

TO: THE HUDSON BAY PRESBYTERY:SEPTEMBER, 1965.NORWAY HOUSE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

Dr. Campbell has asked me to prepare a report on our School and it's possible function in the future, for consideration by the Home Mission Committee.

BRIEF HISTORY:

The original residential school was established in 1900 by the Methodist Church to provide a continued education and knowledge of English to Indian boys and girls whose parents living on the northern reserves followed a migratory way of life, trapping and fishing. It also functioned, to some extent, as an orphanage. Following destruction by fire, a larger school was constructed around 1912. Land was brought under cultivation and the students worked half-time on the farm and work in the school. This was thought to provide work experience and certain job skills that could not be gained in the traditional way of life. It also helped to keep the operational cost of the establishment down. The second school continued operation until 1946, when it, too, was destroyed by fire.

From 1900 to 1946 these residential schools provided the best schooling for Indian boys and girls in the north. The Indian day schools at that time, where they existed, were very inadequate and attendance very irregular, as the parents took their children to the trapline and fish camps. From 1946 to 1954 there was no residential school in operation until the third one was built ready for opening in 1954.

In 1954 there were three one-room day schools operating at Rossville, serving the Indian population at Rossville. In 1956 the Department of Indian Affairs built a 3-classroom block to replace these. This building was located close to the new Residential School and for the first two years of it's operation the classes were conducted separately and independently from that of the Residential School. The Residential School had five classrooms. By this time, residential students were attending classes on a full time basis, instead of half-time as in the former schools. The farm operations of the school were discontinued. In 1958, all the classes were consolidated in order to take advantage of a graded system. This made 8 classrooms in all, and the administration and responsibility of the Day School block was handed over to the Residential School.

SHIFT FROM UNITED CHURCH TO ANGLICAN PUPILS:

Children admitted to the Residential School were from the United Church settlements at the northern reserves, at God's Lake, Oxford House, Red Sucker Lake, Island Lake, Nelson House, etc.. Most of them were here because there were no available day schools, or insufficient room in the day schools on their home reserves.

In the early years of the 1960's, the Department of Indian Affairs opened more classrooms on these Reserves as families were staying more permanently. The number of United Church children admitted to our school fell considerably as they were now attending day schools. However, because of the availability of residential space in our school in the last two years, Anglican children from Split Lake, Shamawatta, the Hudson Bay Line (extending from The Pas to Churchill and York Factory) have been sent here. There is insufficient space at the Dauphin Anglican Residential School. As of September, 1965, approximately half of our children are Anglican. In 1960, only 1% were Anglican.

The following Table will indicate the origin of our pupils:

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ENROIMENT SUMMARY 1961 - 1965

<u>ORIGIN</u>	<u>Dec.'65</u>	<u>Dec.'64</u>	<u>Dec.'63</u>	<u>Dec.'62</u>	<u>Dec.'61</u>
ISLAND LAKE:					
Garden Hill	2	13	29	40	39
Wasagomack	17	18	14	11	12
RED SUCKER LAKE	-	1	1	2	14
OXFORD HOUSE	-	-	-	-	8
GODS LAKE	6	17	20	18	29
NELSON HOUSE	18	17	17	12	19
NORWAY HOUSE	16	13	14	16	12
CROSS LAKE	9	9	10	9	4
THE PAS, HUDSON BAY LINE etc...	61	37	5	1	4
	—	—	—	—	—
	129	125	110	109	141
	—	—	—	—	—

DEVELOPMENT OF DAY SCHOOLS:

As the building program for Day Schools continues, i.e. at Island Lake, Gods Lake, Nelson House, there will be fewer and fewer children coming from the United Church settlements. The need of residential school care for United Church children will no longer be significant (except in a very few cases of broken homes or no available day school).

FUTURE OF THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL:

What can this building be used for in the future is the question that now arises. In considering this, a background of administrative problems have to be weighed. In the last eight years, the number of day pupils have increased from approximately 100 to 236. The residential pupil numbers have fallen from 155 to 130. Our classrooms have increased by four, i.e. from 8 to 12. With day and residential students, we now have 365 in school. Space for these extra classrooms has had to be found at the expense of playroom space in the classroom and residential blocks. With the additional teachers required for the mushrooming day pupil population, the teachers tend to relate less to the problems of the residential school.

