

THE INDEPENDENT

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Residing in Honolulu.

TUESDAY, DEC. 19, 1899.

WHO IS TO BLAME.

Doctor Day's attempt to shift the blame for the unsanitary condition of the section of the city known as Chinatown from the Board of Health to the Legislature was a very lame one, to use no harsher term, being answered in the most crushing manner by the letter of the officers of the Legislature, showing that every dollar asked for by the Board of Health had been granted in the most ungrudging spirit. We have assurances that the Board has been repeatedly told of the filthy condition of the district lately under quarantine, and has taken no pains to verify the statements made. We question whether the President of the Board has set his foot upon the territory now being so thoroughly cleansed during his administration of the office.

As for the physicians of the Board they have been too busy in the practice of their profession and the collection of fees, private and public, to give any time to a survey of the city under their care, particularly of the unsavory section now being cleansed by public spirited citizens. We can all recall the gross carelessness that resulted in the cholera epidemic, and the same carelessness is responsible for the present conditions existing here.

Something more than a perfunctory discharge of duty by the members of the Board of Health is required by the influx of the thousands of Orientals to our islands. With such an immigration we must expect the diseases of such people and see to it that congested sections of the city have more attention than was formerly required. The physicians of the Board whose duty it is to board and inspect vessels asking entry to our harbor receive substantial fees and this reason, if no other should feel a weighty sense of responsibility in the performance of their duty. The question of their competency is not one we care to discuss at this time; but it should be considered by the laymen on the Board.

We now come to the point we have before discussed, and still hold to, that the ablest Board of Health will be one consisting of laymen of good business and executive ability, who for the public good are willing to give their time and talents. Such a Board having salaried physicians of skill and experience to call in consultation when professional service is required, and to board incoming vessels, would be found as effective as it formerly was.

REORGANIZE.

The hour of peril tests people and organizations. The cholera scare and the present one have shown that the organization of the Board of Health is as impracticable as human ingenuity could invent. In the first place the President is a man who has other very important official duties to attend to. Enough, in fact, to claim his whole attention if those duties are properly attended to. The so-called executive officer of the Board has not only Honolulu

to cover but also the Leper Settlement at Molokai. The Board itself is composed of medical men whose private interests, however public-minded they may be, must more than occasionally conflict with their public duties. There must be a practical reorganization of the Board. First of all it must be taken out of politics absolutely. The gun carrying days have passed away and subordinate appointments should be made for merit alone and not for past political services. We are now annexed and are a component part of the United States. The doctors obtained the present organization and, perhaps, even now they regret that they did so as very few of the men who upset the ancient regime have seats on the Board. To be a practical Board of Health the laymen, as business men, should rule, and if possible the men, should be kamaainas with a knowledge of the city before it was encumbered with rotten buildings. The doctors should constitute an advisory board. The President should not be a portfolio holder with other duties to attend to, but a well paid business-headed man who should act as an executive officer, in the fullest direction of affairs. The Leper Settlement of Molokai should have its own executive head and local staff. It is impossible for Mr. Reynolds, for instance to cover Molokai, Honolulu and the country at large at one time. We trust that level heads will think over these matters before our legislature meets.

STRAYED, LOST OR STOLEN.

The following is a pointed and not a stacking paragraph from the Hilo Hawaiian Herald:

The Hawaiian constitution provides that a minister ad interim may hold office for a period of not more than sixty days. President McKinley declines to accept the resignation of Minister Damon who has been absent from his post for a longer period than an ad interim minister may serve. Hawaiian Executive accepts resignation and appoints T. F. Lansing to the place where are we at? According to the Constitution now supposed to be in force Mr. Lansing has no legal standing as Minister of Finance and while he is giving perfect satisfaction to the public and Executive his acts as an official are not, according to the Constitution, legal. Possibly according to Mr. Dole, President McKinley, like Secretary Bay, has not "been long enough in office to familiarize himself with the conditions existing in the islands." Another section of the Hawaiian Constitution has evidently gone astray.

Sent a Thousand Words a Minute.

NEW YORK, Dec. 3.—A successful test was made to-night of the Polak-Virag system of rapid automatic telegraphing between this city and Chicago. The dispatches were sent from the World office, via Pittsburg and Fort Wayne, to the Tribune office in Chicago. Joseph Virag, one of the inventors, handled the New York key. Although the wires were not in perfect working order, he managed to send four messages at the rate of about 1,000 words a minute. It took only two seconds to send the following:

"Editorial Rooms, World, to the Tribune, Chicago: We have fine weather in New York. How is it in Chicago?" "WORLD."

The message was repeated back on an ordinary Morse instrument, with the reply:

"Editorial Rooms, Tribune, Chicago, to World, New York: 'It is snowing in Chicago, but it is pleasant Chicago snow.' "TRIBUNE"

L. O. McPherson, representing the Guardian Trust Company of Chicago, which is promoting the invention in the United States, watched the test at this end. A second long distance test will be made next week when Anton Pollak arrives from the West.

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Store will be open evenings, commencing Saturday, December 9th, with music, as usual, by the best Hawaiian talent. A new feature this year will be our special tables—No. 1, presents for 10c; No. 2, presents for 25c; No. 3, presents for 50c; No. 4, presents for \$1. You are all invited to make us a call, whether buying or not.

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