

DEPARTMENT OF
PENSIONS AND NATIONAL HEALTH

ADA

OUR REPLY REFER TO FILE NO.

OTTAWA, June 4th, 1942.

Dr. Wilder Penfield,
Neurological Institute,
Montreal, P.Q.

Dear Doctor Penfield:

Dr. Convery has passed me a copy of the letter which you sent to him under date of May 23rd concerning additional room for patients in the Institute. I have talked the whole matter over with Dr. Cathcart and the Administration Branch here in Ottawa and have made a hasty review of patients which have been in the Institute during the past two and a half years.

2. A good many of these cases were direct admissions by National Defence Medical Officers, and numbers of them needed immediate attention. It appears, however, that there were quite a number of others who should have been sent in the first instance to Ste. Annes or the Royal Victoria instead of to the Institute where considerable spade work might have been carried out and thereby the necessity for crowding your beds later in the Institute would have been obviated. There are also some cases which were sent to the Institute direct by the Military Medical Officers who probably should not have been sent there at all, having evident functional conditions.

3. I am treading here very gingerly on unknown ground as far as I am concerned, but I can understand the action which was taken for direct admission because of the very favourable and enviable reputation which the Institute has built up for itself, particularly in the minds of all of the Canadian medical profession.

4. I have encountered difficulty in presenting the suggestion to the Treasury Board to assist in the erection of an annex to the Institute in the McGill College grounds and so we will have to look around for alternate proposals.

5. In the first place, I have the partial promise from the Army engineers of some prefabricated houses, 24 X 60, which the Army is now beginning to use in its camp hospitals and larger centers. Dr. Cathcart and I went to see one of these houses yesterday and it is really very adaptable to almost any purposes required so long as it can be serviced from a nearby institution. It can be erected very rapidly on cedar posts and therefore does not mutilate any property, and it is well insulated for both winter and summer. They can be very rapidly put together, ten men can put up a 24 X 60 structure in less than a week which would accommodate at least twenty patients, probably more in emergency. At the present time the Army is using for its own purpose all the houses as they are manufactured, but later on in the year when their needs are at least partially completed, and if we find that our soldier cases are crowding the Institute, I think the proposition might be entertained of putting up one or two of these in the grounds near the Institute as you suggest.

6. Then again for the immediate needs I certainly appreciate your suggestion that one of the junior members of the neurosurgical staff of the Institute might assist our doctors at Ste. Annes with a pre-selection of cases at Ste. Annes to be admitted to the Institute after the preliminary spade work had been completed at Ste. Annes. This arrangement would conserve your beds in the Institute and direct admissions to the Institute could be confined to the definite emergency cases.

7. I would be very glad to arrange a consultation service from the Institute to visit Ste. Annes, and we would set up some sort of an honorarium, say \$25.00 a visit plus transportation expenses, and we would try not to burden your staff and the Institute any more than possible, because I personally appreciate the services which you are affording us.

8. If the above ideas meet with your approval perhaps you will have your secretary drop me a note and I will put the tentative suggestions about the consultant services in effect immediately.

With kindest personal regards, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Ross Miller
Ross Miller, M.D.
Director Medical Services.

RM/MP