

**BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE
STATE BOARD OF HEALTH;
FOR PERIOD ENDING
DECEMBER 31, 1916**

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Biennial Report of the State Board of Health; For Period Ending December 31, 1916 by S. L. Lee

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STATE OF NEVADA

BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

Nevada

(STATE) BOARD OF HEALTH

For Period Ending December 31, 1916

S. L. LEE, M.D., Secretary



CARSON CITY, NEVADA

STATE PRINTING OFFICE : : : JOE FARNSWORTH, SUPERINTENDENT

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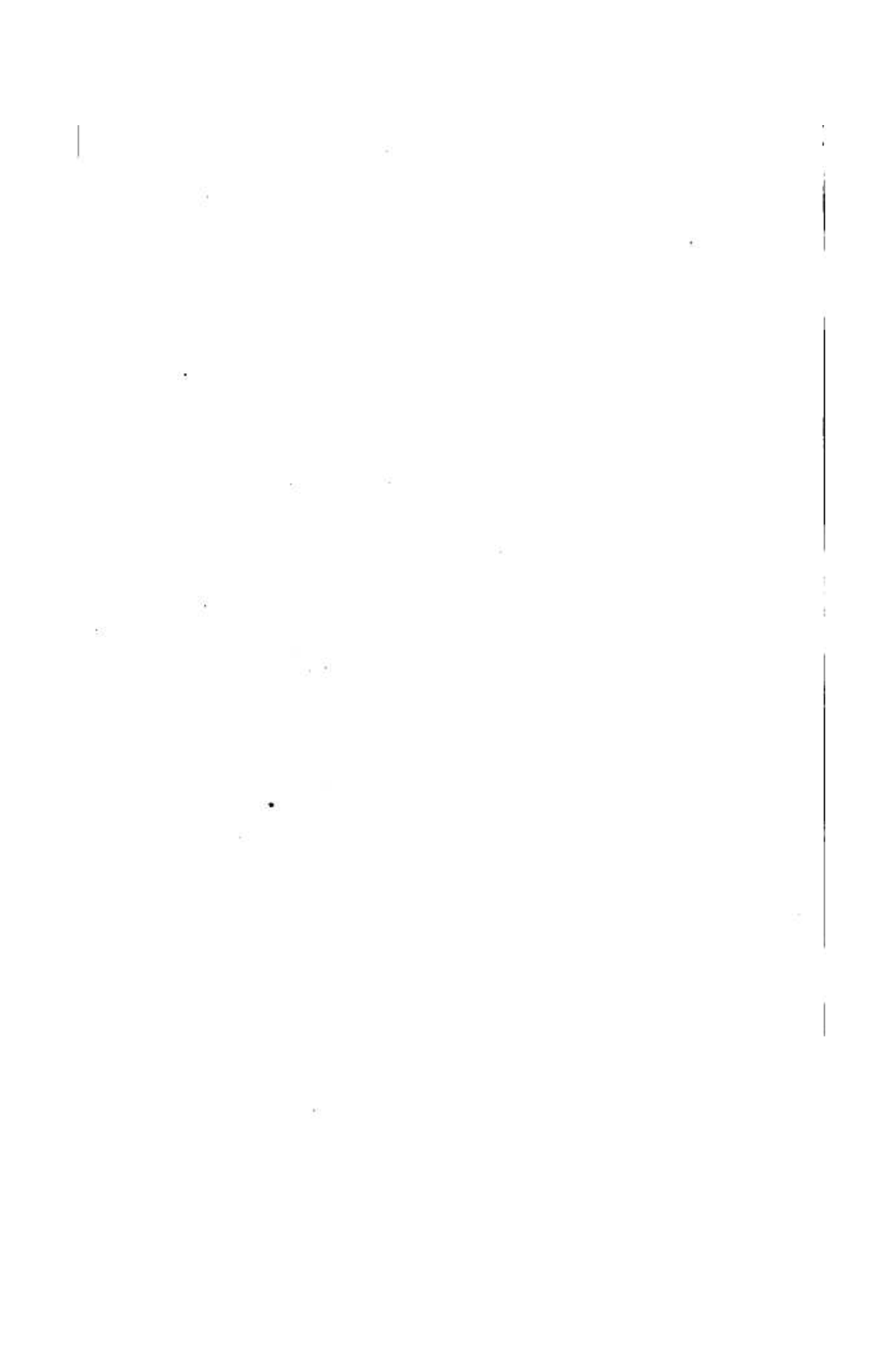
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

OFFICE OF
SECRETARY OF THE STATE BOARD OF HEALTH,
CARSON CITY, NEVADA, January 1, 1917.

