

Title **Proposed deputation of a special Medical Officer for the
purpose of investigating leprosy in Kumaun**

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Medical September 1875

Impresso deputation of a special Medical Officer for the purpose of investigating leprosy in Kumaun

No. 388A. of 1875.

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FROM

THE OFFG. SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES,

To

THE SECY. TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
HOME DEPARTMENT (MEDICAL).

Dated Naini Tal, the 12th August, 1875.

SIR,

In continuation of my letter No. 336A., dated 9th July, 1875,

From Commissioner, Kumaun Division, No. 740, dated 24th July, 1874.
To ditto, ditto, No. 620A., dated 10th September, 1874.
From Inspector-General of Civil Hospitals and Dispensaries, North-Western Provinces, No. 12C., dated 11th June, 1875, and enclosures.
From Superintendent, Leper Asylum, Almora, dated 14th June, 1875.
From Sanitary Commissioner, North-Western Provinces, No. 17A., dated 17th July, 1875.

I am directed to submit the correspondence noted on the margin, regarding the deputation

of a special officer for the purpose of investigating leprosy in Kumaun.

2. In para. 5 of the Resolution of the Government of India, Home Department (Medical), No. $\frac{1}{136}$ dated 5th March last, it was stated that it was not desirable to appoint a special officer for the study of the whole subject of leprosy throughout India. The magnitude of the enquiry at that time suggested was so great, that the Government of India concluded that it was hardly possible that it could lead to useful results. The objection, however, which then was fatal to those proposals, does not appear to His Honor to apply to the suggestion which has now been made by the Commissioner of Kumaun, and by the Superintendent of the Leper Asylum at Almora, that a special officer should be appointed for the purpose of making a complete investigation into the subject of leprosy in Kumaun.

3. It is believed that there is no part of India where leprosy is more common, and there can certainly be no part of India where a complete investigation of the disease would be easier. As the Commissioner writes,—“We have also at Almora an Asylum containing on an average 100 lepers, laboring under every form and stage of the disease, whose family history can be ascertained to the minutest detail. In the district there are many hundreds, either wandering about as beggars, or residing at their homes, whose history could be gathered with perfect accuracy.” It may be added that the division of Kumaun, including the districts of Kumaun, Garhwal and the Tarai, covers an area of 12,420 square miles, and comprising as it does a tract of country extending from the plains to the summits of the snowy range, possesses every variety of climate, from one of tropical heat to one of almost arctic cold, while the population is about 928,000.

4. It appears to the Lieutenant-Governor that General Ramsay is quite right in saying that “it would be impossible to find anywhere in

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India so suitable a locality as Kumaun for pursuing a thorough and complete investigation into the whole subject of leprosy." The field of enquiry, while sufficiently large, would not be unmanageable in extent; and the climate is such that the enquiry could be pursued in one part of the country or another without difficulty at every season of the year; and His Honor therefore strongly recommends the appointment of a special officer for the investigation of leprosy in Kumaun, provided that one condition can be secured, viz., that the officer appointed shall be a really scientific man, thoroughly competent to undertake a purely scientific enquiry. Sir John Strachey is unable to suggest the name of any officer who could be entrusted with such a duty; but if a suitable officer cannot be found in India, His Honor does not doubt that one might be found in Europe, and that it would not be difficult to obtain the services of a man who would make a thoroughly satisfactory enquiry into the whole subject.

5. I am to add that in para. 8 of the Resolution, quoted in para. 2 of this communication, it was laid down that Sanitary Commissioners under each Local Government should collect all the facts bearing on the distribution and causation of leprosy; and in the North-Western Provinces orders have already been issued in accordance with these instructions. The Lieutenant-Governor does not, however, anticipate that it will be possible for the Sanitary Commissioner to make any complete investigation into this large and difficult question. He will have nothing to guide him but a mass of reports, possessing a value which it will be difficult for him to test, from a multitude of Civil Surgeons scattered over these Provinces. His Honor is of opinion that investigations carried on more systematically and scientifically, in the manner which has now been suggested, might be expected to lead to more useful results.