The Department of Indian Affairs is contemplating classroom construction at Norway House in the next few years. The future of the residence here is significant. There are three alternatives :

1. The Department may build classroom space and retain the residence here as is. This will perpetuate the administrative problem.

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2. The present classrooms in the residential school are to be turned into dormitory space and the residence increased from a capacity of 140 to 240. The Department may wish to build an entirely separate classroom complex and teacherages. Children could be taken up to Grade 10. This would relieve the division of authority. However, if students require residential care for their education there is (a) available facilities at Cranberry Portage, and if not there, it would be preferable for them to be sent to Winnipeg where they could become more aware of society than at Norway House.

3. Close up the residence and use the dormitory space for classrooms. Children that would have come here, and most of them will be Anglicans coming from the Hudson Bay line, would either be placed in private homes or other ^{smaller} institutions that could be built with the money that could be saved from the construction of classrooms here, and the high cost of operating, which, over the past three years has averaged over \$1200.00 a year per pupil, without allowing for teachers salaries. This figure is likely to increase for the future. If hidden and depreciation costs are estimated at \$800.00 a year, then the cost per pupil per year is running at \$2,000.00 for care only. Educational costs are extra.

RECOMMENDATION:

As the consensus of thinking in the field of Child Care today is that institutional life for young children under 12 years of age is detrimental to the development of their character and personality, I would strongly urge that private home placement be made for children who cannot receive an education while with their own families. If it is not practical to find private homes, I would recommend the acquisition of suitable properties where perhaps 12 children could live in a family unit. A husband and wife team could be engaged. The man could follow his occupation and the wife, with maid help and laundry service, could provide home care.

The National Children's Home in England, operated by the Methodist Church, use this plan as a substitute for orphanages. The Salvation Army, I believe, also use this plan in London, Ontario. Our Teulon Hostel is very popular. The numbers are small and individual attention is possible. Rules can be more relaxed than in a large institution where staff have to "herd" children, many of them 10 years of age and less.

These small residences could be spotted around the small towns of Manitoba. The Indian children would likely be more accepted and would not run into the adverse influences as in the larger cities.

In view of the above remarks and from my experience at Norway House for the last eight years, I would recommend:

1. Close up the residential space:
 - (a) The need for United Church children has largely ceased to exist.
 - (b) Convert existing dormitory space into classrooms for day pupils.
11. Children requiring care for their education be placed in:
 - (a) Private homes.
 - (b) Small foster homes on the model of Teulon. In view of the high cost of operating the residential school at \$2,000.00 per year per student, small homes should not necessarily be any more expensive.

I am now in my eighth year as Principal of the Norway House Indian Residential School. During this time I have been intimately associated with educational matters of both the day and residential students, and over the past few years I have seen a changing situation develop. I sincerely feel that as the need of a residential school in the north for United Church children has ceased to exist, and that if the residence should continue it would likely be occupied by children of Anglican parentage from the Hudson Bay line, it would be preferable if alternative accommodation be arranged for them as outlined in my recommendation on Page 3.

Our Indian children need opportunities for "social education" as well as academic education. Accordingly, if children have to leave their natural home, it would be better for them to be placed where they could come in contact with our society. The community resources at Norway House are limited.

STAFFING:

In this northern location it is becoming increasingly difficult to engage competent staff for this kind of work. Because of the nature of the work and the fact that the children are resident from September to June, staff are unable to visit their homes or families during the school year without putting too much strain on those remaining. Because of this isolation and the expense of getting out, staff are unable to get away for refreshment which is so essential when living and working in an institution.

This results in constant turnover of staff, changing Supervisors, which gives rise to lack of continuity for the children returning each year.

CONCLUSION:

In view of the above remarks, I would request Presbytery to carefully consider the future of the Norway House Indian Residential School, and make its recommendations accordingly.

Sept/65

Bernard S. Lee, B.A.
Principal.