

PERRY, J

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Waukesha, Wisconsin,
July 19, 1921.

PERSONAL

Dr. J. C. Perry,
U. S. Public Health Service
Washington, D. C.

Dear Dr. Perry:

You will probably be surprised at the recommendation I made yesterday in my letter to the Bureau, asking for the transfer of Dr. Benton from this station. You will probably remember that we always praised Dr. Benton for his clinical work and have always said that in spite of this it was our opinion that he would make a poor executive and a poor clinical director. Experience with him has borne this out. He was Acting Clinical Director for two months during Dr. Heldt's absence on official business and in this position his deficiency had an opportunity to express itself in several ways. Patients not his own, with whom he necessarily came in contact, were often irritated by him. The complaints that have been made against Dr. Benton to the American Legion and to the newspapers and in affidavits have been partly worked up by other patients who 'had it in for him', but there is some basis for them. It is probable that Dr. Benton has been irritated and disgruntled because he was not promoted when Heldt was and that his irritation is shown in his work. This, we think, is a poor way for an officer to react to a disappointment. We still think that Dr. Benton is a splendid clinical man and that in his old position the opposition to him would subside.

The State officers of the American Legion who consulted with me yesterday seemed to feel that there is politics in the recent criticism of the hospital. Although they did not directly express it, ~~say~~ to me, it was suggested in their attitude and a minor official has told me of it. The Legion does not want to get mixed in this politics, especially in any way that might help the faction which has started the trouble presumably to rehabilitate themselves with the soldier vote. The Commander of the Legion has received a number of complaints about Dr. Benton and thinks there must be some cause for them, although they have been exaggerated. The Wisconsin News calls him upon the telephone about as often as they do me in order to find out when he is going to start an investigation. He thinks it would avoid further publicity and relieve the source of irritation if Benton were transferred. He suggested that he would send a wire from here asking for the transfer immediately. I wrote the letter instead. This would not, of course, have been done if Benton, by his attitude toward certain cases, had not given those people who wanted to start the trouble the opportunity they sought. The attitude of the Legion Officers was favorable to the hospital. They were, in general, well impressed with the institution and seemed desirous to stop the publicity and criticism as soon as possible.

Very truly yours,

Lawrence Kolb, Surgeon in Charge.