I have the honor to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient Servant,

A. COLVIN,

Officiating Secretary to Government,

North-Western Provinces.

(COPIES.)

No. 740.

FROM

THE COMMISSIONER, KUMAUN DIVISION,

To

THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,

NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES.

Dated the 24th July, 1874.

SIR,

My attention having been drawn to articles in the *Indian Medical Gazette*, written by Dr. Dougall of Port Blair, on the treatment of leprosy by garjun-oil, I have the honor to suggest that a Medical Officer should be specially deputed to carry

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out a similar plan of treatment in the Leper Asylum at Almora (containing an average of 100 inmates), as the system pursued by Dr. Dougall appears to have been attended with such remarkable success. *N^o 55*

2. The subject of leprosy has of late years occupied so much attention on the part of the leading Medical authorities in England, with results so uncertain in their conclusion, that I think it is desirable to avail ourselves of the exceptionally favorable circumstances that we possess in this Asylum for a full investigation of all the points connected with this terrible disease; settling how far it is possible to arrest it when once established; and more important even than this, how to prevent its spread, for I am disposed to think that in Kumaun of late years the disease has increased.

3. These enquiries will necessitate considerable intelligence on the part of the Medical Officer deputed to conduct them, and I therefore hope that some one well qualified to understand the duty may be selected.

I have, &c.,

H. RAMSAY,

Commissioner.

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No. 620A. of 1874. *N^o 56*

FROM

THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,

NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES,

TO

THE COMMISSIONER, KUMAUN DIVISION.

Dated Naini Tal, the 10th September, 1874.

SIR,

I AM directed to acknowledge your letter No. 740, dated 24th July, 1874, suggesting the deputation of a special Medical Officer for the purpose of carrying out the treatment of leprosy with gurjun-oil at the Leper Asylum, Almora.

2. In reply, I am to say that a special Medical Officer is not available at present. As it is understood that a supply of gurjun-oil has already reached Almora, it is desirable that it should be tried by Dr. Watson, Superintendent of Vaccination, or under such other arrangements as you can make.

3. I am also to add that a further supply of the oil has this day been sent for to Calcutta.

I have, &c.,

C. A. ELLIOTT,

Secretary to Government,

North-Western Provinces.

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No. C. 12.

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FROM

THE INSPTR-GENL. OF CIVIL HOSPITALS AND DISPENSARIES,
NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES,

TO

THE OFFG. SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,
NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES.

Dated Naini Tal, the 11th June, 1875.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to submit, for the information of Government, certain

- *1. Letter No. 556, dated 28th May, 1875, from Commissioner of Kumaun.
- 2. Copy of Revd. Budden's report, dated 30th April, 1875.
- 3. Copy of Dr. Watson's letter No. 64, dated 28th April, 1875.

papers* which, purporting to be a report on the treatment of lepers by gurjun-oil in the Almora Leper Asylum, deal with the larger question, which appears to have been already submitted by the

Commissioner of Kumaun direct to Government (see his letter No. 740, dated 24th July, 1874), namely, whether any special Medical agency should be allowed at Almora for the experimental treatment of the lepers located in the Asylum, and for collateral enquiries into the family history and antecedents of individual lepers.

2. I cannot agree with the Commissioner that there is employment for a special Medical Officer in this enquiry; because in respect of the treatment of individual lepers—either by Beaupertthey's or Dougall's system of treatment, all that is required of a Medical Officer is *direction and supervision* of the application of the remedies; and in respect of the collateral enquiries to be made into the family history of each leper, I think that a series of well-framed questions, to which replies could be obtained by the Civil authorities, will elicit all the evidence that a special Medical Officer could secure.

