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Prince Rupert Daily News

Published at Canada's Most Strategic Pacific Port — And Key to the Great Northwest

VOL. XLVIII, No. 42 | Telephone 6767 | PRINCE RUPERT, B.C., MONDAY, MARCH 2, 1959 | Night Calls—Business 6768, Editorial 6769 | PRICE TEN CENTS

Six hospital board members resign, condemn health minister's comments

Jury urges change in PRGH system for mental cases

Says RCMP cells unsuitable for patients' accommodation

After hearing the history of a man who came to Prince Rupert on a two-week "binge" and died in the cells of the RCMP office, a jury at an inquest Saturday recommended a change in hospital procedure.

It also recommended that the RCMP cells be not used for accommodating patients waiting to go to hospital until it is fitted for hospital purposes.

The jury was told that 44-year old George Spanis was unable to be admitted to the psychiatric ward of the hospital because he had not got a "sitter." It urged that the onus of providing a sitter in future be not placed on the patient's shoulders.

The jury returned a verdict that Mr. Spanis died from lobar pneumonia. He was taken to the RCMP cell at 2 a.m. February 17 and died at 7 a.m.

It also agreed that the RCMP officers were in no way to blame for Spanis' death.

Coroner George J. Dawes and the jury were told that Spanis and Peter Kushner came to the New Royal Hotel February 3 from Alice Arm, where they were working in the silver mines. Coroner Dawes said Spanis was "on a binge."

In a written statement Mr. Kushner, who was not in court, said: "I don't think we drew a sober breath since February 3. We drank all the time."

Mr. Kushner's statement went on to say that Spanis knew he needed medical treatment, but had been refused admission.

Jury foreman Arthur Murray asked for RCMP to inquire if this was true, and if so, why.

In a 20-minute adjournment, RCMP tried to discover if Spanis had in fact been to the hospital and sought treatment, but were unable to get an answer.

RCMP also could locate Dr. R. B. Smith to answer further questions from the jury.

Understood man had DTs

Dr. Smith had earlier told them, before being excused, that a manager of the hotel called him about Spanis. He understood he told the jury, that Spanis was drunk and had delirium tremens.

"I phoned the hospital. The nursing staff said they would find it very difficult to handle a person presumably suffering from the dt's. I said there would be a sitter coming along with him. I thought he should be admitted to the psychiatric ward," said Dr. Smith.

"The phone rang and the nurse said the patient had arrived with two RCMP officers and the sitter. She said the man who was to be Mr. Spanis' sitter was not in any shape to carry out such duties. She said she thought he also was intoxicated.

"One of the RCMP constables was there and I said I could not admit him unless a man was supplied to sit with him in his room because the hospital was not adequately staffed for such a situation, especially at night.

"I said my intention was that if he could be detained, he would be re-admitted when the day staff came on duty.

"The constable said they had no charge against him, and I said I did not want him to be returned to the hotel, and that I would appreciate it if he could be detained in a cell until we could handle him in the hospital."

Dr. Smith said he was called out on another case, the fire at Nobles Radio store, and heard nothing more until he was called to the police office at 7 a.m. and saw that Spanis was dead.

He added that he found no evidence of injury on Spanis.

Mr. Murray asked: "Is it the practice in most hospitals to have facilities for handling such cases at night?"

Dr. Smith replied: "My impression would be that in a hospital of this size there would not be a permanent staff large enough to take care of persons such as this. Extra staff may be called in, or if they are not too busy, an orderly can watch. It so happened there was no orderly that night."

Mr. Murray: "Is there generally an orderly on at night?"

Dr. Smith: "I believe there is."

Dr. Smith said a sedative was given to Spanis.

Nurse Mary McGough, night supervisor said the sitter who arrived smelled strongly of alcohol and she told him to go home.

When a juryman asked if any steps were taken to see if Spanis was really sick or under the influence of alcohol, Nurse McGough replied: "We carried out the doctor's orders."

A juryman commented: "The man was said to have DTs, and no medical man arrived at his side until 7:15 a.m. which was too late."

