

SANITARY COMMISSION.

No. 21.

A RECORD

OF CERTAIN

Resolutions of the Sanitary Commission,

Passed in the Second, Third, and Fourth Sessions.

SECOND SESSION.

1. WHEREAS, instances of great suffering from the exposure of troops arriving at Washington, have come to the knowledge of the Sanitary Commission :

Resolved, That the Commission recommend to the War Department to immediately provide temporary accommodations near the railroad station at Washington, for the use of troops arriving and departing.

2. *Resolved*, That the Secretaries of the Sanitary Commission be instructed to inquire of the Secretary of the Treasury, whether some system cannot be adopted by which the soldiers can secure their wages, at their option, in gold or silver, or by allotment, to be transmitted to their families, and that they use all diligence in showing the moral bearing of such a measure on the health of the troops, and the comfort and self-respect of their households.

3. *Resolved*, That the existence of many commodious marine hospitals, now very little in use, offers a natural and ready resource for the Government in any lack of military hospital room, and that the conversion of those spare beds to military uses is suggested to the immediate consideration of the United States authorities.

4. *Resolved*, That the Resident Secretary suggest to the Government the desirableness and practicability of furnishing butter as a ration in place of its equivalent value in other articles at all places where regular and rapid communication by water or rail exists, and that the detail of a plan to this end be drawn up to accompany the suggestion.

5. *Resolved*, That Dr. Harris, Dr. Van Buren, Prof. Gibbs, and Dr. Agnew, be a committee to prepare and issue a circular letter to the

commanding and medical officers of regiments upon the subject of camp police, and that Dr. Harris be requested to procure for the letter such authorization as may be expedient from the Medical Bureau of the War Department.

THIRD SESSION.

6. *Resolved*, That a committee be appointed to call upon the Paymaster General, and ascertain from him if, under existing laws, it is practicable for soldiers generally to remit a portion of their pay in the form of checks to their families at a distance and if this is not possible, what are the objections understood to exist in the mind of the Paymaster General to the enactment of such a provision; and if it shall appear to the committee that such an arrangement is unprovided for in a proper manner, and that no sufficient objections exist to its being made, that the committee be requested to lay before the Commission the draft of a memorial to Congress on the subject. It was determined that the committee should be the committee of the whole, and it was agreed that at 1½ o'clock p. m., this day, the Commission will call in a body on the Paymaster General with this subject in hand.

7. *Resolved*, That this Commission take immediate measure, to procure the introduction of a suitable clause into the army bill, to provide for the establishment or employment of a competent cook in every company in the volunteer regiments.

8. *Resolved*, In view of the mischief done to the physical health of the soldiers of the volunteer regiments, by improvident expenditure of their pay; the wants of those dependent on them, who are in danger of becoming a public burden, and creating a vast pauper element in our cities and elsewhere; the danger of the war becoming unpopular in consequence, and the prospect of systematic private speculations in the soldiers' pay:

That the Commission earnestly recommend the passage of a law for the issue of treasury notes for the payment of volunteers, in sums of five dollars and upwards; and that each soldier and non-commissioned officer receive his pay, in whole or in part, in such treasury notes, at his option. And in case Congress should consider the above scheme impracticable, then that the Commission earnestly and most respectfully commend the subject of the mode of paying the soldiers to the consideration of Congress, and pray that it will enact such measures as may seem best for the remedy of the evils and dangers above indicated.

9. *Resolved*, That the Commission respectfully and most earnestly

recommend to Congress, as an important means of preserving the health of the volunteer regiments, and averting the danger of disease, with which all newly-organized troops are threatened, to make provision by law for the enlistment or selection, in each company, of a cook, in addition to the detail from the ranks at present provided for. That said cook receive the pay of a musician, and one ration per day, and be a non-combatant.

10. *Resolved*, That the Secretary be requested to open a complaint book, in which shall be entered all violations of the army regulations, and all other abuses reported by the agents of the Commission, or by other responsible authorities, and that such complaints be reported from time to time, in writing, to the general-in-chief.

11. *Resolved*, That the Commission respectfully suggest to General Mansfield the propriety of an order directing the commanders of forces encamped near the city of Washington, not to grant leave of absence from camp to more than one-eighth part of their command on the same day, and to give no leave under which men shall be absent from their camps after the hour of one o'clock, p. m., or of such general order as in his judgment may seem best adapted to cure the abuses and irregularities that arise from the too liberal granting of leave of absence; also, that he issue an order forbidding the sale of intoxicating drink in the city of Washington, except by hotels to their boarders, before the hour of one o'clock, p. m.