3. I think that Dr. Watson's suggestions should be carried out; that an Hospital Assistant, thoroughly well qualified, should for one or two years be attached to the Leper Asylum to work under the Civil Surgeon of Almora in applying the remedies referred to. And that the Civil Surgeon be asked to assume Medical charge of the Asylum (which I have no doubt he is ready to do), and to draw up a series of questions framed to elicit the previous history of each leper under treatment, and that the Civil officers be requested to co-operate in obtaining exact replies to these questions, enquiring personally when on tour in the district into the particulars of such cases as come within their circuit.

4. Dr. Watson deserves the acknowledgments of Government for the gratuitous labor he has given to these poor unfortunates. At the same time it is impossible for him to supervise continuously the work of the Hospital Assistant whom I propose to attach to the Asylum, and on this account I think the work should be transferred to the Civil Surgeon.

5. Looking on the treatment of these lepers as auxiliary to the work of the Almora Dispensary, I would suggest that the expense of the experiment be met (if possible) by an assignment from the Sada Bart Funds.

I have, &c.,

W. WALKER, M.D., M.A.,

Insptr.-Genl. of Civil Hospitals and Dispensaries,
North-Western Provinces.

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No. 556.

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FROM

THE COMMISSIONER, KUMAUN DIVISION,

To

THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF DISPENSARIES,

NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES.

Dated Naini Tal, the 28th May, 1875.

SIR,

IN forwarding the enclosed copy of a report dated 30th ultimo, from the Superintendent of the Almora Leper Asylum, with a copy of Dr. Watson's No. 64, dated 28th idem, in reply to your No. 376, dated 24th April, 1875, I have the honor to draw your attention to my letter to the Secretary to the Government of the North-Western Provinces, No. 740, dated July 24th, 1874.

2. The benefit to be derived from gurjun-oil in the treatment of leprosy has, I consider, been established: it is no longer a question of experiment. But whether this oil or any other treatment can effect a cure, or prevent the actual outbreak of the disease, is a matter which has yet to be decided.

3. To arrive at such a decision, it is absolutely necessary that the question should be taken up in earnest, and with this view I recommended that a Medical Officer should be appointed solely for the duty.

4. It would be impossible to find anywhere in India so suitable a locality as Kumaun for pursuing a thorough and complete investigation into the whole subject of leprosy. At Almora we have an Asylum containing on an average 100 lepers, laboring under every form and stage of the disease, whose family history can be ascertained to the minutest detail. In the district there are many hundreds either wandering about as beggars, or residing at their homes, whose history could be gathered with perfect accuracy.

5. Such a record would give a mass of statistics which would admit of some reliable deductions being drawn, as to whether it is possible to deal with this loathsome disease, either by way of cure, or by arresting its spread by segregation.

6. In my opinion it is necessary that something should be attempted. If on enquiry it is found that nothing can be done, then it will be so far satisfactory to have ascertained that as a fact; but in the absence of that knowledge, it appears to me a wrong that this fearful disease should be allowed to continue to spread itself amongst the population if any measures can be taken to prevent it.

7. I therefore again repeat my request that an intelligent and suitable Medical Officer may be placed temporarily in charge of the Leper Asylum at Almora, with instructions to investigate the whole subject of leprosy: when he has collected a sufficient amount of data upon which to base facts, a report should be submitted to Government.

I have, &c.,

H. RAMSAY,

Commissioner.

FROM

THE SUPERINTENDENT, ALMORA LEPER ASYLUM,

To

THE SENIOR ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, KUMAUN.

Dated the 30th April, 1875.

Dr. Walker's Docket on Leper Asylum Report.

