

Fort Simcoe N. J.
Sept. 3^d 1874

Rev. James H. Wilbur
U. S. Ind. Agent.

Sir in accordance with your instructions I have prepared and now submit for your consideration my annual report for the year beginning July 1st 1873 and ending June 30th 1874

The past year has been in some respects an unusually hard one for the Indian people. They were visited by an epidemic of measles which began in December and this was followed up closely by the whooping-cough so that by March many were suffering with both diseases.

The weather was exceedingly inclement and the people not very well supplied with wood and consequently the sick could not be so well cared for as they might have been under more favourable auspices.

The measles assumed a virulent form and often several members in the same family were sick at once. In some instances nearly all were ill. On the occasion of one visit I remember to have found eleven sick in one house. Some were just recovering some just taking the disease while others were in the height of the fever.

It was impossible to have the cases brought to the hospital to receive medical aid. The exposure necessarily consequent upon moving them would not have been compensated by the change. It was therefore thought best

to treat all the cases at their homes except the children belonging to the school or such persons as were very near to or at the Agency buildings.

Due to the virulent form of the disease the very bad weather and other unfavourable circumstances the measles proved very fatal either directly or indirectly.

In some instances patients passed through the disease and considering themselves well went out to engage in their avocations and by exposing themselves to cold fell victims to acute bronchitis or pneumonia. Some again with originally weak respiratory organs have been left with permanently impaired lungs and finally have fallen victims to consumption while some died from the direct effects of measles itself.

Among some of the more uncivilized Indians on the outskirts of the reservation they undertook to treat the cases in their own way according to the traditions received from the generations gone by. Sweating in their sweat houses is considered a luxury in health and a medicine in disease. These "wild Indians" as they are familiarly called undertook to treat ^{the} measles and whooping cough by the sweating process. Their sweat houses are made by bending small elm poles in the form of hoops and putting the ends in the ground thus making a conical frame work from 3 to 4 feet high; over this brush and earth are thrown leaving a small

opening sufficiently large to allow one person to go in stooping or crawling.

Stones are heated in a fire on the outside and the patient having stripped naked goes in taking a vessel of water: the hot stones are passed in and a blanket thrown over the doorway of the hut. The man to be sweated then pours the water upon the stones which generates a dense and hot steam. He stays in and parboils as long as he can endure the heat and then reeking with perspiration and panting for breath he rushes out and plunges into cold water.

However effectual such a proceeding may be in the removal of filth it cannot but be a desperate method of treatment for measles.

The results of the sweating and cold water plunge were such as might have been anticipated a very large mortality. On the very outskirts of the reservation I am informed that some of the Indians even cut holes in the ice to get into the water after their sweats.

During the winter I was constantly in the habit of going on horseback from house to house among the people in the various settlements to visit the sick and keep myself informed of the condition and wants of the people. Advice was given as to the management of the sick and I personally administered remedies whenever I could and gave instructions as to the

manner of preparing food for them. In many instances I showed them how to prepare it and fed it to the sick myself.

The food issued to the Indians by your order in the form of rice flour beef &c ~~was~~ ^{was} fully as much needed as medicine. When I remember the ignorance prevailing among the whites in regard to the proper food for the sick and the proper manner of administering it I cannot be surprised to find the Indians in some instances bring in these ~~things~~ ^{things} ~~respect~~.

During the year I have dispensed 4371 prescriptions and made 418 visits to the sick. In the month of January alone I made 103 visits ~~to the sick~~ many of them from 3 to 10 miles distant the snow being at the time about 2 feet deep. For a number of weeks I found it almost impossible to take care of all the sick. We had the hospital full and there were scores in the surrounding country down sick some with measles some with whooping-cough and some with both diseases others had pneumonia or bronchitis. For awhile the school was compelled to stop owing to the prevailing epidemic.

Through the blessing of Providence, ^{the supervision of the St} and the aid of the Superintendent of teaching the matron, ~~and~~ teachers and others the school children were well cared for and generally passed safely through both measles and whooping cough.

I am glad to report a very excellent sanitary condition over the whole reservation at the present time.

The Indians are gradually casting off their former habits of life and are taking up with the white man's mode of living.

