated chart comparing the death rates in Detroit in 1913 and 1938 was eloquent testimony to the changes which have taken place in this industrial center where for two decades and more the profession has become accustomed to look for a superlative example of public health administration. Those in attendance could not fail to note the generous credit which Dr. Vaughan gave to his colleagues for the advances which Detroit has made in its health program. It was a subtle revelation of the underlying reason for Dr. Vaughan's undisputed leadership.

Some health officers seem strangely reluctant to allow demonstrations of public approval of their services. Of course it is quite conceivable that these exhibitions might run beyond the limits of proper professional ethics; yet when a public expression is so sincere and spontaneous as was the case in Detroit, it must be conceded that it does a community good to recognize the devoted public service of all such soldiers of the common good. The Association joins with Detroit in congratulating Dr. Vaughan and his distinguished staff.

EQUINE ENCEPHALITIS IN MAN

ONE of the most interesting as well as important medical events in 1938 was the outbreak of equine encephalitis in several parts of the country, notably in New England. In Minnesota an epidemic in horses began in 1934 and the disease was very prevalent in 1937. In New England the outbreak began in Massachusetts in August, 1938. Important as this disease has been from the economic standpoint, the great interest which attaches to it is due to the fact that for the first time there was clear proof of its transmission to man. At the meeting of this Association in Kansas City a paper was read by Dr. Feemster,[1]