12. *Resolved*, That copies of the reports of the sanitary inspectors appointed by the Commission be communicated to the Governors of the several States to which the regiments respectively belong. It is understood that the Secretary of the Commission may exercise his discretion as to the communication of answers believed to be confidential or specially affecting the character and position of individuals.

13. *Resolved*, That Dr. Van Buren confer with the chief of the commissariat, and communicate to that department the views of this Commission on the subject of the following communication :

SANITARY COMMISSION, *July 12, 1861.*

To the COMMISSARY GENERAL :

SIR: It having come to the knowledge of the Sanitary Commission, from trustworthy sources, that the surgeons of the volunteers are unable to get the rations of the sick commuted by the commissaries, and are, therefore, unable to procure proper food for them, the Sanitary Commission respectfully request of the Commissary Department to take

such action as will secure proper attention to regulations by the commissaries, and their rights to the sick.

Respectfully,

FRED. LAW OLMSTED,

Resident Secretary.

14. On motion, it was ordered that the suggestions of the surgeon general respecting the employment of nurses, as stated in a letter from the Medical Bureau to the Secretary, be carried out by this Commission, and that Miss Dix be informed of the purpose and wish of the Commission on this subject.

15. The following action was taken upon the question of varying and commuting rations :

Whereas the company fund relied upon by the regulars, for varying their rations, is generally unavailable under the circumstances of the volunteer ; therefore it is recommended, that a larger and more varied supply of vegetable food, either fresh or desiccated, be steadily secured to the volunteers by a new regulation in their favor of the army ration ; it is also recommended, that one-eighth of a pound of butter be added to the daily ration, between the 1st of October and the 1st of May, and whenever else it is found practicable.

16. *Resolved*, That the Central Finance Committee in the city of New York, for the Sanitary Commission, be authorized to audit all bills and accounts of the treasurer of this Commission.

FOURTH SESSION.

17. *Resolved*, That the Sanitary Commission, in their endeavors to promote temperance, cleanliness, and comfort among the troops, have become convinced that the first sanitary law in camp and among soldiers is *military* discipline ; and that unless this is vigorously asserted and enforced, it is useless to attempt and impossible to effect, by any secondary means, the great end they propose—which is the health and happiness of the army.

18. *Resolved*, That looking only to the health and comfort of the troops, it is our profound conviction that any special relaxation of military discipline in favor of volunteer troops, based either upon their supposed unwillingness or inability to endure it, or upon the alleged expectation of the public, is a fallacious policy, and fraught with peril to the lives of the men and the success of the national cause ; and that, speaking in the name of the families and the communities from which the volunteers come, and in the name of humanity and religion, we

implore that the most thorough system of military discipline be carried out with the officers and men of the volunteer force, as the first and essential condition of their health, comfort, and morality.

19. *Resolved*, That the health and comfort and efficiency of the men is mainly dependent on the uninterrupted presence, the personal watchfulness, and the rigid authority of the regimental and company officers ; and that all the great defects, whether in the commissariat or in the police of camps, are radically due to the absence of officers from their posts and to the laxity of the discipline to which they are themselves accustomed—a laxity which would never be tolerated among regulars, and which, while tolerated among our soldiers, will make our force a crowd of armed men rather than an army.

20. *Resolved*, That it is the public conviction of this Commission, that the soldiers themselves, *in their painful experience of the want of leaders and protectors*, would heartily welcome a rigid discipline exerted over their officers and themselves ; that the public would hail with joy the inauguration of a decisive, prompt, and rigid rule, extending alike to officers and men ; and that any despondency or doubt connected with our military and national prospects, or with the health and security of our troops, would disappear with the first indications of rigid order enforced with impartial authority throughout the whole army.

21. *Resolved*, That the Sanitary Commission assure Major General McClellan in advance, of all the moral support and sympathy of their numerous constituents, and beg him to believe that the humane, the intelligent, the religious, the patriotic, will uphold his hands in every endeavor to communicate a spirit of subordination, fidelity, and obedience to the troops, even by resort, if found necessary, to the utmost rigor of military law, believing that the health, comfort, and efficiency of the army are all united in their dependence on a strict, uniform, and all-pervading military discipline.