REFERRING to the above docket begs to forward a letter just received from Dr. Watson on the subject, and to state that the number of patients under treatment

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with gurjun-oil has never been more than five, and that Dr. Watson reported the results of his own application of it at the close of 1874. Since then the Native Doctor of the Dispensary has applied it, but with what results is not known. There has never been any Medical Officer in charge of the Asylum which was commenced and has been supported by private charity with some Government assistance. The Native Doctor of the Dispensary has given help when asked in cases of sickness apart from leprosy, and has received gratuities from the Asylum funds. The Native Superintendent of the Asylum, who has received no Medical education, has kept a record of cases of sickness and of treatment and results. The treatment has been prescribed in special cases by the Native Doctor, in others by two Native Christian women who were instructed in Miss Swain's Medical class in Bareilly. The medicines used have sometimes been furnished by the Dispensary, but a supply has also been purchased with Asylum funds. Recently a building has been prepared to serve as a Dispensary and hospital with male and female wards, and one of the Christian women mentioned above has been placed in charge. From this statement it will appear that the memo. asked for by Dr. Walker, showing the number of men, women, and children of all the remaining lepers who have benefitted by the treatment with gurjun-oil during the year, cannot be furnished, as none of them have been under treatment.

The method of treatment described by Dr. Dougall in pages 6 and 7 of his pamphlet, is one which it is impossible to carry out even with a small number of patients, unless a qualified person is appointed to this as his special and proper work, so long as the work is placed in a secondary and subordinate position, and imposed on unwilling agents in addition to other, and it may be, heavy duties, and without any remuneration, it cannot be expected to succeed even with a limited number of patients. For this reason, and considering the large number of patients to be benefitted by the treatment, if successful, not only in the Almora Asylum, but throughout the Province and all India, the good and increasing evidence that the treatment, when properly applied, promises to prove a specific,—the great importance of testing the remedy thoroughly, and the abundant facilities afforded for the experiment by the Almora Asylum, it is much to be regretted that the proposal brought forward last year by Dr. Pearson on the subject was set aside by other considerations; and an inadequate and inefficient mode of meeting the requirements of the case was substituted for it. It is now earnestly to be hoped that the proposal on the subject, brought forward by Dr. Watson, at the request of the Managing Committee of the Asylum, may receive all the consideration which the known wishes of the Supreme Government on the subject and the urgent necessities of the case demand.

J. H. BUDDEN,

Superintendent, Leper Asylum.

No. 64.

FROM

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF VACCINATION,

ALLAHABAD AND JHANSI DIVISIONS,

TO

THE SUPERINTENDENT, LEPER ASYLUM, ALMORA.

Dated Camp Almora, the 28th April, 1875.

SIR,

I HAVE the honor to report that in the autumn of 1873 I attended the Leper Asylum once a week, and carried on the Beaupertthey's treatment by cashew-nut-oil; and in the autumn of 1874 I attended the Leper Asylum daily, and carried on the Dougall treatment by gurjun-oil.

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N^o 28 During my absence in the plains the gurjun-oil treatment has been carried on by the Hospital Assistant in charge of the Dispensary, but unfortunately the Dispensary is a long way from the Leper Asylum, and the Hospital Assistant has so much to do in his own Dispensary, that it is hardly fair to give him the extra work of the Leper Asylum, especially as he gets for the latter no pay or remuneration of any description. He has now given his gratuitous services for nearly 8 months, and I think it is time this should stop.

I myself would willingly again undertake the treatment during the time of my stay in Almora, but several of the subscribers to the Leper Asylum think, and with much reason, that it would be much better if the Leper Asylum was put under the Medical superintendence of the Civil Surgeon, who is a permanent resident.

As I have been asked by the Committee of Management of the Leper Asylum to give my opinion, I would recommend—

(1.) That the Civil Surgeon of Almora should be asked to become Medical Officer to the Leper Asylum, either with or without a salary.

(2.) That application should be made to Government to send a first class Hospital Assistant as resident Medical Officer of the Almora Leper Asylum.

(3.) That the two new systems—the Beauperthey and the Dougall—should be carried on simultaneously. About 10 patients should be selected for treatment on the Beauperthey system, which is a painful one, and somewhat dangerous in a very weak person, and that as far as possible all the other lepers, without exception, should be treated with gurjun-oil.