Nurse McGough added that Spanis walked in under his own power, and appeared normal except for a strong smell of alcohol.

Co-manager of the New Royal Hotel, Donald MacInnes, described Spanis's behaviour during his stay at the hotel.

He said that on one occasion he visited Spanis's room. Spanis kept telling him there were people in the room. MacInnes said he could not find anybody there. He said Spanis drank heavily while at the hotel.

Evidence of heavy drinking by Spanis was also given by co-manager E. H. Gasparini.

RCMP Constable G. G. Wright, who was on night duty at the RCMP office, said Spanis appeared to be suffering from the DTs, and was placed in the cell.

Constable Wright said Spanis walked across the cell and talked to himself continuously. Constable W. F. Rayson and Constable W. B. Ulrich gave evidence of bringing Spanis in from the hospital to the police cell.

Constable Ulrich told the jury that Spanis gave no indication of violence, and received no medical attention while in the cell.

Foreman Murray said it was only fair that the doctor or the hospital should have a chance to answer the jury's query about Spanis's being unable to obtain admission to the hospital.

While RCMP were trying unsuccessfully to locate Dr. Smith and the hospital administrator, the jury retired. When they reassembled, Mr. Murray announced that they had considered their verdict.

He said the jury thought

(continued on Page 5)
SEE Jury Urges

City housewife wins $1,000 bingo prize

Mrs. Maurice (Caroline) Wozlowski of 312 Eighth Avenue West was the lucky winner of $1,000, first prize at a successful Kinsmen Club Swimming Pool bingo held Friday night in the Civic Centre.

A total of $1,700 was raised by the Kinsmen Club and will be turned over to the Civic Centre Swimming Pool project as the first installment of the Club's $10,000 commitment. More than 800 people attended.

Winning second prize of $100 was William Pound of the St. Elmo Hotel. There were 18 other $50 prize winners.

Mrs. Wozlowski a housewife and mother of three children has already made plans to put her winnings to good use.

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ONE OF THE YOUNGEST members of the Vancouver Symphony orchestra which plays three concerts here on Friday, March 20, is 20-year-old English horn player Eugenia Millensky. Miss Millensky came from New York to join the orchestra in 1957. She started both violin and piano lessons just after her fourth birthday, then switched to oboe and English horn when she entered New York's Julliard School of Music three years ago. Only two weeks remain for city residents to obtain tickets to the concert in the Navy Drill hall which will feature the entire 68-piece orchestra directed by conductor Irwin Hoffman.

Martin tells hospital group to elect board

Health Minister Martin today placed the responsibility of operating the Prince Rupert General hospital to the hospital association.

Yesterday at a special meeting the association asked the health minister to take over after six of the nine hospital board members resigned.

The following wire was received at 1 p.m. this afternoon by hospital administrator Edward H. Knight:

"To secretary, Prince Rupert General Hospital Association: It is the responsibility of Prince Rupert General Hospital Association as owners of hospital to operate hospital. I feel it imperative that special meeting be called to replace elected directors who resigned. If hospital closes as a result of failure of association to elect directors, the responsibility for the effect on people of Prince Rupert rests entirely with all members of the association. Recommend that you consult solicitor to ascertain requirements of bylaws regarding election of officers at special meeting.

Eric Martin, Minister of Health and Welfare."

Mr. Knight said he had no comment to make on the wire.

Jailed for day

Andrew Duke of Prince Rupert was sentenced to one day in jail by Magistrate E. T. Applewhaite in city police court this morning on a charge of public mischief. He pleaded guilty February 2 and was remanded until today for sentence.

NURSING SHORTAGE REPORTED

Hospital in red again, $25,077 loss in 1958

Prince Rupert General Hospital Association ran up a deficit of $25,077 last year, the hospital board was told Friday night by auditor A. L. Bell.

Biggest item was salaries, which jumped from $349,779 to $394,212. Food, the next biggest item, rose from $43,235 in 1957 to $49,076.

This was followed by drugs, prescriptions and medicines which rose from $22,137 to $24,831.

