

SANITARY COMMISSION.

(Supplement to 59.)

SUPPLEMENT TO FOURTH REPORT,

(OF DEC. 15TH, 1862.)

CONCERNING THE

Aid and Comfort given by the Sanitary Commission

TO

SICK SOLDIERS PASSING THROUGH WASHINGTON.

BY FREDERICK N. KNAPP,
SPECIAL RELIEF AGENT.

(To the 2d edition, Feb. 10th, of the Fourth Report, are appended the following memoranda.)

Additions to means for Special Relief recently made.

- 1st. "Lodge No. 3," in F street, opposite Paymaster's Office.
- 2d. "Home for Female Nurses," in G street.
- 3d. Additional help to men obtaining their discharge papers and pay.
- 4th. Agency for getting Pension Papers for discharged soldiers, without cost to the soldier.
- 5th. "Office" for sale of "through tickets," at reduced rates, to discharged and furloughed soldiers.
- 6th. Relief Stations, and safeguards to the soldiers.

I.

Lodge No. 3.—The Lodge in F street was built early in December, to accommodate the discharged soldiers gathered daily at the Paymaster's for their pay. The need of this was urgent.

Cost of Lodge.....	\$535 00
Stoves, chairs, kitchen furniture, &c.....	61 00
Cost of extra supplies, and wages of cook from Dec. 8 to Feb. 8th.....	352 00
	————— \$948 00
Number of meals furnished at this Lodge, (No. 3, from Dec. 8th to Feb. 8th, (nine weeks).....	11,916
Number of nights' lodging, (nine weeks).....	1,980

II.

Home for Nurses.—The following copy of a notice inserted in the public papers early in January will indicate in general terms, the objects aimed at in establishing this house:

“Temporary Home for Nurses, U. S. A.

“The Sanitary Commission has opened a branch of its Washington Army Relief Station for the protection and accommodation of female nurses, temporarily detained in Washington by illness, or while waiting orders and unprovided with proper quarters by Government or friends. All such nurses will be made welcome on application at the office of the Commission, 244 F street.”

Scarcely a day passed that did not bring to us a number of nurses so situated that they needed assistance, which we could not give. They were alone, and often sick or worn

down with service in the hospitals, and needed a few days of rest in a quiet home. Also, from time to time, mothers and wives, and sometimes daughters, would appeal to us for protection and help; they had come on from distant points to see a husband, or son, or father, who was sick in Field or General Hospital. These women, sad and weary, strangers here, and without friends, seemed to rightfully claim some help. The public notice advertising the "Nurses' Home," limits its inmates to "Hospital Nurses," but we reserve the right to send there these other needy women when humanity seems to demand it.

A furnished house was hired and opened January 1, 1863. Mrs. Caldwell (wife of Prof. Caldwell, one of our hospital visitors) is in charge of the house; she is a woman eminently qualified for the position. When a notice is sent to the office that a nurse in some given hospital is sick, Mrs. Caldwell visits the hospital and informs herself of the condition of the nurse, and how best to care for her.

This Nurses' Home has been in operation so short a time, that it has probably not yet become known to many women, who would gladly avail themselves of its comforts. But the record stands thus: From January 1 to February 8, number of meals furnished at the "Home for Female Nurses," 287; number of nights' lodging, 159.

III.

Additional help to Discharged Soldiers in getting pay.—An abstract of the report of work of aiding disabled soldiers, perfecting their papers, and securing their pay, gives the following figures: From November 21st to January 21st, (two months,) number of applicants at this office for assist-

ance, or advice, 4,400. Number who have received such aid in perfecting their papers, or such advice or assistance in obtaining their pay as made a *record* important, 450. Amount of money collected during these two months for soldiers who were too feeble to go to the Pay Office and collect it for themselves, \$19,579 81. This has been in sums varying from one dollar to one hundred dollars, in each case the soldier's receipt being taken, and a record made. Some of these sums collected were upon papers which, except for the aid thus afforded by the Commission, would have left the soldier utterly destitute.

This is not because the officers connected with the Paymaster's Department are not doing their utmost to aid the soldier. They are; but it is simply impossible for these officers to give time to these individual cases, correcting mistakes or supplying deficiencies.

I will here insert the following extract from Mr. Abbott's note book. Mr. Abbott is Chief Assistant in Special Relief.