I have, &c.,

W. WATSON, M. D.,

Supdt. of Vaccination, Allahabad and Jhansi Division.

N^o 29
FROM

THE SUPERINTENDENT, LEPER ASYLUM,

N^o 30
ALMORA,

TO

THE OFFG. SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,

NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES.

Dated Almora, the 14th June, 1875.

SIR,

WITH reference to your docket No. 278A. of 1875, dated Naini Tal, 10th June, I have the honor to state that the communications marginally noted in that docket were duly answered, and Dr. Watson's report of the treatment of the lepers with gurjun-oil, sent through the Commissioner of Kumaun in his docket No. 1067, dated 19th October, 1874, the receipt of which is acknowledged by you in your letter No. 744A. of 1874, dated 3rd November, 1874.

2. Since then, in reply to a request sent by Dr. Walker to the Senior Assistant Commissioner of Kumaun, in his letter No. 79 of 1875, dated 8th February, a full report of the Asylum for 1874 was sent by me to the Senior Assistant Commissioner of Kumaun, and forwarded by him to Dr. Walker, and in that report mention was made of Dr. Watson's treatment and its results.

3. In reply to that report a further application from Dr. Walker, asking additional particulars, has been received and answered in the following papers, viz,—

(a.) A second letter from Dr. Watson, in the name of the Asylum Committee, regarding the application of gurjun-oil,

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(b.) A further statement by myself of the circumstances of the Asylum, both in regard to the gurjun-oil treatment, and to medical matters generally in the Asylum.

(c.) A renewed application by Dr. Pearson for the appointment of a competent European Medical Officer to the important duty of thoroughly testing Dr. Dougall's treatment by its extensive and systematic use in the Asylum.

(d.) A letter or docket from the Commissioner of Kumaun, forwarding these papers to Dr. Walker.

4. A further application has since been received from Dr. Walker, at the same time with your docket, to which this letter is an answer, enclosing a statistical table of men, women, and children, under six different heads, to be filled up for the year 1874, and which has been filled up and forwarded to him by to-day's post.

5. Having thus already furnished to Government on different occasions all the information I possess regarding the treatment with gurjun-oil, and the affairs of the Asylum generally, I can only repeat what has been previously stated, viz., that the number of cases in all treated in the Asylum with gurjun-oil is five; that since Dr. Watson's first report, the Native Doctor of the Dispensary has continued the treatment; that lately he has been in the habit of visiting the Asylum about twice a week. that this manner of applying the remedy does not appear in any sense to correspond with Dr. Dougall's method of treatment, and cannot be expected to succeed; that the results have no practical value as a test of the efficaciousness of the remedy; and that to do full justice to the experiment, and to meet the urgent claims of the occasion, nothing short of the appointment of a competent and zealous European Medical Officer, as recommended by Dr. Pearson, to give his best thought and attention to this special duty for a sufficient period will be adequate.

6. In the representation of the case made last year by Dr. Pearson, he recommended the appointment of Dr. Milne to this work; and with a view to prepare himself for an efficient discharge of this duty, that officer gave himself with great zeal and earnestness to the study of the subject. But he was subsequently appointed to other duties by Government. The last supply of the oil received from Calcutta was apparently of a different quality from that supplied at first, but there was no one at hand to test its quality. Had Dr. Pearson's proposal been carried out, this essential point might have been ascertained, and the efficacy of the remedy might by this time have been thoroughly tested.

7. Dr. Walker now intimates that he has recommended the appointment of a "Hospital Assistant" to this responsible and important work. As the Superintendent of the Asylum, I beg respectfully to submit that such an arrangement has no greater promise of efficiency than those already adopted, and also to petition against the further continuance of inadequate measures as essentially unjust, both to Dr. Dougall's method of treatment, and to the interests of the Asylum.