Total expenditure was $553,032.

Total revenue was $527,955, of which the BCHIS provided the lion's share of $442,212 for in-patients. Other in-patients revenue totalled $57,457, with private and semi-private differentials providing a further $17,125.

Out-patients' services brought in $22,540. Net earnings from patient care were $523,943. Other miscellaneous income totalled $4,011.

The hospital modernization fund started with a balance of $2,594 and ended with a balance of $6,147.

At December 31, the association had a bank overdraft of $29,605.

Balance of the plant fund capital account at December 31 was $400,716—this is the value of all the buildings, land and equipment, along with the various funds that sustain them.

The auditor's report was adopted unanimously.

From the women's auxiliary, Mrs. Carl Strand asked what suitable project they could undertake this year. Dr. W. B. Hick suggested the hospital needed several more incubators.

Chairman R. G. Moore said a consultant from the BCHIS would be coming to the hospital to check on the nursing situation. Matron Mrs. J. L. Kelly had reported that there was a shortage of nurses.

"Rather than get more nurses, they think we are overstaffed," Mr. Moore said.

The medical staff will also present a report on the staffing position, said Dr. Hick.

The annual meeting of the hospital association will take place Thursday, March 26 at the Civic Centre at 8 p.m.

Rupert couple jailed for year

Clarence Green and his wife Violet were each sentenced to a total of one year in jail by Magistrate E. T. Applewhaite in city police court this morning on charges of breaking and entering and theft, and possession of stolen currency.

Mrs. Green pleaded guilty last Monday to charges of breaking and entering and theft of money totalling $37 from the Fraser House and the Westholme Rooms; while Green pleaded guilty to two counts of possession of the stolen currency. They both pleaded guilty to charges of being in a dwelling with intent to commit an indictable offence.

City logger "improving"

Alfred W. Dyer, 801 Alfred Street, mechanic employed with MacDonald Logging Company at Shames, is in satisfactory condition in Terrace hospital after his mishap last Wednesday. Mr. Dyer suffered a slight skull fracture when struck on the head by a limb from a falling tree.

Truck crushes garage owner, fractures ribs

A city garage owner was rushed to hospital by ambulance Saturday morning shortly after a light delivery truck he was working on slid from its position on a grease rack and pinned him up against another vehicle.

In fair condition in Prince Rupert General Hospital is Otto Quast of Superior Auto Service Limited on the corner of Third Avenue West and Park Avenue.

City RCMP said that Mr. Quast was greasing the truck when the accident occurred.

An unidentified man who was in the garage at the time shifted the other vehicle and removed Mr. Quast at once.

RCMP said that Mr. Quast received head lacerations, fractured ribs and is suffering from shock.

Mayor asks for commissioner from Victoria to take over

Mayor P. J. Lester last night asked Premier Bennett to send up a commissioner to operate the Prince Rupert General hospital.

The mayor's action in a telegram to the premier, followed resignation of five elected members and the city representative on the Prince Rupert General hospital board.

The board resigned at a special meeting yesterday afternoon at the Canadian Legion hall of the Prince Rupert General hospital association.

After the board resigned the association approved a resolution asking Health Minister Martin to take over the operation of the hospital.

A telegram signed by administrator Edward H. Knight said:

"Special society meeting today accepted with regret resignation of all elected and city representatives of hospital board. No replacements were made by society. Society passed unanimous resolution condemning manner minister answered board's request for assistance. Board felt letter to Daily News expressed lack of confidence in present board and they had no alternative but to resign despite vote of confidence from society. Meeting voted to have you take over operation of hospital."

Before the six of the nine members of the board resigned, despite a vote of confidence from the association, the meeting approved a hospital board personnel committee recommendation that an offer be made to the members of Local 510 of the International Union of Engineers.

The engineers, following a government - supervised strike vote, set 12:01 this mornnig as a strike deadline and then extended the deadline to 12.01 Thursday. The five 4th class engineers in their wage dispute with the board had asked for a $20 per month pay boost.

Alderman Norman Bellis, personnel committee chairman proposed that the engineers be offered a 3 per cent wage increase, in an effort to prevent the strike.

