

Feb. 20, 1952: New Edmonton sanatorium focuses on more active treatment of tuberculosis patients

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Aberhart Memorial Sanatorium

Photograph by: File, Edmonton Journal

The Aberhart Memorial Sanatorium was officially unveiled by the widow of William Aberhart, the Social Credit premier who made free, provincewide treatment of tuberculosis one of his first acts when taking office.

Jessie Aberhart declared the 6.4-hectare site on the University of Alberta campus officially open.

The \$3-million hospital, when in full operation, would serve tuberculosis patients from all parts of northern Alberta. Advanced medical equipment would ensure the staff of 150 would be able to better meet the needs of the more than 300 patients who were expected to be moved there.

"During the past 30 years, the method of treatment for tuberculosis patients has changed drastically," said Dr. G.R. Davidson, medical director of the tuberculosis division. "The

emphasis used to be on rest cures. Now we incorporate the more active treatment, including surgery.”

The completed building, self-sufficient in every way, is supplemented by two smaller structures, the nurses’ home and an auxiliary building to house laundry facilities, garages and storage rooms.

A news story at the time said builders “spared no pains to make the patients comfortable. Doors cannot slam, window blinds cannot flap. Special corridor ceilings prevent reverberation. A 5,000-volume library helps time pass.”

Ninety per cent of the wards in the new hospital face toward the south, providing maximum sunlight. Correspondence courses were also made available to patients.

Aberhart was premier from 1935 until his death on May 23, 1943.

Tuberculosis patients were treated at the sanitorium until 1970, when management of the hospital transferred to the University of Alberta Hospital.

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