

AIRMAIL

11th June, 1948

Dr. Saint,

PORT WENDLAND

Dear Dr. Saint,

Thank you for your letter of 6th June and for the valuable information and suggestions contained in it.

I have been notified informally by the Hon. Minister administering the Department of Native Affairs, that we are likely shortly to be stuck with all matters affecting the health of natives, including the administration of native hospitals.

I fully agree with you that in that contingency we must completely revise present policy, but how far we may be able to implement a policy of our own will be, of course, contingent upon financial support we obtain from Cabinet, a matter which may be determined by the money-men in the light of Native Affairs' practice and their accepted standards.

In the meantime I should greatly appreciate it if you at your leisure could formulate a plan applicable to the circumstances in your own district. My own bias - which I was at liberty to indulge in the Northern Territory - is that the maximum number of cases would be handled and treated at the General Hospital and that special native hospitals (as distinct from separate native wards), should be brought to the irreducible minimum.

I know that in this country there is a real and strong public aversion to racial mixtures in hospital even though these appear to be quite well supported outside. I feel, however, that the greater part of this difficulty could be overcome by the provision of special wards staffed by suitably trained coloured girls and men.

I know that the dirty habits of undisciplined natives, particularly that of spitting tobacco juice on the walls, floors, bed clothes and into the circumambient air, make them unwelcome charges for white trained nurses even in only a supervisory capacity, but be overcome this

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...activity in the territory and we should be able to overcome
over with Matron Campbell - to whom, by the way, convey my
kindest regards.

I am sorry I have no detailed information regarding
combined Diphtheria and Pertussis Vaccine, but it has been
used privately in the Fremantle area and I will see what information
I can get for you.

I shall also give consideration to your suggestion
that you be provided with your own power plant. This is a matter
which must be considered in conjunction with any proposal the
Premier may have for improving the local town supply.

With regard to the X-ray, our advice has always
been that given a good power supply 30 milliamp portable set
with bucky should serve all purposes likely to be demanded
of an X-ray installation by the general practitioner and
as recently as a few weeks ago Dr. Eddy of the Commonwealth
Radiophysics Laboratory re-liberated this view to me.

The Department has taken initial steps towards
having all sets along the North-west coast examined by
technicians of Watson Victoria and some of the reasons for the
instrument's failure in your hands - which is probably to be
ascribed to the town supply - may then be qualified.

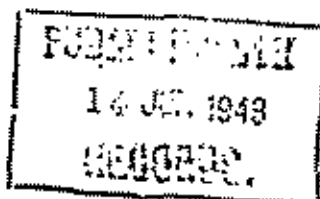
The Department is negotiating with the
Department of the Army for the purchase of the X-ray installation
at Karrakatta used for the examination of recruits and review
of men about to be discharged.

It is the intention to install this in the
Perth Chest Clinic thereby releasing a mobile set which it
is hoped to make available for a chest survey, particularly
of natives in the North-west.

I am discussing certain aspects of this suggestion
with Dr. Menzies next Monday and I shall bring before him your
remarks on Asbestos which I regard as of the highest importance.

Kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,



COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC HEALTH