CHAIRMAN R. G. MOORE
. . . Ends eight years

Call for arbitration if necessary

If that failed, he said, he asked the association to approve a resolution calling for the wage dispute to be heard by County Court Judge W. A. Schultz on an arbitration basis with the award to be binding on both the union and the hospital association.

The meeting approved the alternatives.

M. B. O'Toole, president of the engineers local said last night that the union had wired its international reprsentative in Vancouver, Edward Callan, regarding the hospital association's offer of a 3 per cent wage increase. The increase would amount to about $10 a month.

Mr. O'Toole said that Mr. Callan would be in Prince Rupert Tuesday to discuss the matter with the engineers.

Mayor Lester's wire to Premier Bennett said:

"All elected members of the Prince Rupert General hospital have resigned today because 'from letter that was sent by minister of health to Prince Rupert Daily News it appears that minister has no confidence any longer in the board and the future operation of the hospital would be jeopardized if they were to remain.'

"Hospital association unable to obtain any replacements on board.

"Suggest government appoint a commissioner to operate hospital in place of board and to work with hospital association in formation of new board."

Tendering their resignations were R. G. Moore, chairman, who has served on the board for eight years; J. D. McRae, finance chirman who has been on the board six years; Alderman Norman Bellis, personnel committee chairman, with seven years on the board; Alderman A. Donald Ritchie; A. A. W. Macdonnell; Mrs. Eugene Bartlett.

Remaining on the board were W. D. McAra, government appointee; Mrs. Carl Strand, hospital women's auxiliary representative and Dr. L. M. Greene, reprsentative of the Prince Rupert Medical association.

The board members resigned despite a plea that they reconsider by Dr. W. S. Kergin who said that he could see no particular reason why they "should resign because of the ignorance of the minister of health."

Also given a vote of confidence was administrator Edward H. Knight who will continue to administer the affairs of the hospital.

In explaining his stand, chairman of the board R. G. Moore said that in writing a letter to the Prince Rupert Daily News and stating that "the people of Prince Rupert should press the hospital board for explanations . . . as to why it should go so deeply into deficit" Health Minister Martin showed that he had lost confidence in the board and therefore the board felt that "it would be in the interests

(Continued on Page 5)
SEE Six Hospital Board

J. D. McRAE
. . . Six years in office

ALD. NORMAN BELLIS
. . . "Not quitter"

ALD. A. DONALD RITCHIE
. . . "Hit below belt"

Cabinet job for Murray latest rumor

William H. Murray, Social Credit MLA for Prince Rupert, looks like the best bet to become the new minister of commercial transport, J. K. Nesbitt, Daily News political writer, says in his column today.

Mr. Nesbitt, whose column "Victoria Report" appears on the editorial page every week, says:

"Socred Mr. Murray appears the best bet, at the moment, to become the new minister of Commercial Transport, or at least to be taken into the cabinet.

"He's a bright young man, has much hidden talent and besides, if the Premier adds to his cabinet at this time, he'd like the western north represented."

Mr. Nesbitt says that "Prince Rupert rates a cabinet minister now that it's our city nearest to the new state of Alaska.

Prince Rupert has now gone 46 days without a fatal traffic accident.

More funds for schools

At the Canadian Conference on Education last year, 850 delegates representing 3,000,000 Canadians said:

"We must spend more money on education."

In 1957, Canadians spent:

$1,687 million on defence.

$1,865 million on cars.

$1,322 million on tobacco and alcoholic beverages, and only $1,020 million on education.

WHICH OF THESE ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF CANADA?

WEATHER—

Gale warning in effect. Variable cloudiness Tuesday with rain in the evening. Little change in temperature. Winds light before midnight increasing to southeast 30 again tomorrow evening. Low tonight and high Tuesday 37 and 45.

TIDES—

Tuesday, March 3, 1959
(Pacific Standard Time)

High	07:50	18.8 feet
	21:17	16.3 feet
Low	01:23	9.1 feet
	14:48	5.8 feet