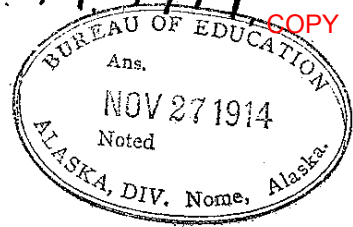


Mr. Walter b. Shields:-

Supt. Northwestern District,
Nome, Alaska.

Nov. 14 1914



Dear Mr. Shields:-

Late in the afternoon of Nov. 12th I received a letter from Mr. Sickler of Shungnak dated Oct. 26, 1914. In it he says:

"We are having the largest school that the state has ever had. We have about 50 daily."

"The health of the natives is the poorest, however that I have witnessed. The young children have their faces covered with rotten scabs. The disease seems contagious, but a number of cases have made complete recoveries. The adult natives seem to be troubled with swellings on the neck and bad colds."

Mr. Sickler describes the condition of one Toonooshuk alias "Susi Broad", wife of one Immak, who has a bad arm. He fears blood poisoning in her case, or the need of amputation of the arm. From his description I know that there is a very bad infection in her arm. She did not care to be brought to Kotzebue. She sent word to her brother in Ikroavik urging him to come down & get me. He does not respond. Then Mr. Sickler goes on:

"Mrs. Sheldon" (wife of the native whose cabin you I slept in last winter) "has been in bed some time with rheumatism in the hip. She cannot sleep for pain and shows ^{but} little improvement."

"Kareak. Mrs. Big John, complains of pains in the feet. Every few days the natives report her as being near

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"I am not sure that you could leave your other work to make a trip up here, or whether you have the funds etc. for such a purpose. However, if you could come you would find considerable work to give your care and attention to."

Mr. Shields, I have \$240.00 of my \$400.00 for medical purposes left when scarcely more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the fiscal year is ended. \$50.00 is the maximum sum that this call to Shungnak warrants taking out of the \$240.00. It looks as if no less than 15 travel days would be needed for making this trip both ways. I offered one man \$35.00 to take me up & back. He finally decided that his dogs were in poor condition and that he did not know the trail above Keana. Another native preferred to go trapping before we spoke of amount of pay. Another native did not have a suitable sled. Another native who wanted \$5.00 a day finally agreed to go for \$4.00. 2 or 3 hours later he came around to tell me that his hip was too lame for going on such a trip. Many of the dog teams are out of the village at present. The last individual ~~to~~ that ^{seemed} ~~was~~ available did not have a sled, and thought he would be unable to borrow one. He said that if he had a sled he would be willing to go under the circumstances. I had offered him \$4.00 a day.

I am sure that several of these men ~~could~~

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Dick Hall an old timer in this country ^{COPY} says that with no snow on the ground to fill up between the nigger heads it would be impossible to go over the portages going up the river, & that a team would do well to get to Shungnak in less than 9 days. Do you see where I could make the trip for less than a hundred dollars allowing something for subsistence, without I used reindeer which cannot stand up on smooth glare ice, and the reindeer camps are way off too.

By the way, ~~many~~ two good teams could not be thought of on account of there being chicken pox in the family. It would not look well for the physician who closed school & church on account of chicken pox to travel to other villages with the father of a child who has it, since the contagium is carried from the affected to the well in the clothing of a third individual.

I do not feel just right to advise Mr. Sickler by letter only which may be six weeks in getting up to him; and yet the situation in Shungnak is not an emergency that warrants ~~my~~ depleting my medical fund by one hundred dollars this early in the winter. If it were an epidemic of measles or small pox I would go anyway.

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... you away now just as well as not. No one in the hospital, & no one very sick in the community. ^{COPY} The more I think about it the more I feel like coughing up the \$400.00 for the trip & taking chances on the needs during the remainder of the year.

I wish you were in Kotzebue at present en route for Shungnak. \$25.00 would probably cover the expense if you were here to take me along as a member of your party. Reindeer transportation is surely cheaper than dog team hire, though perhaps not quite as agreeable to the passenger who likes to ride & sleep like freight.

Yours very truly
H. N. T. Nichols, M.D.

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