"During the last ten days, discharge papers of at least sixty soldiers have been received by us, and transportation home for the men secured to them, through the kind cooperation of Captain Lockwood, of the Staff of the Military Governor. These men have been discharged without complete descriptive papers, consequently the date of last payment could not be given in their final statements. This date is usually ascertained from the rolls in the hands of their regimental Paymasters; but, during the last ten days, nearly all of the Paymasters have been absent with troops in the field. Hence, the endorsement of facts necessary to enable these soldiers to get their pay could not be obtained; therefore they have left with us their papers to be completed, their pay secured, and sent to them."

IV.

Agency for Pensions.—The imposition frequently practised upon disabled soldiers by claim agents, as revealed by daily observations and a careful investigation, has shown the importance of establishing a Pension Agency, where the soldier can obtain all necessary legal assistance without cost and without exposure. A plan has been matured, which was approved and endorsed by the Commissioner of Pensions, and by the 2d Auditor; it was set forth in a letter of which the following is a copy:

“SANITARY COMMISSION, CENTRAL OFFICE, 244 F ST.,
“WASHINGTON, D. C., *Jan. 15, 1862.*

“The Sanitary Commission propose to establish an office where discharged soldiers, entitled to pensions, can have their papers made out free of charge.

“The necessity of establishing such an office rests upon the fact that many discharged soldiers, ignorant of legal forms, and anxious to secure their money, are often cruelly imposed upon by so-called Pension Agents, who frequently induce soldiers who have no claim for a pension to believe that they are entitled to it, and that it will be obtained by these agents, provided the soldiers advance five dollars each for the service to be rendered.

“These Agents, through their runners, beset the discharged men from the time they leave the door of the hospital, or even within the hospital, until they are in the cars for home. Unquestionably there are many good and honorable men among Pension Agents, who solicit the soldiers; but it is also equally unquestionable that there are men assuming that name who are without principle, and whose only aim is to secure money.

“The average number of men daily presenting their papers for pay at the office in Washington is about two hundred and fifty. Of this number it is estimated that from thirty-five to forty-five are entitled to pensions, (probably many more than that number apply for pensions.) Calling the number forty who thus pay each one five dollars to an agent, the sum of \$200 daily would be saved to the soldiers in Washington alone, were we to provide means for obtaining their pension papers for them without charge.

“Moreover, when a soldier with money in his pocket is once detained in the city, (even if but for a few hours,) he is exposed to various dangers.

“I propose establishing a Pension Agency, near the Paymaster’s Office, with such facilities as will enable any soldier who wishes it to file all necessary papers, and make the required oath for obtaining his pension, before he even goes into the street. This Agency will be conducted by men approved and endorsed by the Commissioner of Pensions, and by other public officers, and all papers will be transferred directly from this Pension Agency to the Pension Office, the service thus rendered to be entirely without cost to the soldier. Notice of this Agency to be conspicuously posted in the Paymaster’s Office, at the Hospitals, and wherever it is most likely to meet the eye of the soldier.

FRED’K N. KNAPP,
Special Relief Agent.

FRED. LAW OLMSTED,
General Secretary Sanitary Commission.

The plan proposed in the foregoing paper meets my cordial approbation.

JOS. H. BARRET,
Commissioner of Pensions.

I heartily approve of this plan, and believe that it must accomplish its benevolent and praiseworthy object.

E. B. FRENCH,

Second Auditor of the Treasury.

A suitable building for the office has been secured from Government within the grounds of the Paymaster's Office, and an experienced agent engaged, (William F. Bascom, Esq., of Middlebury, Vt., acting District Attorney in that State,) who was suggested by the Commissioner of Pensions as a man by integrity and ability eminently qualified for conducting the business.

The number of soldiers who would be assisted and protected by this agency, (as determined by examination of the last 15,000 discharge papers at the Adjutant General's Office, and by consulting the books of the General Pension Office,) would probably be about 1,000 each month. The cost of maintaining this Agency will be about \$250 per month, making the cost to the Commission of the aid given to each soldier about thirty (30) cents, a service for which he now pays \$5. Thus, on this estimate, the cost of 1,000 pension papers would be \$5,000 monthly, while the cost of working our Agency will be about \$250.

V.

“*Through Tickets.*”—Arrangements have been nearly completed by which *through tickets* will be furnished to discharged soldiers at reduced rates of fare. The following Circular was submitted to the Presidents of four of the most important Railroad Companies, and by them approved; and the General Ticket Agents of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and

of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad have been appointed to correspond with other railroad and steamboat companies and complete the working plan. Government is now building us a suitable office for the above purpose.