22. *Resolved*, That the following articles be procured for immediate use in the general hospitals : 100 small tables for writing in bed, 100 iron wire cradles for protecting wounded limbs, 30 back-gammon boards, 30 boxes of dominoes, 30 checker-boards, 5 lbs. of Delphinium.

23. *Resolved*, That no article of clothing or other supplies shall be issued except upon the order of the Commission, or the order of the Resident Secretary when the Commission is not in session, and that in every instance receipts shall be taken therefor from the medical officers supplied, and that all such articles be distinctly marked with the stamp of the Sanitary Commission.

24. *Resolved*, That a Barber be employed by the Commission for the service of volunteers in hospitals.

25. *Resolved*, That a committee to be appointed inquire into the feasibility of having some substitute for a grave-stone placed at the burial place of each volunteer dying in general hospital, to bear his name, rank, and date of death.

26. *Resolved*, That the Medical Purveyor be respectfully authorized to direct that a ticket bearing the name, rank, regiment, company, and disease of each patient in general hospital, together with date of his admission, be placed at the head of his bed, or in some conspicuous place in its vicinity, as early as practicable.

27. *Resolved*, That it be referred to the Committee on Hospitals, to consider and report whether it be expedient to establish a Military Hospital in Washington or elsewhere, under the direction of the Commission; and if they deem it expedient, to report further what should be the site and capacity of such hospital, and what would be the expense of its erection and maintenance, and to report plans, and estimates for such hospital building, and that Drs. Van Buren and Agnew be such committee.

28. *Resolved*, That it be referred to a committee to inquire and report what action, if any, can be taken by the Sanitary Commission to improve the condition of the general hospitals at Georgetown, Alexandria, and elsewhere.

29. *Resolved*, That Dr. Newberry be requested to give himself up to the superintendence of inspection of our labor in the West—visiting the different sections, conferring with and aiding our local inspectors, and reporting weekly to Washington the results of his general observations and reflections upon the best methods of promoting the objects of the Commission in that quarter.

30. *Resolved*, That a committee of three be appointed to draw up and present to the Sanitary Commission, during its present session, a report on the best methods of improving the morale of the volunteer and militia forces. (Messrs. Gibbs, Strong, and Van Buren, were appointed such committee.)

31. *Resolved*, That the same committee be requested to report upon the best means of promoting cheerfulness, and healthy mental and physical recreation among the volunteer and militia forces.

32. *Resolved*, That the Recording Secretary be requested to collect and arrange the resolutions passed by the Sanitary Commission at its different meetings, and print the same as a document of the Com-

mission, and that, in future, all such resolutions shall be collected and printed at the close of each session.

33. *Resolved*, That the Sanitary Commission cordially approve of the substitute for yeast prepared by the Rumford Chemical Works under the patent of Professor Horsford, and recommend the use of this material in the preparation of bread for the volunteer and militia forces.

34. *Resolved*, That it is expedient to add to the Commission an additional member from New England, and that the Right Rev. Thos. C. Clark, Bishop of Rhode Island, be appointed such a commissioner; also that it is expedient to add to the Commission one member from Pennsylvania, and that Horace Binney, jr., Esq., be so appointed.

35. *Resolved*, That a committee of three be appointed to prepare a list of graduates of West Point who have resigned from the army, and who are probably available for military command, and that the committee be instructed to prepare such list, without aiming at the minute accuracy, which might interfere with prompt action, and that they be authorized to furnish their results in such form as may seem to them appropriate, correcting the list, if practicable, by a circular, to be addressed to the graduates.

The President, Professor Bache, and Col. G. W. Cullum were appointed such committee.

36. *Resolved*, That the Sanitary Commission urgently recommend the establishment of receiving stations at New York, Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Baltimore, and at various points in the West, so that troops upon their arrival in those cities may, in case of necessity, be provided with lodging, and with well-prepared and nutritious food; also with facilities for washing, and for attention to the calls of nature.

37. *Resolved*, That the Resident Secretary be instructed to organize, under the special charge of one of the inspectors, a system in each of the hospitals of this military district, (and, as far as possible, in all others,) by which the wounded soldiers shall be enabled to communicate by letter with their friends; and to secure also such comfort from reading, and being read to, as their condition and the rules of the hospitals allow.

