

Poor farm filth led to charges

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no ventilation, dirt, cobwebs and falling plaster. "The bath rooms are so dirty that the thought of taking a bath in either of them, at once drove us to the conclusion that we would rather keep what dirt we had and not take any chances in them."

It was in the last sentence of their report that the grand jury got to the point, which was "immediate removal of the superintendent in charge."

The man in charge of the poor farm was William J. Semple, a man who was not without resources to combat the charges. In the Oct.-26 edition of the *Telephone* Semple's letter sidestepped the issue by denying he had "used questionable means in securing the appointment as superintendent of the Poor Asylum."

In a separate column, it was reported that the "Charity Association" had also made a visit to the farm to make a "careful inspection." Continued the article, "... the members were not slow in

saying that from the conditions that the report is too severe, and they make the same statement in public today."

Nevertheless, Semple was served with a bench warrant, obliging him to discuss his interpretation of the word charity with Judge Wilson. Semple had also issued a statement in which he denied the grand jury's allegations and refused to resign.

On Nov. 16, the newspaper reported that charges had been preferred against Semple. "There will be a score of witnesses, many of whom are from the asylum and will be asked to relate the actual conditions. On the other hand, it is said the defense introduced members of the Charity Association to prove that under the circumstances Semple is doing all that can be done, and that to properly care for two or three of the inmates alone would require more expenses than the total amount of salary paid the superintendent."

On the eve of Semple's trial, the prosecutor and defense attorney were clashing over the fact that his arrest came as a result of an affidavit, rather than as a result of a grand jury indictment.