To the Honorable EMMET D. BOYLE, Governor of Nevada.

SIR: In compliance with section 4 of an Act to create a State Board of Health, approved March 27, 1911, I have the honor to submit herewith my biennial report for the years 1915-1916.

Very respectfully,
SIMEON L. LEE, M.D.,
Secretary State Board of Health.



REPORT OF STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

At a meeting of the State Board of Health held in Carson City on the 12th day of July, 1914, the following letter was addressed to the Surgeon-General of the U. S. P. H. S. in Washington, D. C.:

CARSON CITY, NEVADA, July 12, 1914.

DR. RUPERT BLUE, *Surgeon-General U. S. P. H. S., Washington, D. C.*

GENERAL: The Nevada State Board of Health desires to present to the next Legislature a bill reorganizing the State Board of Health along the lines of greatest efficiency, and desires that the bill submitted to the Legislature may prove the best foundation for the future development of the board's activities.

To assist in this endeavor, the board at its last semiannual meeting instructed the Secretary to communicate with the Surgeon-General of the U. S. P. H. S., and request of him the detail of an experienced representative of his staff to study Nevada conditions in relation to public health administration and the present health activities of the State, and to embody the results of his investigations in a report to the State Board of Health, outlining plans for a reorganization of the public health activities of the State, such a report to be made the basis for future legislation.

S. I. LEE, *Secretary.*

On the 11th day of August, 1914, Dr. Blue replied as follows:

WASHINGTON, August 17, 1914.

DR. S. I. LEE, *Secretary State Board of Health, Carson City, Nevada.*

DEAR DOCTOR: My absence in New Orleans, on account of the plague situation, has caused some delay in replying to your letter of the 12th inst. requesting, on behalf of your board, an investigation of public health administration in Nevada.

It would be impracticable for me to comply with the request in the immediate future, since a number of States have previously made similar requests and must be given attention in the order in which they were received. In case there is no special need of haste for the investigation in your State, I shall be pleased to keep the request on file and comply with it as soon as the status of other investigations will permit.

Respectfully,

RUPERT BLUE, *Surgeon-General.*

On the 10th day of February, 1915, Dr. Blue sent the following:

WASHINGTON, February 10, 1915.

DR. S. I. LEE, *Carson City, Nevada.*

DEAR DOCTOR: I have had your letter of the 12th ultimo for some time and deferred replying in the hope that it might be practicable to send an officer to your State to make a study of health organization and administration. The previous requests from other States, however, and the limited number of officers available for this special duty have prevented me from doing so. From several weeks to several months are usually devoted to this kind of work in a State and the time of the officers so engaged has been more than occupied.

If it is your desire I would be pleased to bear this matter in mind and have an officer come to you for such time as may be necessary when the studies now going on shall have been finished. This will probably be within the next few months.

Respectfully,

RUPERT BLUE, *Surgeon-General.*

After about a year of waiting, the following letter was received from Dr. A. H. Glennan, Acting Surgeon-General:

WASHINGTON, June 17, 1915.

DR. S. L. LEE, *Secretary State Board of Health, Carson City, Nevada.*

DEAR DOCTOR: Referring to your letter of the 12th instant, I desire to state that it is expected to have in the near future Surgeon Carroll Fox proceed to Nevada for the purpose of making a study of public health organization and administration in that State as requested by you. Dr. Fox is at present completing a similar study in Toledo, Ohio, from where he will go to Nevada.

Respectfully, A. H. GLENNAN, *Acting Surgeon-General.*

In the latter part of June Dr. Fox arrived in Nevada and commenced his study of the situation. The Secretary of the Board accompanied him to the various counties of the State. The result of Dr. Fox's investigation and study is embodied in the following report:

PUBLIC HEALTH ADMINISTRATION IN NEVADA

By Carroll Fox, Surgeon, U. S. P. H. S.

The following report contains the result of a study of public health administration and organization in the State of Nevada, carried on through a period of six weeks:

During the course of the investigation eight towns, representing seven counties, were visited, namely, Reno and Sparks in Washoe County; Elko, Elko County; Winnemucca, Humboldt County; Goldfield, Esmeralda County; Tonopah, Nye County; Carson City, Ormsby County; and Virginia City, Storey County.

