

DOWN THE MACKENZIE

themselves but beyond these places the only medical aid available is from an occasional visit of the Government physician and what the missionaries are able to furnish. At practically every post and Indian village on our way we were besieged for medicine by the afflicted. In many cases they were the victims of chronic diseases which would undoubtedly yield to surgical treatment provided proper means were afforded for attendance and nursing.

A few of the missionaries have some knowledge. One of them, perhaps the most proficient in this respect, informed me that appendicitis was quite as prevalent among the Indians of those regions as it is in the outside world, but that he felt incompetent to attempt an operation, and, moreover, even if such operations were properly performed, the conditions of life in the wigwam would afford poor chances for an ultimate recovery.

If a small hospital properly equipped were established say at Fort Simpson, at the junction of the Laird and Mackenzie Rivers, or at some point on Great Slave Lake, it could be reached by canoes in summer from