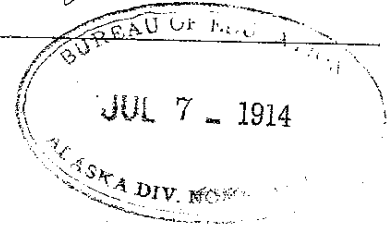


DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF EDUCATION
ALASKA SCHOOL SERVICE

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July 2, 1914

SUBJECT, _____



Mr. Walter C. Shields,
Nome, Alaska,

Dear Mr. Shields:-

Several things have come to mind since writing you in April that should be brought to your attention.

It is one of the rulings of the Dept. I believe, that no additions to or subtractions from a school house can be made without authorization from the district superintendent. The larger of the two rooms up stairs has no adequate way of being heated. There are two stoves in the school house that are not in use. One of these could be set up in the room if there were a chimney for its pipe to run into. The chimney flue made of tiling that carries smoke from the sitting room & kitchen down stairs and from the smaller chamber up stairs does not have a stove pipe hole into it from the up stairs room we would like to heat. As

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just stated we have the stove. We now have on hand eight lengths of galvanized iron stove piping, and ^{several elbows} ten lengths of tiling. None of the tiling has a side opening. We want a chimney for that room so that a stove can be set up in it & the room made habitable for other purposes than sleeping at night. I am writing for permission to put in a chimney. It is needed. To state it mildly it has got to be put in this summer. Mrs. Nichols needs the room so that it can be warmed for her to rest in when tired, or to sit & study in when preparing her programmes for work among the natives. Through absence of suitable privacy her working efficiency this year just past has been much decreased. Please think the matter over & advise me both as to kind of chimney flue to put in, & subauthorization to cover its cost.

What, Mr. Shields, are my powers as health officer in this locality? The Commissioner

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of Education sent a circular letter to the teachers in the service quite recently detailing to them their powers along that line. The same powers would be mine of course and more. But so far as I can prove to myself I am not commissioned to ~~do~~ use any authority other than persuasion and what comes from the prestige of my position as physician. For instance, (a circumstance which has not occurred), I wish to fumigate the interior of some house where there has been an infectious disease. The occupant of the house, perhaps a native, perhaps a white man, refuses to allow it done. What powers have I in this case? Can I go to the U. S. Commissioner & have him swear in someone to act as marshall, who would go with me & forcibly compel the occupant of the house to allow it to be fumigated? Am I commissioned with powers as health officer when it comes to dealing with the white men of this locality? If so what are my powers? In

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case some event arose which required action, I could act to far greater advantage if I knew just how much authority I had and how much backing I had by law. Knowing this if I went farther than I were commissioned to I could do so in a way that would make retreat less humiliating.

It bothers me not being licensed to practice medicine in Alaska. The members of the Territorial Examining Board who reside in Nome, have not replied by letter to me in regard to a license. All I can learn about it is that one of them told Mr. Johnson that nothing could be done about it at present. This was early in the winter or earlier. I am not sure that appointment in the Alaska School Service exempts a physician from the Territorial Medical Practice Acts.

Could you, Mr. Shields, be thinking about a way how a portion of the attic could be partitioned off for use by whom ever is sent in

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next year for teachers for use as their kitchen or living room: One or two dormer windows as well as warm partitions would have to be provided for. The attic could be remodeled so as to make the school house contain fair living quarters for two families, a physician's & a teacher's. At present the arrangement is poor

This is one of the inconveniences of the present arrangement. I have no office in which I can do my work & make my examinations undisturbed by other members of the family. Mrs. Nichols has no sitting room in which she can meet the natives and entertain her friends undisturbed by me when patients come in for treatment. Miss Hawk has had no place in which she could meet and entertain the natives & her friends undisturbed by Mrs. Nichols & myself except her little bed room up stairs, which has been impracticable for that purpose. We three have repeatedly hindered & hampered each other in the

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other's field of activity by being cramped for room.

In the absence of a hospital with living quarters for the physician and his family could this change and addition to the school house be made? On the northeast side of the school house construct a large storm shed entrance with good floor, good doors, four to six windows, and make it large enough for cloak room & assembly room for 40-50 children. It would include the two windows on that end of the school ^{Room} ~~House~~. Hence the large number of large windows in the storm entrance.



This would provide a school room entrance. The present assembly room which lies between the sitting room & the school room could then be used for my office. It is large enough to have some drug shelves, bookshelves, desk, examining table, laboratory bench chairs & store in. The room would need a double window put in in the outside wall next to the

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school room partition, for which there is room enough for two windows like the smaller of the two sizes that are in the school house. The present storm entrance would remain unchanged. This would give me a good office, would leave the sitting room free for Mrs. Nichols to use socially in her work with the natives. It would allow the school teacher greater freedom down stairs, & would make the sitting room even more available as a small hospital ward than it has been this winter when we had two mother's with sick children in it at the same time for a duration of a month or longer. One chimney perhaps could be made to answer for both the large chamber up stairs and for this air castle of an office. To this add the construction of suitable living quarters in the attic for the teacher's family & the day dream would be as pleasing as that of any opium smoker.

Along the line of necessary repairs let me say that something must be done to make the school house tighter under the eaves. Also

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the outside of the building needs painting all over roof included. The two school house out house toilets need painting the same. Any real estate owner outside who wished to keep up his property would put on paint when his buildings had become weather beaten to the extent that the school house has.

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

Govt. Physician

P.S. If the teacher, or teacher's family cook outside of the school room a cooking stove or kitchen range will need to be figured on for them.

There are certain peculiarities of architecture that should be thought of when the Government puts in a hospital in Kotzebue. One of them is as follows: It frequently happens that the whole family come to Kotzebue when one of their number is brought for treatment. Two or even three cabins or rooms with outside entrances provided with stove and cooking utensils & benches are needed for such

(over)

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many instances minor chronic ailments & convalescent cases & Pulmonary T. b. cases could be cared for in them and save the additional work, bother & expense of keeping them in the ward.

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If you think it would be a good plan I will when time permits draw & describe a rough plan for a hospital which would be very serviceable & not too theoretical for this location. If I should do so & the official architect had it for reference when planning the Hotzeboe hospital, it might give him a few suggestions that would be helpful. For instance: if an outside architect were planning the hospital he might put a four foot excavation under it for a cellar, not realizing that on July 4 the frost is not out of the ground to a sufficient depth to permit its being done, and also there is an abundant vein of water in the gravel above the frost line which would make such a cellar damp & wet.

H. N. T. Nichols, M. D.

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