38. *Resolved*, That it be recommended that in each hospital the steward, ward master, or intelligent convalescents be made the agents and instruments of the commission in accomplishing this work; that to one of them be specially committed a store of stationery, marked with the stamp of the Commission, and either franked or furnished with postage stamps when the use of the congressional privilege is not pre-

ferred by the soldier; that this agent be required to make a daily record of every letter written, and every hour of reading done, and a weekly report of the same to the inspector.

39. *Resolved*, That the Bible and such religious books as the soldiers may ask for, or such as represent their denominational relations, be always recommended, and read when acceptable to the sick, but not to the exclusion of works of entertainment, newspapers, &c.

40. *Resolved*, That the Barber be under the superintendence of the same inspector, and make weekly reports to him.

41. *Resolved*, That the proprietors of leading newspapers and periodicals be earnestly requested to furnish as many copies of each issue as their benevolence and ability may prompt, directed in bundles to our address, for the use of the sick in the hospitals.

42. *Resolved*, That the Resident Secretary be authorized and advised to cause to be published an abstract of those sections of the army regulations which relate especially to the sanitary interests of the soldier.

43. *Resolved*, That \$25 a month for two months from the present date be appropriated for the washing of the clothing of volunteers entering the general hospital at Columbia College; the surgeon in charge (Dr. Abadie, U. S. A.) to give receipt for the same. Also that \$20 per month for the same period be appropriated for the Seminary hospital, Georgetown; the surgeon in charge (Dr. Smith, U. S. A.) giving receipt for the same; and both of these gentlemen undertaking to superintend the disbursement of the money.

44. *Resolved*, That the report and recommendations of the hospital committee be accepted and adopted, and that the same be referred back to the committee for revision and amplification; and that the committee cause the same, when complete, to be printed and circulated as a document of the Commission; and that copies thereof be sent to the Secretary of War, and to the medical and quartermaster's departments.

45. *Resolved*, That Dr. Harris is hereby requested to visit the military depots at Albany, Elmira, and Harrisburg, for the purposes of sanitary inspection and the improvement of their condition and the troops assembled at those places, and to report upon the same at the next meeting of the Commission.

46. *Resolved*, That the Commission recognizes no official relation with any persons except the officers of Government, and its own associates and employees.

47. *Resolved*, That the members of the Sanitary Commission, resident

at Washington, be a committee to call at an early day upon Major General McClellan, and assure him of their desire to co-operate with him in every possible manner in securing the good discipline, health, and efficiency of the troops; also to explain to him the ends and methods of the Commission, ask his favorable consideration, his frank counsel, and his powerful assistance in the objects of the Commission.

48. *Resolved*, That the same committee be instructed to obtain from the General, if possible, the direction of the receiving depot of troops, subject to understood conditions of receiving it.

49. *Resolved*, That resolution twelve be and hereby is rescinded, and that it be ordered, that when important defects or mismanagement affecting the sanitary condition of any regiment shall be reported by the Sanitary Inspectors, the facts shall be communicated to the Governor of the State from which the officers shall have received their appointment, unless the information shall appear to have been furnished to the Commission confidentially.

50. *Resolved*, That the Commission has reason to believe that personal visits to the soldiers from the Governors of States and other eminent men, with words of sympathy, encouragement, and well-deserved praise, are of most essential service, and that the Commission suggests that the regimental bands should be instructed to give occasional concerts to the soldiers; that dress parades shall be held in Pennsylvania avenue, or elsewhere, to be attended by members of the cabinet and high officials; that when it is convenient the position of the regiments should be occasionally shifted some distance, and that so far as practicable and consistent with official propriety, the officers of the General Government shall continue to show a lively and personal interest in the welfare of the troops.

51. *Resolved*, That the thanks of the Commission are due to Dr. Harris, for his devotion to the interests of the Commission, and for the zeal and fidelity with which he has discharged his duties; and that the duties of corresponding and recording secretary are hereby united to the duties of the Resident Secretary.

52. *Resolved*, That the Sanitary Commission have observed with great satisfaction, during their official visits to the general hospitals, the intelligent devotion of the medical officers of the army to their respective duties, and the commendable means with which they have commenced the organization of military hospitals under extraordinary difficulties.

53. *Resolved*, That the report of the committee on West Point

graduates be referred back to the committee with authority to make such additions and changes as may be approved by them ; to have their report, thus finally prepared, printed, and to circulate the list of names of graduates probably available for the military service.

54. *Resolved*, That the report from the committee on the preservation of records of deaths and interments be accepted or recommitted to the chairman of the committee, with directions to procure the adoption of a plan for such registration.