

HAZELTON HOSPITAL, HAZELTON, B.C.

Dr. H. C. Wrinch in charge (supported by Belleville and Picton  
District Epworth Leagues).

## The Hazelton Hospital's Mission

**A History of the Hazelton Hospital from Its Start in an Indian  
Cabin to One of the Best and Most Successful Homes  
for the Sick and Injured in the Province**

---

FROM THE OMINECA, B.C., HERALD.

---

Hospital work in this Central Interior of British Columbia had its beginning in the winter of 1900. The first hospital was a lean-to room at the back of an Indian log house in Kishpiax, which the doctor rented at a dollar a week, to enable him to care for an Indian who had come seventy miles to obtain surgical treatment.

At that time, and for several years later, the population was about five-sixths Indian, and the question of funds for hospital building and maintenance appeared an insuperable obstacle. The plan of renting a room wherever available was therefore the only solution. The nursing care of the patients was in the hands of a trained nurse, who lived at the doctor's.

### Site Obtained.

In the course of time land for a site was obtained near Hazelton, which at that time was the only business centre in the district. It was the head of navigation of the Skeena River and the distributing point for supplies for points for 200 miles north, south and east from itself.



**First Patients.**

The first building erected was the doctor's residence and dispensary. It was occupied in August, 1903. It was not intended to take regular in-patients until the hospital proper should be ready for occupation the following year, but within three months of moving out of their residence the doctor and his wife and the nurse found themselves with patients in beds in their house—and regular hospital service had commenced.

Since that time the service rendered by the Hazelton Hospital has been continuous to the present moment. For twenty-four hours a day and for three hundred and sixty-five days a year its doors and its wards have been open for the accommodation of any and all who needed its services.

**Services Rendered.**

During the time of its operation the registers show a total of 2,926 patients admitted for treatment. Doubtless, this appears but a small number as compared with the records of large city hospitals, but it represents about sixty thousand days of treatment of persons who were either too ill to be cared for in their homes or had no homes to go to.

Without doubt it means that a good many have been helped back to health and given a new lease of life who otherwise would have had small chance for recovery. The next nearest hospital is at the coast a hundred and eighty miles distant. Before railway days this was accessible from the interior only by boat and at certain times in the summer.

**Initial Equipment.**

The building at first provided accommodation for 20 patients. It was lighted by coal-oil lamps and heated by a good hot air furnace. The latter is still in excellent condition and heats as well as ever the portion of the building in which it was first installed.

All water had to be carried in by hand and all waste was disposed of in a similar manner.

**Improvements.**

Successive improvements in the water system were made as conditions required. First a double-suction hand pump was installed and the water forced into a tank in the attic. This was followed by a hot-air engine having a pumping capacity of 150 gallons per hour. Finally a motor-driven pump of 800 gallon capacity was installed and is operated by the hospital's own power plant.

