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SENATE

} REPORT
No. 489

ADDITIONAL HOSPITAL FACILITIES FOR PATIENTS OF THE UNITED STATES VETERANS' BUREAU

APRIL 24 (calendar day, MAY 2), 1924.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. MCKINLEY, from the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 3181]

The Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, to which was referred the bill (S. 3181), to authorize an appropriation to enable the Director of the United States Veterans' Bureau to provide for the construction of additional hospital facilities, and to provide medical, surgical, and hospital services and supplies for persons who served in the World War, the Spanish-American War, the Philippine insurrection, and the Boxer rebellion, and are patients of the United States Veterans' Bureau, *having duly considered the same*, hereby make report of it to the Senate and with the recommendation that the bill do pass.

Hearings were had on this bill before the House Buildings and Grounds Committee. A letter from Director Hines of the Veterans' Bureau, which sets out the conditions and requests the passage of this bill, reads as follows:

APRIL 29, 1924.

HON. BERT M. FERNALD,
United States Senate.

DEAR SENATOR FERNALD: I wish to extend my unqualified indorsement to S. 3181, a bill to authorize an appropriation to enable the Director of the United States Veterans' Bureau to provide additional hospital facilities, introduced by you on April 26, 1924, and referred to the Senate Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds.

The bill you have introduced, calling for an appropriation of \$6,500,000, is similar in purpose to H. R. 5209 reported out by the House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, and this latter bill was sponsored by this bureau and provides for the completion, so far as now can be determined, of the program for hospital facilities for disabled ex-service men and women of the late war.

In general this program embraces the replacement of temporary or leased hospital facilities by permanent modern Government-owned facilities, and in two instances the providing of modern Government facilities in localities where there are at present inadequate or no Government facilities necessitating the use of

contract or State hospitals. There is no question but what the construction proposed is, not only highly advisable, but most essential to the proper carrying out of the obligations of this bureau to its beneficiaries.

To specifically outline the construction comprehended by this bill, there is shown below each project now contemplated, with the brief résumé of those factors which have entered into its determination:

1. District No. 2, including the States of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, 1,000 neuropsychiatric beds. At the present time there are in the second district being hospitalized 1,444 neuropsychiatric cases, 754 of which are being treated in State or civil hospitals. The Government facilities in the second district for this type of case consist of United States Veterans' Hospital No. 81, Bronx, N. Y., with a present capacity of 708 beds, 692 of which are occupied. This hospital was originally constructed for a capacity of 1,011 beds under the first Langley bill at a final cost of approximately \$3,586,000. To bring its capacity up to that originally contemplated, were such action justified, would involve an additional expenditure of approximately \$400,000. However, it is not recommended that this hospital be continued for its original purpose, since it is improperly located geographically, it is structurally inadequate for its purpose, and its acreage is so limited that there can not be provided there the outdoor occupational therapy which is considered most vital to the improvement and cure of the patients sent there for treatment. It is located in the heart of a thickly settled area in New York City, which unfortunately makes possible the easy securing of drugs and liquor by the patients themselves, and also subjects the patients to embarrassing comments of persons in the immediate environment of the hospital. The acreage of this hospital is approximately 33 acres and it is not possible to develop extensive farm operations for occupational therapy which are considered essential to the proper and beneficial treatment. The buildings are old and can not be adapted to the most modern method of treatment for this type of case. It is desired to establish a new modern and complete neuropsychiatric hospital away from the city, which will overcome the foregoing obstacles. This action is in line with the locating of most State institutions of this character, which institutions are located away from the centers of population. While the cost of this project is estimated at about \$3,000,000, the net cost to the Government should be not more than half this amount, for it is contemplated that when the new hospital is completed the old hospital will be sold and the receipts of this sale, which should approximate \$1,500,000 will be turned in to the Treasury. This measure is unqualifiedly recommended, for it must be realized that these cases must be afforded the most modern treatment possible under the best possible conditions so that the recovery of these mentally deranged cases may result to the maximum extent.

