

Settlers in Rouyn District

remedies for treatment. The letter before me, dated February 2, 1933, is addressed to Mr. J. A. Ellis, of the Ontario Unemployment Relief Department, and is as follows:

Two weeks ago your representative, Mr. Tackaberry, at the Northern Development office, sent me a copy of regulations as to medical services and medical supplies, dated December 29, 1932, asking me for comments on same by return post. Hurriedly, I gave him my impressions.

The flu epidemic has not given me time to go further into the subject. To-day, however, financial conditions urge me to come to you for information.

I was this morning asked by a man on relief to go ten miles to attend to his wife sick in bed for the last six days. This man walked in ten miles and back ten miles, which is not unusual here. I called the relief department for the \$5 livery pay in the case. Receiving no satisfactory answer I at first refused the husband. Eventually I went, driving twenty miles with team and driver, and opened an abscess in the mouth.

The problem that presents itself is "How deep shall I sink before I stop." My expenses are so very heavy and the present returns so insignificant that I have had to borrow. My limit at the bank has been reached. I can no further risk the welfare of my family and go deeper into debt without assuring myself of the reimbursement of my expenses, and money to keep my wife and seven children going.

Like everybody else, doctors are willing to make sacrifices, but in return expect a living. On account of the population under our care, the amount of work done, and the hardships encountered in this climate, covering the distances over roads, full of impediments, the inevitable expenses are such that the amount of money allowed in the south is altogether inadequate here; and just lately the flu epidemic has intensified that condition.

Whereas I concur with subsections a, b, d and e, of regulation No. 3, I must point out that subsections c, f and g, are not at all suitable to the district. Doctors with mixed practices of medicine and surgery can, as a rule, fairly well forego their surgical fees, but when patients are so far apart that doctors cannot possibly make the round, or where homes are so unsanitary that patients cannot be left there—(settlers' homes are all of pioneer age here, log shacks, all of them, many tumbling down, previously discarded homes even being at times used)—and must of all necessity be brought to hospital for care.

The hospital here takes the place of the home down below, and we should be paid for such services. Unlike the southern hospitals there are no house surgeons here to assume responsibility of patients and our attention is constant. As corroboration to my assertions I might tell you a maternity case of mine died in her home lately because no doctor could reach her. The coroner had to investigate.

Personally I care for about 6,000 of a population in a radius of 50 miles. During this flu epidemic my professional expenses (drugs and supplies, auto or livery, office rent and care, tax, insurance and inevitable expenditure, train, travelling bills) vary between \$500 and \$600 a month.

[Mr. Bradette.]

To one who does not know our circumstances I will say "not one drop of medicine or one article of medical supply has been handed out that should not have been." In most cases I should have given more.

Unfortunately I have reached my limit financially and physically. (I have been practising my profession twenty-four years). It is not to be forgotten that three or four doctors in Cochrane do incomparably more work than southern doctors, and, if I may say so, undergo hardships unknown in the south.

I am now asking for information and fair treatment, commensurate with the relief work done. I only want my expenses, on relief work, and fair compensation.

I would not wish my letter to be construed as a threat, but in all justice I cannot work all day in one municipality and all night in another one, spend \$20 a day to receive \$3.33.

Keep in mind that there is one doctor in a city to every 600 or 800 people in a small radius, whereas I attend seven or eight times that number in a radius twenty-five times as large.

This letter is written explanatory to our conditions, and imbued I believe with good intentions. I should be pleased to give any information one might wish, any time.

I have gone to homes where five, eight or ten had la grippe, and three or four such houses in succession, fifty miles from my office. I have had to furnish those poor but honest people with requirements deemed necessary to effect a cure in as short a time as possible. There is no drug store in any of the twenty communities I have to attend to. It is absolutely out of the question to give such patients medicine for two or three days, it must be for eight, ten or fifteen days as the case may be, and for the number that are affected.

Men have skied or hiked eighteen miles each way to my office. Mothers have pulled babies six or eight miles behind them to my office and other mothers have walked ten miles to my office. One mother, chilled, drove eighteen miles at 15 degrees below zero with a sick infant in her arms to my office. That is only a few, and they must be looked after, and looked after with humanity, and I cannot support the cost alone, or any more.

I have given thirty-two ounces of cough medicine to a family of ten, fifty miles away, and as much tonic; that was not enough, it only lasted four days, and rightly so. The cost may seem high, but it is both expensive and sad in the community to see a few cases developing tuberculosis or a young father dying. I have seen both in this present epidemic. It is very heart-rending at times, but most of those people on relief do not deserve to, must not be left unattended, especially now.

Whatever it may seem to cost, I don't get it. I would welcome a relief agent from Toronto to go my round and investigate.

My yearly income tax reports to Ottawa show my expenses, professional only, at from \$5,000 to \$6,000 a year. They are the same now.

Quite correctly you have assumed 25 cents a fair remuneration for mileage. This is commensurate with conditions where a car can be used. Herein you will find affixed a cartoon of the country physician. Now that has happened often to me, but for displacements it is worse yet, as we have to hire a team of horses