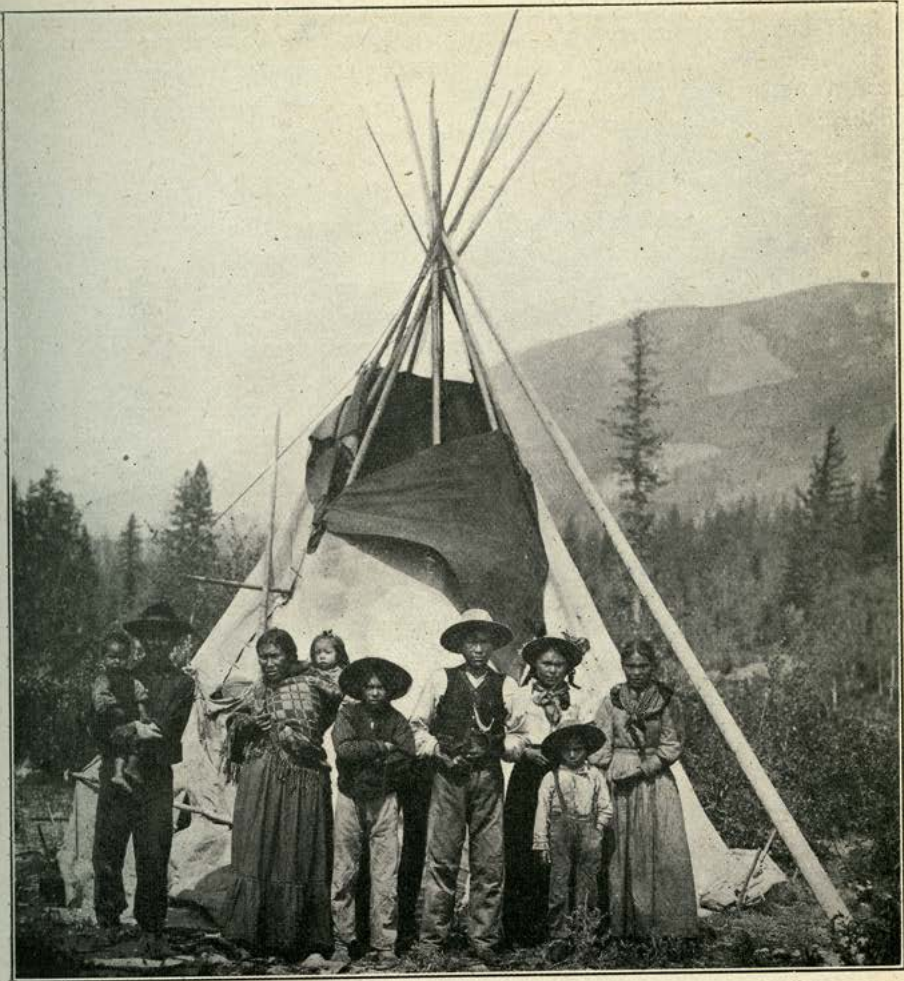
An excellent sewerage system is now in operation, the ultimate disposal of sewage being by the septic tank method.

The coal-oil lamps were superseded in 1906 by an acetyline gas system. This gave excellent satisfaction and is still in operation, but only as an auxiliary to an electric lighting system which was installed in 1913.

**Many Building Extensions.**

The original plans of the main building provided for enlargement with the least possible disarrangement of existing portions. The first step toward





SOME OF OUR CONSTITUENCY.  
Shuswap Indians of British Columbia and their Home.

increasing accommodations was the fitting up and furnishing of the third storey for nurses' rooms. This was intended as only a temporary expedient, but the nurses are still there. A properly equipped home for the nurses is long overdue. It must be provided soon if the institution is to retain any vestige of self-respect whatever.

Bright sun rooms were added, and still later increased accommodation for patients was provided by an extension of twenty feet to the main building. An addition was also put on to the service wing and a separate room added for laundry.

#### Other Buildings.

Other buildings include a bungalow and two cottages for members of the staff or for cases that require separate accommodation, a power house,



gas plant house and garage, and a combined icehouse, refrigerator-room and storeroom. For the farm use there is a barn with basement accommodation for fifteen head of stock, implement shed, drive-house, root-cellar, hay shed and a modern poultry-house for 150 fowls. Nearly all buildings are electric lighted from the hospital power plant.

#### **Garden and Grounds.**

Hazelton is admitted, even by its rivals, to be "the greenest spot on the G.T.P." Hazelton Hospital, with its extensive grounds, is the most beautifully situated of all this highly-favored spot and has taken full advantage of its situation. Its table is supplied the year around with fruits and vegetables from its own gardens, and with fresh milk and cream from its own herd of high-grade Jerseys. Its gardens, large grounds and its park of seven acres furnish the most ideal surroundings for its convalescent patients that could well be imagined. They contribute not a little to the very favorable percentage of successful results shown by its records.

#### **Staff.**

When the hospital was first opened, the staff consisted of doctor, two nurses, a housekeeper and a man-of-all-work. The accommodation was for twenty patients. The present accommodation is 35, and their needs are provided for by a staff of fourteen on full time and four part-time employees.

