

*Letter, p. 2*  
Extract from report of Rockefeller War Relief Commission.

*Signed W. Sabine*

August 4, 1916.

I have spent the past week in the study of the tuberculosis situation in France, its increase, the attitude of the public towards it, of the Government, of the Medical Profession and of the many civilians, French and Americans who are interested in its relief.

There are, of course, statistics to be had up to the beginning of the war; of course also, these statistics, like most medical statistics are of little value. It is impossible to be certain whether any increase or decrease which these figures may show is due to a change of care in their compilation or a change in definition of a disease somewhat vague in its inception and in its termination if cured. I believe there are no statistics since the war. On the other hand there is no question that the returning soldiers are highly tuberculosis and that the returning prisoners at the close of the war will be even more so. I am enclosing with this a copy of an analysis of the tuberculosis situation in France prepared for me by Monsieur Maurice Lazard, Secretary and Solicitor of Baron Henri de Rothschild. I am reserving the original copy for Mr. Warwick Greene. I am sending to you this preliminary copy because he may wish to communicate with you by cable and I am sure that he will wish you to have this information in your hands.

My greatest assistance has come from Dr. Letulle, who by common consent is the highest medical authority in France at the present time in regard to tuberculosis.

Dr. Letulle has spent two days solidly with me, one devoted to the hospitals in Paris, the other devoted to the Sanatorium at Bligny. I have also met, at Mr. Warwick Greene's suggestion, Miss Anne Morgan, Mrs Robert Wood Bliss, Mrs. Edith Wharton, Mr. Beatty, Director of the American Relief Clearing House, and a number of others. Many suggestions are made, varying in definiteness from a vague vision of an enormous tuberculosis village to a real stone and plaster Chateau, but no money to operate it with. There are some Committees with goodwill but again with no funds at all, or very inadequate funds, and worst of all with no medical knowledge whatever. What is worse, many of them are officious to a degree which must surely be irritating to the Government.

The French civilians, or rather non-medical men especially interested in the tuberculosis campaign are (1) Leon Bourgeois, Minister of State, (2) M. Millerand, formerly Minister of War, and (3) Baron Henri de Rothschild.

The medical men in France especially interested in tuberculosis seem to be (1) Professor Landouzt, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, (2) Professor Letulle, (3) Professor Bernard, (4) Dr. Guinard, Director of the Sanatorium at Bligny, (5) Dr. Ristz and (6) Dr. Kuss.

The one idea which I do not find anywhere is that a campaign to accomplish anything commensurate with the problem, must have for its primary consideration not elaborate equipment but utmost economy; this not merely because the number of cases to be treated is wholly beyond the capacity of any conceivable system of elaborately built hospitals or sanatoriums but because all the financial resources

of the Government and of individuals are directed in many other channels. I obviously cannot go into details here as regards schemes which have been proposed by the several ladies and gentlemen mentioned above but none of them seem to vitally touch the problem.

I am very anxious to see, in Switzerland, Professor Rollier and the work which he is doing at Leysin. This seems to be a modification of the open air treatment with special reference to sun light. This is his own description of it in his book which I have read. In France it is variously described by medical men as snow treatment and hardening; they seem to have a very vague idea of it but hold it in very high respect.

My resumé of the situation is this; - tuberculosis is common in France, as indeed it is common everywhere, and is responsible for a high proportion of mortality. This menace has been greatly increased by the war. France relatively indifferent to the situation up to two years ago is now very keenly alive, and many regard it as likely to be the most serious after-effects of the war. Whereas the scientific work of France as regards tuberculosis is doubtless admirable its experience in its practical treatment is relatively slight. This combination of a grave menace and a very suddenly awakened consciousness, the whole precipitated and justified by the war- you can see the psychology of it- offers a remarkable opportunity for a great medical service, but the whole must be handled in the broadest possible way in order not to destroy its fruitfulness by provoking antagonism.