I have, &c.,

J. H. BUDDEN,

Supdt., Leper Asylum, Almora.

No. 17A.

FROM

THE SANITARY COMMISSIONER,

NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES,

TO

THE OFFG. SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT,

NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES.

Dated Naini Tal, the 17th July, 1875.

SIR,

WITH reference to the accompanying papers forwarded to me for opinion, as regards the correspondence about the Leper Asylum at Almora, with your docket

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No. 331A., in the Medical Department, dated 6th July, 1875, I beg to record the opinion that the appointment of a specially selected Medical Officer to the charge of the Leper Asylum at Almora is most desirable. The officer in question to be charged with the duties—(1) of thoroughly and effectually pursuing the treatment of leprosy by gurjun-oil in a large number of cases; (2) of keeping on official record a history of every case so treated; (3) of submitting an annual report of results to Government; (4) of collecting and recording, with the assistance of the local authorities, correct histories of all the cases of leprosy to be found in Kumaun, with a view to the ultimate preparation of a report upon the subject of leprosy, which may embrace all that can be learnt by a specially qualified Medical man brought into actual communication with many lepers, and recording facts as gathered.

2. The result is likely to be a record of considerable value, and a welcome addition to the literature on this subject at a time when much attention is being directed to the unfortunate class of sufferers concerned; and a very earnest desire is evinced on the part of Government to have something done in the right direction for their relief, and, if possible, for the decrease of the existing prevalence of this sad complaint.

I have, &c.,

C. PLANCK,

Sanitary Commissioner, North-Western Provinces.

Regr. No.

HOME 1875 DEPT.

From

Government, North-Western Provinces,

To

Secretary to Government of India,
Home Department, (Medical)

Dated 12th August, 1875.

No. 388A.
Enclosures.
Spare copies.

Received

SUBMITS, with an expression of His
the Lieutenant-Governor's views, certain
respondence regarding the proposed deputation
of a special Medical Officer for the purpose
carrying out investigations into the subject
leprosy in Kumaun, for the consideration
orders of His Excellency in Council.

HOME DEPT. PROCEEDINGS, SEPTEMBER 1875.

No. 605, dated Simla, the 22nd September 1875.

No. 60.

From—ARTHUR HOWELL, Esq., Offg. Secretary to the Govt. of India.

To—The Secretary to the Government of the North-Western Provinces.

I AM directed to acknowledge your letter No. 388 A, dated the 12th ultimo, regarding the proposed deputation of a special medical officer for the purpose of investigating leprosy in Kumaun.

2. It will be better if the two proposals—(1) for testing the efficacy of different modes of treatment of leprosy, especially the treatment by means of gurjun oil as pursued by Dr. Dougall in the Andamans, and (2) for undertaking a complete and scientific investigation of the disease—be kept distinct. Dr. Dougall's mode of treatment is simple and the directions for carrying it out are plain. The best plan will be to appoint a first class Hospital Assistant to the Almora Leper Asylum under the general supervision of the Civil Surgeon of Kumaun with a view to try Dr. Dougall's method or any other methods that promise success. It will be sufficient if the Civil Surgeon visits the Asylum once a week and gives such advice to the Hospital Assistant as may be necessary.

3. The Government of India fully agree with the Lieutenant-Governor that Kumaun affords an excellent field for scientific enquiry into leprosy, and that such an enquiry should be conducted by a man of scientific knowledge. It is also necessary that he should be unbiased in his opinions. But it is difficult to find such an officer in India available for the duty, and the Governor General in Council considers it inexpedient to bring out a special officer from England for the purpose. Being quite new to India he would labour under great disadvantages, and if he were of any standing so as to give weight to his opinions, the cost of the arrangement would be considerable. The Government of India propose therefore to depute Drs. Lewis and Cunningham, who with Indian experience combine scientific qualifications of a high order, to Kumaun to make a thorough enquiry into leprosy early next year.