The money thus saved to soldiers in Washington alone will be very great; the cost to the Commission almost nothing, except to see that the benefits when offered are understood by the soldiers. Steps will at once be taken to secure these tickets to soldiers at all the railroad stations in all the principal cities where they are likely to be needed, extending to the most western wing of the army, wherever there are railroads and steamboats.

Circular.

SANITARY COMMISSION, CENTRAL OFFICE, 244 F ST.,
WASHINGTON, D. C., *Jan. 16th, 1863.*

It is desired to have at Washington a ticket office where "*through tickets*" over the various railroad and steamboat routes can be furnished to discharged and furloughed soldiers, at Government rates.

Great inconvenience and often serious suffering to sick soldiers result from the present arrangement. These men are obliged to purchase their tickets at different points along the road, thereby frequently losing the through train on which they leave Washington, and being weak and strangers, they are worried and delayed. Moreover, being obliged to take out their money at different railroad stations, they are thereby exposed to the eye and hand of men who are constantly lying in wait for discharged soldiers, seeking an opportunity to rob them. Not a day passes but soldiers are robbed at stations, or in the cars, or in the cities where they are thus delayed waiting for

the next train. Therefore, it seems eminently desirable to have an arrangement by which a ticket agent (capable, experienced, and honorable) can have an office (which will be provided with all facilities, free of rent, by the Sanitary Commission, near the Paymaster's Office,) where *through tickets* over all the routes can be bought at reduced and uniform rates of fare.

Where there are rival routes, it may be so arranged that the soldier himself, shall decide which route he will take without any influence being used to persuade him to select one rather than another. In cases where soldiers have no preference, an equal division of tickets can be made over these rival routes. Thus with an office which will probably be established, also near the Paymaster's, for collecting pensions without charge, the soldier can be prepared to leave the city at once, and not take out his money again until he reaches his home, and thereby avoid great exposure and annoying trouble.

Over two hundred (200) soldiers daily are discharged at Washington. The aggregate suffering which would be daily saved to them by the arrangement proposed, would be great.

It will be desirable, after this system of through tickets is perfected, to extend its benefits to discharged soldiers leaving any of our principal cities.

The co-operation of presidents of railroad and steamboat routes, is earnestly desired.

FRED'K N. KNAPP.

Special Relief Agent San. Com.

FRED. LAW OLMSTED,

General Secretary San. Com.

VI.

Safeguards to Soldiers, and Relief Stations.—In order to guard the soldiers against falling into the hands of sharks, and to

inform them of the assistance rendered by the Commission, large hand bills (of which the following is a copy) have been posted in all the hospitals in this vicinity:

“Discharged Soldiers can obtain all needed information and assistance in regard to their papers, at office of Sanitary Commission, 244 F Street; also, a Resting Place and Food, Without Charge, at the Lodge (No. 3) of the Sanitary Commission, No. 210 F Street.”

Tickets directing the bearer to the Relief Agency of the Commission, or to some one of the Lodges, have been printed, and placed for distribution in the hands of surgeons on the Front, and those at hospitals, as well as in the hands of our own agents and Inspectors who are with the various divisions of the army, or at relief stations, (as at Aquia Creek, and at Convalescent Camp.) When a soldier is discharged, and is leaving for Washington, one of these tickets is given to him, and he feels that he has a friend to go to.

A Lodge has been established at Aquia Creek, (a suitable building for the purpose, put up by the kindness and by the order of Captain Hall, of the Quartermaster's Department,) where from 25 to 35 invalid soldiers are cared for each night. Some nights there have been as many as 80 or 90 taken in there. These are usually men waiting for a boat the next morning to convey them to Washington. This Lodge serves the same purpose relative to the Soldiers' Rest—an excellent building—at Aquia Creek, which the “Home” or the Lodge in Washington does to the Soldiers' Rest here: that is, it secures additional comfort and care to those who are too sick to be left to the ordinary provision which is made for soldiers *in transitu*.

So, likewise, at Convalescent Camp there is an agency of the Special Relief. A person is established there who has constantly on hand, in a store-house, all articles of clothing and comfort for distribution. And the soldiers from all the divisions of this camp of five thousand men are sent to this agent of the Commission by the surgeons, with printed tickets, placed in the hands of the surgeons for the purpose, stating what articles the bearers need. This Agent, who visits in person all parts of the camp, is generally informed of existing necessities; this, beside furnishing actual care to many sick men in hospital tents immediately connected with the store-house there.

