

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

JANUARY 28, 1924.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the
state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 5209.]

The Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 5209) 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 House with amendments and with the recommendation that the bill as amended do pass.

Amend the title to read as follows:

A bill to authorize an appropriation to enable the Director of the United States Veterans' Bureau to provide additional hospital facilities.

Line 6, page 1, after the word "for," strike out the words "persons who served in the World War and are."

Line 4, page 2, after the word "thereto," strike out the comma and insert a semicolon in lieu thereof; and strike out the words "vehicles, livestock, furniture, equipment, and accessories."

Hearings were had on this bill, from which it appears that at the present time there are available in Government hospitals 25,460 beds, of which number 7,963 are unoccupied. At the same time there are being hospitalized in State and civil hospitals 5,498 patients. While it is true that the number of unoccupied beds is in excess of the number of patients in contract hospitals, it must be borne in mind that there are in existing Government hospitals approximately 4,600 beds which are unsuitable for permanent utilization and will have to be discontinued or replaced in the course of time. Furthermore, certain

of these available facilities are so distant from the patients actually in contract hospitals that it would be detrimental to the welfare of these patients to move them so far from their homes and friends, as it has been found that particularly in cases of tuberculosis the matter of mental contentment is most necessary to their recovery.

The following memorandum received by the chairman of your committee from the office of the Director of the United States Veterans' Bureau sets forth in detail the purpose of the additional construction provided under this bill:

The additional construction proposed for patients of the United States Veterans' Bureau provides approximately 2,350 permanent fireproof hospital beds, to be located, so far as a study of the existing hospital facilities indicates at the present time, as follows:

Second district, including the States of New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, 1,000 neuropsychiatric beds; third district, including the States of Pennsylvania and Delaware, 200 tuberculosis beds; fourth district, including the States of Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia, 200 general beds and 100 tuberculosis beds; eighth district, including the States of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Illinois, 250 neuropsychiatric beds; tenth district, including the States of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota, 300 tuberculosis beds; and the fourteenth district, including the States of Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas, 300 general beds.

This program does not contemplate, except in two instances, an additional number of hospital beds. In the other instances it contemplates only the replacement of existing unsatisfactory facilities, or the change from leased facilities to permanent Veterans' Bureau owned facilities.

The first project in the second district contemplates the replacement of the existing neuropsychiatric hospital provided for under the first Langley bill, namely, United States Veterans' Hospital No. 81, Bronx, N. Y. This hospital is unsatisfactory for three reasons: First, that it is in the heart of a very thickly populated area, which fact is not to the best interest of the patients themselves; second, because the acreage at this hospital is insufficient to permit outdoor occupational therapy, which is absolutely essential to the cure of the cases at this hospital; and third, to bring this hospital up to its scheduled capacity and to eliminate the risks of fire would require an expenditure of some \$400,000, which expenditure is not justifiable because of the obvious unsuitability of the institution. When this hospital is replaced by the proposed new construction it is intended that it be sold and the funds received from such sale be turned into the Treasury.

The second project, in the third district, provides for the construction of a 200-bed tuberculosis hospital at Aspinwall, Pa., which site is already owned by the Veterans' Bureau and was provided under funds of the first Langley bill. The original program under the first Langley bill contemplated the construction of this hospital, but funds were not available either under the first or second bills to accomplish it. In this thickly populated area there is no Government tuberculosis hospital, and it is desired that Government facilities be provided for patients now in contract hospitals in this locality who will not accept transfer to Government institutions distant from their homes.

The third project, in the fourth district, providing some 300 beds, is to replace the existing temporary frame structures at the Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D. C. At the present time there are more than 300 patients of the Veterans' Bureau at this hospital and it is anticipated that this load will continue. Existing structures are not fireproof or fire resisting and should be replaced by permanent structures. The construction at this hospital will not involve any increase in the utilities, such as power, water, light, etc., since these are already in existence and the contemplated construction does not increase the number of beds available.

The fourth project in the eighth district for 250 neuropsychiatric beds is to provide facilities for insane cases now in State hospitals in that area. At the present time there are more than 1,000 insane cases in State and civil hospitals in the eighth district. The new neuropsychiatric hospital at Camp Custer, Mich., will take a certain proportion of these cases, but there will still be a large balance of cases remaining for whom Government facilities must be provided. The hospital contemplated in the eighth district is to be constructed on Government-owned property where the utilities are already in existence.

The fifth project is to provide Government-owned tuberculosis beds in the tenth district. This project does not contemplate increasing the number of beds available in this locality, but to replace existing tuberculosis beds now operated in the leased general hospitals at St. Paul and Minneapolis. These leased hospitals cost the Government in rentals approximately \$160,000 a year, and with the new facilities becoming available it will be possible to eliminate immediately one of these hospitals.

The sixth project is to purchase the now leased general hospital at Muskogee, Okla., in the fourteenth district. This hospital has a capacity of 300 beds, of which number 253 are occupied. It is a new, modern, fireproof structure constructed by the State for ex-service men. The annual rental is \$23,500. The Veterans' Bureau at the present time does not own any general hospital in the States of Oklahoma, Arkansas, or Texas. The only other general facilities available in this district are at the Army hospitals at San Antonio, Tex., El Paso and Hot Springs, Ark. These hospitals are so isolated that they can serve but a very limited area.

Contingent upon this additional construction is the relinquishing of certain leased hospital and contract facilities in the areas affected and the taking of beneficiaries of the bureau from unsuitable non-fireproof structures or structures clinically and structurally unsuitable for the purposes now used and placing them in modern fireproof hospital facilities.

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.

