



OFFICE OF
MEDICAL OFFICER IN CHARGE

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

S-B

UNITED STATES

PUBLIC HEALTH AND MARINE-HOSPITAL SERVICE

WILMINGTON, N. C.,

May 22, 1914

Ref'd to J.A.F. MAY 25 1914

Ans'd ✓

Dr. J. A. Ferrell,

Rockefeller Sanitary Commission,

Washington, D. C.

Dear Doctor:

We reached Wilmington safely after a most interesting trip through the country on which I was able to gain some interesting impressions. In the first place, while sanitation is far from perfect, it is absolutely clear that there has been an improvement in the rural and semi-rural districts. In some localities I noticed new privies, and in other localities privies of an improved type. It seemed to me that this was especially noticeable around Goldsboro.

Doctor Leonard is here in Wilmington and last evening he and Doctor Thames and I had a long conversation about the work. He is starting in with a good deal of enthusiasm; naturally the method must develop itself. We have already agreed that two or more men from the Hospital force will begin work in his community very promptly so as to hasten the work along. From the present outlook, I see no reason why any serious complications in the community work should arise. Theoretically, the most serious point that comes up in my mind is the necessity for avoiding in the community work a reversing of the public health policy of the last ten years to do everything possible to confine the work of public health officials to disease prevention instead of disease treatment. If the community men in the different parts of the South broaden their work too much so as to go beyond the terms of the original grant; for instance, by vaccinating against Typhoid and Smallpox, and by practically becoming practicing physicians, this might give the entire work a very bad black eye in raising the antagonism of the practitioners and thereby handicapping the State Boards of Health. I feel that Leonard is far-sighted enough to avoid this difficulty, but somehow I have the feeling that it would be rather wise to issue a notice of warning quietly to all the men, inviting their attention to the fact that the terms of Mr. Rockefeller's gift are very specific, and that we cannot afford to even let the impression arise that a great health movement is to take the direction of an attempt to oppose the recognized policy of the medical profession of the United States. It will be easier to avoid a mistake in this matter at present than to correct one later.

With best regards,

Very sincerely yours,

Chas. S. Siler