



Address by Dr. John W. Cronin, Chief, Division of Hospital Facilities,
U. S. Public Health Service, Washington, D. C.
at Dedication of Citizens General Hospital, November 6, 1952 *

Mr. McCabe, distinguished guests and friends. I bring you first a greeting and congratulations from Surgeon General Scheele of the United States Public Health Service.

We've been watching this project with considerable interest. You had a little trouble and it's maybe the troubled one we watch but, fortunately, it was resolved and resolved in the best interest not only in this particular community, but to the nation as a whole. Now you may wonder how a hospital in New Kensington could be of benefit to the United States. Well, these are troubled times we are living in. We're all certain that everything will be fine, but we're not ostriches, and we don't stick our heads in the sand and shiver. We know that you are near one of the greatest industrial areas of this country - one of the areas which is very important to all the people of this nation; in fact, very important to all the people of the world - that is, a free world.

We know that one of the most important assets we have in this land is the worker who can stay on the job. We should do everything we can to keep that worker working. He can't work if he can't be helped when he is ill. He can't work if his family is sick. So it is upon the health resources of this nation that a great deal depends. Now some health resources of the nation are bricks and mortar. This building is brick and mortar. It isn't worth much in terms of service if you discard the people who are working in it, if you discard the people in the community who are working for it, and if you discard yourself by never thinking of it.

A hospital is a public service institution. As such, you as the public set certain goals for your hospital. The people working in your hospital think and work and pray and try to achieve those goals. Those goals are entirely as you want them to be. If you want a hospital that is nothing more than a

* New Kensington, Pennsylvania.

doctor's workshop you set the pace. You want a hospital, however, that is a real health center of your community, a place where health can be maintained, not just a place where you go to get well when you are sick. It is a place from which health education stems, and I would like to assure you that all health begins with health education. These hospitals that are being built today are really representative of the modern medical commodity which is health maintenance. This is a fusion of curative medicine and preventive medicine.

Now I mentioned this great industrial area. Your geographical location is such that upon you may fall a very great responsibility. The program which is my responsibility to head up - to be the pediatrician on, because on the platform here today is former Surgeon General Thomas Parran, who was one of the obstetricians - is the great National Hospital Survey and Construction Program. I didn't think it up. It's my job as the pediatrician to raise the baby. I can report to you that your hospital here is the 1,009th Hill-Burton project which has been completed in the last five years in this country. That's an awful lot. We have currently 1,950 projects. Eight hundred and ten are under construction. Those projects are mostly general hospitals like yours. Eighty percent of them. Yours is a big hospital as compared to most of those projects. Most of the projects, the 80%, are in towns under 5,000 population, and are under 50 beds in size. Your hospital here is much bigger than that but, nevertheless, you will serve the same purpose if this country ever does have a national catastrophe. It was Providential - it was not planned - that many of these hospitals are being built around the larger towns.

These hospitals on the periphery of the larger industrial areas, on the peripheral places like Pittsburgh, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and San Francisco can very well become evacuation

destinations if we get in trouble. I'm not saying we will. No one knows. I'm sure that all of us don't want it to happen, but we do want to be prepared. Now as far as your own community's peace time needs are concerned, as I said before you have to set the goal. This hospital is a fine hospital. You had a splendid architect - you've gotten excellent results.

I enjoyed going through this hospital for one main reason. It is functionally laid out so that there is a conservation of people's time and effort. People in hospitals work hard and time means a lot to them. People who are patients appreciate that. Sometimes most of us who have never been in a hospital don't quite understand. However, it is very important to the administration of your hospital, to the Board of Trustees and to the people working in it to try to get over to the community to face the fact that you have a hospital that can serve you and serve you well. But how it serves you is dependent upon you. There is a salesmanship job to a hospital, and I don't think people in the hospital business should ever feel that they are above selling this hospital. Not to be disrespectful, but I think one of the biggest sales organizations on the face of the world are those organizations that are selling the Lord. We have to sell salvation. All of us respond to a sale of salvation, and we should. It's the proper thing to do. So also, do we respond to the work of a hospital. The hospital is dedicated to one thing, and that is service to mankind. The doctors work and they work hard, the nurses work, as do the dietician, the pharmacist, the stationary engineer, the man who mows the lawn, and many others; but they're all doing it for a primary purpose. That is to enable you or me or our friends who are in that hospital bed to get out of that bed, to get home and get to work so that the family can again be maintained on a level of equilibrium we hope better than before.

A hospital is people. It's not just brick and mortar. This hospital has the opportunity to be a fine institution. It is well laid out, well designed and is in a location where it can serve you.

Now when I knew last week that I was coming here, I was wondering just exactly what I was going to say. I found a letter from an old Commanding Officer. He is now over eighty years of age. He was a very fine friend, a former associate, and I would like to read to you what he said in that letter, because he had just learned, having been out of the Service, what I was doing. So I will conclude my remarks with first wishing you the best of luck in the operation of the hospital; assuring you of the cooperation of the U. S. Public Health Service in any way we can to assist you; and read you these three short paragraphs. These were written by Assistant Surgeon General, retired, Frederick Smith, who had charge of the Division of Hospitals twenty or twenty-five years ago.

"A hospital pays higher dividends in usefulness than any other public building. A department, bureau, agency or court, post office or custom house is open only a third of each twenty-fours and is closed fifty two Sundays and many holidays each year. A hospital is never closed. Its lights are an eternal fire on the altar of service. Its door is never locked; its windows never darkened.

"When vacation grass grows lush on silent school house grounds the hospital knows no respite. While the Cathedral drowns many days each week over empty pews, the hospital vibrates through every crowded moment with never-failing service to humanity. Through long hot summer days and nights, as in winter storm and autumn blast, the hospital carries on. In public disaster, when other enterprise is dazed and crippled, the hospital never fails.

"The best that is in men and women is brought out in the crises that try the soul. In operating room and ward is forged, in the fire of sacrifice and renunciation, the character that enobles. Pious resignation, courage and generosity are here daily witnessed. To the hospital come both saint and sinner, the victim of wasting disease, of violence or of his own vicious habits. Whether they march to the drums of war or the pipes of peace, the sick and maimed seek refuge where pain is eased and life held sacred and find there, true to hospital traditions, not only scientific efficiency, but tolerance, kindness and understanding sympathy."