

ANNUAL REPORT OF ASSISTANT SURGEON L. A. PAGE, 1889.

Battleford, 30th November, 1889.

Sir: I have the honor to tender you my annual report for this post for the year ended 30th November, 1889;

Having been ordered from Calgary on 21st June, I took medical charge of this post on 30th June.

I am happy to state that the general health of the men of this district has been good throughout the year. I am also happy to say that the fear -- the well grounded fear -- expressed by Assistant Surgeon Aylen on his report for 1888, for an epidemic of fever in this post if the season was dry, has not been justified by fact.

All conditions of weather, etc., seemed to favor such an outbreak, for it has been an exceptionally dry season, the rivers and creeks were very low -- in fact, sloughs, little lakes, etc., which in the memory of the oldest inhabitants were never known to be dry were so this year. If to this is added the fact of the absolute absence of vegetables, which, on account of the failure of the crop in this part of the country, it has proved impossible to procure, we have, I think, great cause to congratulate ourselves at our escape.

As compensation for the absence of vegetables, large quantities of lime juice were allowed the men. In fact no restriction was placed on the issue.

The use of lime juice has been highly recommended by all authorities in the absence of vegetables, and its efficacy in the prevention and cure of diseases attributable to the absence of vegetables is, I may say, universally admitted. Might not its very liberal use, together with other means, viz, strict disinfection, etc., have somewhat contributed in preventing the outbreak of an epidemic which everything seemed to prognosticate. I mention this merely for two reasons: first on account of all the circumstances considered by all authorities as being most favorable to an outbreak of this special fever being present at this post this year; second, on account of the researches that the medical profession of the Territories propose to make on the nature, origin, causes and treatment of this fever.

There has been this spring and again this fall, as the daily reports show, some febrile symptoms amongst our men, but they quickly subsided under the influences of a few doses of quinine and the treatment usually followed in these cases.

There were 321 cases treated in this hospital during the year, much the same number as last year. The cases are also much as usual, most of them being mere functional disturbances. The cases of adenitis, epididymitis, bruises, sprains, flesh wounds, etc., are mostly due to accidents occurring to our artisans or to men while riding or handling horses. The number of these cases, taking into consideration the large amount of riding and the constant handling of horses by our men, is small and reflects credit on the carefulness of the men and the gentleness of the horses. The gun wound (face and eye) were injuries resulting from the accidental explosion of a Winchester rifle cartridge, on which case I have already had the honor of submitting to you a special detailed report, and so will refrain from giving any further particulars. Reg. No 1214 Constable Grant, the victim of the accident is now very well and doing active duty on detachment. His sight is almost as good as ever, though both eyes bear quite marked cicatrices, the left eye especially.

The men's quarters are now quite comfortable; and each man has 1,200 feet of breathing space. The window space is somewhat below the proportion recommended by authorities on construction of military hospital and barracks, but our dwellings are so advantageously situated, there is such an exposure of air, and consequently such an amount of perfectly pure air all round them and there will be no shops or anything in the vicinity to pollute it, that it is not so bad. Now, especially if we take into consideration the region we live in, and also the amount of ventilation, known as spontaneous ventilation, which necessarily takes place in all the buildings of this post.

pure air are the best and cheapest disinfectants and they are at our doors and windows in all their purity and with all their purifying and vivifying properties, why not take advantage of them and admit them as freely as possible. No chemical substances skillfully used as they may be can equal sunlight, ventilation and cleanliness as antiseptics.

Mentioning cleanliness (and men are noted for their neatness, cleanliness, etc., the reports from headquarters are there to justify this assertion; but mentioning cleanliness I must say that I greatly regret the absence of a bathroom at this post. I have drawn the attention of our commanding officer, Superintendent Antrobus, to this deficiency, and so fully alive is he to the necessity that he has already provided a temporary one; but I would suggest that a permanent one of easy access be built. This was also one of the wise suggestions of my predecessor here, Assistant Surgeon Aylen, in his annual report of last year, to which I beg leave to refer you.

The greatest care has been paid to the distribution of disinfectants about the post. I found it advisable in the latter part of August and part of September to use a weak solution of permanganate of potash in the water barrels, for when the water got very low in the river it emitted a particularly weedy smell. This would point to the necessity of securing another source of supply for such possible contingencies.

I have the honor to be Sir,

your obedient servant,

L. A. PARR,

Assistant Surgeon.

To L. M. Herchemer, Esq.,
Commissioner,
N.M.M.P.,
Regina.

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The men's quarters are now quite comfortable; and each man has 1,200 feet of breathing space. The window space is somewhat below the proportion recommended by authorities on construction of military hospital and barracks, but our dwellings are so advantageously situated, there is such an expanse of open prairie and consequently such an amount of perfectly pure air all around them with no shops or anything in the vicinity to pollute it, that it matters not so much now, especially if we take into consideration the region we live in, and also the amount of ventilation, known as spontaneous ventilation, which must necessarily take place in all the buildings of this region. Sunlight

pure air are the best and cheapest disinfectants and they are at our doors and windows in all their purity and with all their purifying and vivifying properties, why not take advantage of them and admit them as freely as possible. No chemical substances skilfully used as they may be can equal sunlight, ventilation and cleanliness as anti-septics.

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