#### **Electric Light and X-Ray.**

In the year 1912, during the time of railway construction, the absolute necessity for a good x-ray equipment became increasingly apparent. This implied power for generating the electricity. Since there appeared no likelihood of there being any power available from any other source, either public or private, there was no other alternative but that the hospital instal its own plant. A systematic canvass for this purpose brought in funds of about \$7,000, and in 1913 a very fine gas-electric system comprising a 15 h.p. engine and 10 kilowat generator was installed.

This furnished the necessary power for a powerful 4-kilowat transformer, which was installed with a fairly complete supply of X-ray accessories. This has been one of the most useful and most important features in the whole hospital equipment and has done and continues to do excellent work. This year additional X-ray equipment has been added, one special treatment tube, with its transformer, alone costing \$250.

There has also been put in this year a "high frequency" electric plant. This is a comparatively new type of apparatus and produces five kinds of electric current and provides a number of valuable methods of treatment.

#### **General Equipment.**

From its inception it has been the aim of the management to provide any reasonable facility for treatment required in a general medical and surgical practice. Funds for obtaining equipment have not been easy to obtain, for





HAZELTON MAIN STREET. SHOWING THE WATERWORKS SYSTEM.

The Hospital has its own water system.

the extensive district tributary to the hospital is too new to boast of many wealthy people. Yet the response of its constituents whenever a direct appeal has been made has been so generally favorable that the management has felt that the people were better pleased at seeing the institution kept abreast with the times than if it had taken a narrower and penurious course of action.

#### Surgical Equipment.

By this method an excellent operating-room equipment, with fine sterilizer, and a liberally-supplied instrument cabinet have been gradually accumulated. The surgical and maternity department comprise a large proportion of the work done by the hospital and it is now well-equipped for all other classes of service.

For other types of treatment a well furnished dispensary is maintained in connection with the hospital.

#### More Room Needed.

In caring for the present needs of the district the building is taxed to its utmost, and every foot of available space is being utilized. There is not the least doubt that if the population of the district increases, as every sane



person admits it must if its extensive resources are not to remain dormant indefinitely, the hospital will have to make very considerable increase in its capacity. In making extensions now, however, it should be clearly borne in mind that the increased accommodation will be possible at a minimum of cost. There will be no increase needed in the expensive types of equipment, nor in the administrative staff. The cost can all be applied in furnishing accommodation for patients, with a corresponding increase in merely those who will wait upon them. The splendid equipment already installed can serve a 75-bed hospital as easily as the present one of 35 beds.

#### Maintenance Costs Problem.

When first started, the annual cost of maintenance was estimated at \$3,500 and it was approximately correct at the time. But the institution has grown, and unfortunately the cost of living has grown out of proportion to the growth in attendance. Normally, as attendance increased, the corresponding increase in receipts was sufficient to provide for ordinary needs, but it cannot be made to do so under present conditions. The cost of maintenance in 1918 was slightly in excess of \$20,000.

#### The Solution of the Problem.

One hospital administrator recently made the statement in a public address: "I want to say that the public institution that is showing a surplus year in and year out is either an extortionist or is not giving the service to humanity that is expected." Notwithstanding the rise in charge for almost every service rendered by practically every business, the Hazelton Hospital has not yet raised its charges over those of six years ago. The management will not do so unless there is no other possible way of meeting its obligations. It now makes this frank statement and appeals to the people served by the institution. It will, of necessity, have to be guided in its future policy by the response received to this appeal. In spite of every effort to the contrary all through this year, the shortage on maintenance account has been steadily increasing.

To close the books in good shape at the end of the year the management will need a subscription from the people of well on to \$2,000 before December 31st. Some liberal donations have already been handed to the Superintendent by those who know the state of the hospital finances.

By the courtesy of the *Omineca Herald*, all gifts will be acknowledged in these columns as well as by the hospital direct.

The management of the hospital is more than anxious not to raise its charges, and if sufficient subscriptions come in so that the books may be closed clear of a deficit, the management will accept it as a mandate from the people and the rates will remain as they are until the institution cannot be run without increasing them.