2. District No. 3, including the States of Pennsylvania and Delaware, 200 tuberculosis beds. At the present time there are 142 cases of tuberculosis hospitalized in the third district in State and civil hospitals and no Government facilities for this type of case are available in this area. While every effort is made to induce these patients to accept hospitalization in Government facilities away from their homes, and already there are hospitalized several hundreds of patients from the third district in other districts, there remains this number of patients in the third district who are not willing to accept transfer to districts away from their homes. Under the first Langley bill funds there was purchased at Aspinwall, Pa., a tract of land suitable for the erection of a tuberculosis hospital. Due to lack of funds and to a readjustment of the hospital construction program, it has not been possible to construct a tuberculosis hospital in this area. The continued use of State and civil hospitals is not considered to be the best advantage of the patient and is not in line with the hospitalization policy of the Government. Furthermore, the use by this bureau of State hospitals greatly interferes with the original purpose of these hospitals, since these facilities are originally intended for the usual civil tuberculous load. The construction of a tuberculosis hospital in this area will eliminate the use of contract hospitals.

3. District No. 4, including the States of Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, 300 beds. At the present time the Government is making extensive use of the excellent therapeutic facilities at the Walter Reed United States Army General Hospital. There are being hospitalized there at the present time 356 beneficiaries of this bureau. There are no other Government facilities in the District of Columbia which are available for these patients. These patients are now being treated to a very large extent in temporary frame buildings, which constitute a considerable fire hazard and are rapidly deteriorating. It is expected that the use of the Army facilities at Walter Reed will continue for a long period, not only due to the excellent character of treatment

received there and the special facilities available, but also to the fact that hundreds of patients come to Washington in the interest of their claims and require hospitalization. The continued use of these temporary facilities by this bureau can not be countenanced and it is contemplated to replace them by permanent modern facilities.

4. District No. 8, including the States of Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, 250 neuropsychiatric beds. In the eighth district there are reported 1,456 neuropsychiatric cases being hospitalized, of which number 820 are in State and civil institutions. There is being constructed at Camp Custer, Mich., a modern neuropsychiatric hospital of 527 beds, which will still leave a balance of approximately 350 cases for whom Government facilities have not been provided. It is reported that the State institutions, particularly in Illinois, are seriously overcrowded, due to the load of Veterans' Bureau beneficiaries committed there and it is essential that additional Government facilities be provided to meet the increasing load in the eighth district. It is proposed to construct on Government-owned property at Great Lakes, Ill., a modern 250-bed unit for psychotic or insane cases.

5. District No. 10, including the States of Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Montana, 300 tuberculosis beds. At the present time the Government is utilizing a leased hospital at Minneapolis, Minn., for the care of its tuberculosis patients in that locality. This hospital costs the Government in annual rentals approximately \$93,600. There is also leased in the city of St. Paul a general hospital costing the Government in annual rentals approximately \$63,200. The proposed construction in the tenth district will accomplish two purposes, one, to take the treatment of tuberculosis cases from the heart of a big city and, two, to make possible the giving up of a leased hospital. This project, therefore, does not contemplate additional beds, but primarily the replacement of leased beds by Government-owned modern beds to be located at a point away from the populous city, thereby providing better control and better conditions.

6. District No. 14, including the States of Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. At the present time the bureau is leasing the general hospital at Muskogee, Okla., at an annual rental of approximately \$42,500. This hospital was recently completed by the State of Oklahoma to take care of its war cases and is the only modern Veterans' Bureau general hospital in that great area. The hospital is in excellent condition, modern in every way, and needed for a long period. It is proposed to purchase this hospital at a cost not exceeding the cost of construction and to operate it as a Government-owned institution.

The above program of construction was arrived at after very careful consideration and review of all existing Government facilities and of probable needs as far as can be determined at the present time. Each project is without question essential and necessary to the proper carrying out of the provisions of the act as amended. This program has the support of all ex-service organizations. It is urgently recommended that early consideration be given to the passage of S. 3181 to the end that the providing of the facilities contemplated may be commenced at the earliest possible date. I should be pleased to make available to you any data incident to the consideration of this bill, or to personally appear before the Senate Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds in its support.

Very truly yours,

FRANK T. HINES, *Director.*

It is apparent that additional funds must be provided for completing the hospital program for beneficiaries of the Veterans' Bureau in order that adequate and satisfactory hospital facilities may be available at the earliest practicable date, and your committee recommends the immediate enactment of this legislation.

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