Reading Log #1

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This analysis is based on the three articles: “Care for the ‘Racially Careless’: Indian Hospitals in the Canadian West, 1920-1950s” written by Maureen Lux, “Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952” written by Ian Mosby and “The Impact of Colonization on Aboriginal Health in British Columbia” written by Mary Kelm. The common theme of these three articles is the health of Aboriginal Canadians from the 1900s to 1950s.

The Lux article focuses on “how a putative liberal democracy [came] to rationalize and justify coerced and racially segregated hospitals.” 1 Through this article it becomes quite clear that Euro-Canadian people did not care for the health of Aboriginal peoples, they just did not want them to infect white people with their diseases. The Kelm article compliments this by stating that the concerns made by the Health Officials became so severe that it “eventually led them to take measures designed to control the disease among the First Nations.” 2 They were not interested in helping them eliminate these diseases or provide them with proper health care, they just did not want it around their people. Euro-Canadian hospital staff did not want to treat First Nations people so the residential schools were being turned into hospitals specifically to segregate Aboriginal people. 3 Research found that the poor living conditions at the residential schools were a major cause of these illnesses in the first place. 4

The mortality rates in Aboriginal reserves were on the rise in this time period. This was largely due to tuberculosis and “maternal, infant and childhood mortality” 5. The Canadian Tuberculosis Association (CTA) decided that they “must include Aboriginal people in its calculations of national health, if only to keep them properly isolated.” 6 A primary contributor to the poor health quality in the Aboriginal community is the fact that they did not receive proper medical treatment. The purpose of the Mosby article “was to “study the state of nutrition of the Indian by newly developed medical procedures,” which meant that – in addition to collecting information on local subsistence patterns – the research team conducted detailed physical examinations, blood tests, and x-rays on nearly 400 Aboriginal residents of these communities.” 7 Sadly the researchers immediately noticed the extreme amounts of malnutrition and hunger that the Aboriginal peoples were experiencing. 8 Euro-Canadian people attempted to “confine illness on reserves, marking Aboriginal bodies as fundamentally weak and diseased.” 9 Due to the fact that the Department of National Health decided that Aboriginal people did not care for their health or the wellbeing of other people, they decided it would be okay to segregate Aboriginal people in places that were making them sick. Unfortunately, even though there were many experiments conducted, “ it seems that none of these experiments and studies conducted between 1942 and 1952 had much in the way of long-term positive effects on the lives of those being studied” and very little of these findings have been published. 10

After reading these articles there are questions I would like to have answered. I would like to know how the First Nations people reacted to the segregation as this is not delivered from the perspective of the people forced into these institutions. As well I would like to know why the health organizations in this time period did not want to cure the Aboriginal people. It seems that by not treating them, they were just endangering the Euro-Canadians more.

Notes

1 Lux, Maureen, “Care for the ‘Racially Careless’: Indian Hospitals in the Canadian West,

1920-1950s” Canadian Historical Review, 91, 3 (2010): 408.

2 Kelm, Mary Ellen, “The Impact of Colonization on Aboriginal Health in British Columbia” in

Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998: 3.

3 Lux, Maureen, “Care for the ‘Racially Careless’: Indian Hospitals in the Canadian West,

1920-1950s” Canadian Historical Review, 91, 3 (2010): 412.

4 Lux, Maureen, “Care for the ‘Racially Careless’: Indian Hospitals in the Canadian West,

1920-1950s” Canadian Historical Review, 91, 3 (2010): 412.

5 Kelm, Mary Ellen, “The Impact of Colonization on Aboriginal Health in British Columbia” in

Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998: 6.

6 Lux, Maureen, “Care for the ‘Racially Careless’: Indian Hospitals in the Canadian West,

1920-1950s” Canadian Historical Review, 91, 3 (2010): 410.

7 Mosby, Ian, “Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical

Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952” Histoire sociale/Social History, XLVI, No. 91 (Mai/May 2013), 146.

8 Mosby, Ian, “Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical

Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952” Histoire sociale/Social History, XLVI, No. 91 (Mai/May 2013), 146.

9 Lux, Maureen, “Care for the ‘Racially Careless’: Indian Hospitals in the Canadian West,

1920-1950s” Canadian Historical Review, 91, 3 (2010): 409.

10 Mosby, Ian, “Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical

Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952” Histoire sociale/Social History, XLVI, No. 91 (Mai/May 2013), 170.

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1920-1950s” Canadian Historical Review, 91, 3 (2010): 407-434.

Mosby, Ian, “Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical

Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952” Histoire sociale/Social History, XLVI, No. 91 (Mai/May 2013), 615-642.