Nevada is a State having an area of 109,821 square miles. Much of this vast territory is semiarid except in small areas, here and there, which have been brought under irrigation.

The chief industries of the State are: First, mining; second, cattle- and sheep-raising; and, third, agricultural pursuits in the irrigated districts and some dry-farming.

Notwithstanding its immense area, the State had a population in 1910 of but 81,875, and it is somewhat questionable whether there has been any very marked increase since then. It must be remembered that mining towns are subject to vicissitudes that change the prosperous community of today into the deserted village of tomorrow. Increased immigration into a new section frequently means emigration from an old section. No state census has been taken, and information obtained locally is purely a guess. The new International Year Book for 1915 gives Nevada a population of 98,726 as of July 1, 1915. This is an estimate based on the increase for the previous ten years. It is believed to be too high. At any rate, in computing death rates, etc., in the following report the population of 1910 is used.

There are no large cities in the State, Reno is the largest, with a population of approximately 11,000. All the principal communities have railroad communication, but, the State being a country of magnificent distances, to reach certain points may require one or two days.

For information and assistance received in the study, I am indebted to the Secretary and members of the State Board of Health, the local health officers, and other state and county officials.

Administration and Organization

As early as 1893 a law was enacted creating a State Board of Health and giving it rather comprehensive powers and duties of a public health nature, including the authority to promulgate and enforce regulations and providing a penalty for any violation thereof. Under this act the board of health, apparently not realizing the extent of the powers vested in it and being greatly

handicapped by a totally inadequate appropriation, accomplished little except of a purely emergency nature.

In 1911 a vital statistics law was enacted. This law was patterned after the model law, but in addition provided for the creation of a State Board of Health along the lines of the law of 1893 and specified that such board was supreme in matters relating to the public health. This was followed in 1915 by an amendment making certain diseases reportable and requiring that physicians maintain quarantine.

After the passage of this amendment the Board of Health, in July, 1915, promulgated its first comprehensive regulations for the suppression of disease.

Composition and Appointment of the Board. The Board of Health is composed of a President, a Secretary, and one other member. The President and Secretary are appointed by the Governor for a term of four years. Before being eligible for such appointment they must have been engaged in the regular practice of medicine in the State of Nevada for at least five years. This requirement does not apply to the third member of the board who is appointed by the Governor, the President and the Secretary.

Meetings. The State Board of Health is required to meet in Carson City on the first Tuesday in January and the first Tuesday in July of each year and at such other times as the President may deem advisable.

Duties and Compensation of the Members. The President is required to preside over all meetings of the board and to perform such other duties as may be determined by the board. He receives a per diem of \$20 for each day the board remains in session and necessary traveling expenses.

The Secretary is required to keep the minutes of all meetings of the board and to attend to all correspondence; to proceed immediately to any locality when called upon by the local health officer for the purpose of eradicating and preventing the recurrence of any epidemic; to investigate epidemics when called upon by the State Board of Health; properly to record and tabulate all vital statistics and to issue semiannual bulletins; to make a biennial report to the Governor and to compile the reports received from the various health officers.

The Secretary receives a salary of \$1,500 per year and is allowed the sum of \$300 a year for a stenographer and a sum not to exceed \$100 a year with which to provide a suitable office for the conduct of the affairs of the State Board of Health.

The third member of the board is required to attend all meetings of the board and to consult and advise with the board whenever called upon to do so. He receives a per diem of \$20 for each day's attendance at meetings and necessary traveling expenses.

Powers and Duties of the Board. The State Board of Health is declared under the statute to be supreme in all health matters, and it is empowered to remove any deputy or local health officer for any violation of the provisions of law. It is further empowered to "take cognizance of the interests of life and health among the inhabitants of the State"; to "make or cause to be made sanitary investigations and inquiries respecting causes of disease, especially of epidemic and contagious diseases and the means of prevention; to investigate the sources of mortality and the effect of localities, employment, habits and circumstances of life on the public health." The board is further empowered, upon request or when in its opinion the sanitary interests of the locality require it, to "advise with municipal, county, and township officers with regard to the location, drainage, water supply, heating and ventilation of public buildings, and the drainage and sewerage of towns and cities."

The Board of Health is likewise given the authority to promulgate and to enforce such regulations for the better preservation of the public health in contagious and epidemic diseases as it may judge necessary.

For refusing or neglecting to comply with any regulation of the board within five days after having received notice in writing, there is provided a fine of not