We are also about establishing a Relief Station at Sixth street wharf in order to look after the invalid soldiers as they arrive, at all hours, by boats from Aquia Creek or from other stations. They are feeble, and strangers, and at a distance from the Paymaster's Office, which they seek; they will always find some one on the wharf to look after them, and at this station food and shelter until they can be taken to the other part of the city, or to hospitals. The building for this use will be finished in a few days, and I am confident that much relief will be here given.

Among additional means of relief, is also to be mentioned two new buildings which have been commenced as part of the "Home," on North Capitol street, near the railroad station. Our present buildings were constantly so crowded that enlarged accommodation became necessary. One of the new buildings is about 30 feet by 50, with abundance of light and of air, to be used as a sick room, where some 15 or 20 of the men needing most care can be placed without being crowded, or exposed to noise. During the last few weeks there have been a large number of discharged men who were in

such an enfeebled state that, after obtaining their final papers and their pay, they were obliged to keep their beds for some days before they could venture to start upon their journey home. In this new building we shall specially care for such men. The Commission is putting this up. At the same time, Captain Camp, of the Quartermaster's Department, who always kindly co-operates with our work, is building for our use a sleeping room 24 feet by 76, to be fitted with berths at the sides and through the middle, where we shall furnish comfortable beds to men needing warmth and care, but not so seriously sick.

The office of Major Yard, successor to Major Pomeroy, where discharged soldiers are paid off, has been removed from F st. to H st., between 13th and 14th sts. In accordance with our request, Col. Rucker, Quartermaster, who is found ready always to render real service to the soldiers, has put up there for our use a building 22 feet by 90, which will be used for the same purpose as was the Lodge in F street. It contains a sitting room and beds for fifty, a dining room where a hundred can be seated at a time, a kitchen, and a baggage room. Here all the men who are gathered daily from the various regimental and general hospitals with their discharge papers are fed and cared for, and those who are very weak or who are obliged to remain over night can find a comfortable bed in a warm room. He has also put up, at our request, another building 16 feet by 50 for the three (3) offices: one for "Special Relief," so as to save the men the necessity of coming down to the Central Office, (thereby also relieving the Central Office of a crowd;) another for sale of Railroad Tickets by a Railroad Agent; another for the Pension Agency.

These buildings are within the grounds of the Paymaster's Office, and a strong detail of guard has been furnished by

the Provost Marshal to exclude from this point all suspicious hangers on.

The current expense of maintaining the whole department of "Special Relief" is at the rate of \$1,600 per month, or \$53 per diem.

This monthly expense of \$1,600 is divided thus :

Pay of Relief Agents, of Superintendents, and Surgeon,	} Monthly.....	\$440
Pay of working men and women.....		325
Supplies purchased.....		470
Transportation of Sick.....		210
Incidentals.....		45
Repairs of Buildings and additions.....		75
Wood, coal, &c.....		40
		\$1,600

Some weeks since \$250 were placed at my disposal for the purpose of sending to their homes men who had not money enough to carry them there; we were also allowed to use part of it to send to their homes female nurses who found themselves sick and without means. We call this the "Ware Fund." It has now all been used, and the detailed record of the relief it has given tells of many grateful hearts. And to-day we have received one thousand dollars for this same purpose from friends in Brookline, Mass., who were informed of the good which might be thus done, and the suffering and anxiety which might be thus relieved. I specify these gifts because they are given for a specified purpose, for which we can hardly use legitimately the funds given to the treasury of the Commission for general relief of the soldier, inasmuch as this is helping the men after they are discharged from the service.

Special Relief Department of Sanitary Commission at Washington.

“The Home,” or Lodge No. 1, 374 N. Capitol street, second house from rear of Railroad Station, towards the Capitol.

Lodge No. 2, 17th street, between Pennsylvania avenue and H street.

Lodge No. 3, 210 F street, between 14th and 15th streets.

Lodge No 4, 389 H street, between 13th and 14th streets.

Pension Office, 389 H street, between 13th and 14th sts.

Lodge No. 5, 6th street, corner of M, near 6th street wharf.

Special Relief Agent, FREDERICK N. KNAPP, 244 F street.

Assistants, { J. B. ABBOT,
T. B. PECK,
O. C. BULLARD.

Pension Director, WILLIAM F. BASCOM.

Medical Examiner for Pensions, T. B. SMITH, M. D.

“*The Home.*”

Surgeon in Charge, T. B. SMITH, M. D.

Superintendent, J. B. CLARK.