The numerous handsome dwellings the Agent is causing to be erected for the Indians will I confidently believe stimulate them to habits of cleanliness and order and go just so far in bringing up their sanitary condition. It cannot be denied that poverty and filth usually go hand in hand and so long as a people are compelled to live in houses of skins dirt or brush there are not many incentives to cleanliness. Even white men who adopt the life of the miner or mountaineer and are deprived of the conveniences of houses are usually wanting in this respect.

The past winter has been a hard lesson for the Indian people. They could not comprehend why so many of them should die. They saw that more Indians in proportion to the number sick died than there were died among the whites. Some of them impelled by their old superstitions attributed the sickness to the spite of the Indian doctors. In despair they went to the doctors for help but seeing that they almost universally caused the death of the sick the Indian doctors fell into disrepute and today I think there is a more entire abandonment of the native ^{medicine men} ~~doctors~~ than ever before.

Since my observations on this reservation began over two years ago there has been a marked improvement in the Indians in every respect.

I can bear witness to the untiring efforts made by the Agent for their general welfare.

Like the descendants of Ishmael the poor Indians seem to have the hand of every man against ~~them~~ ^{themselves} and in this uncultivated land there are many who are ready and willing to do anything to keep them back and to throw obstacles in the way of those who are struggling to raise them up to civilization and manhood.

The debased and vile among the whites in the surrounding little towns corrupt ^{the Indians} by their examples of profanity, intemperance, and lust while they sow their loathsome diseases among them thus making trouble for the Agent the resident physicians the peaceable whites and indeed I may say to the whole community at large. In illustration of the spirit exhibited by some of the baser sort among the whites I will relate this ^{circumstance} ~~occurrence~~. Last fall a man was moving up the Yakama river with his family his children being sick with measles. He stopped along at various points on the river and when he reached the settlements above he boasted of having thrown the measles along among the Indians and remarked that he was sorry he could not give them smallpox also. According to my observation this class of persons are ~~the~~ ^{and loudest} first to complain of the misdoings of the Indians.

It has been my constant aim to give as good attention to the Indians in their sickness as I should to whites in like circumstances. I have been ready to go at any and all calls. As ~~Maintenance~~ ^{Opportunity} has offered instructions have been given in regard to hygiene. Sources of infection ^{& diseases} have been pointed out and habits of cleanliness and virtue enjoined.

About the office and dispensary it has been the design to keep everything in order, and to be as systematic and ~~methodical~~ as ~~possible~~ ^{practicable}. As far as could be the Indians have had all the advantages of the recent improvements and advancement in medicine.

I would again urge the provision for a better supply of medicines. It cannot but be clear to any one that the sum of two hundred dollars currency will not ~~properly~~ supply medicines to 2000 people. An equal number of whites usually support a drug store with an annual purchase of stock to the amount of several hundreds or thousands of dollars. During the past two years I have paid out of my own salary one hundred and fifty dollars for medicines for the Indians - this amount over and above the ^{sum} ~~amount~~ allowed by the government. Not feeling able to lose this amount I would respectfully ask that it be made up to me out of funds not otherwise used, and that in the future provision be made for a sufficiency of ^{medicines} ~~supplies~~ to carry

us ~~perfectly~~ through. Unless some arrangement be made for the purchase of medicines for this winter we shall be out of all the staple articles before spring.

I will here take occasion to remark that the surgical instruments purchased by you this summer are just the things ^{needed} ~~wanted~~ and I believe ~~them to have been purchased on very reasonable terms~~. Our dispensary is beginning to be much more what it ought in respect to surgical appliances.

In conclusion I wish to return to the Agent my gratitude for the uniform and extended to me in carrying out plans for the welfare of the sick. No one who has not shouldered the burden can form any idea of the pressure of responsibility resting upon a physician amid such circumstances as we passed through during the winter. This burden was much the lighter for the hearty cooperation of the Agent and ~~employees~~ of the Agency. Did I not realize that all improvements are being made as fast as possible I should urge a better arrangement for a hospital and some improvements and changes in the dormitory for the school. These subjects are already brought to your notice and will doubtless be attended to at an early period.

I have the honor to be

Yours very truly

W B Hey Kendall M.D.
Physician

Dr Annual Report

For

1874