

OFFICE OF THE
GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT
AGENCIES



CANADA
DEPARTMENT
OF
MINES AND RESOURCES

Regina, Sask. July 3, 1943.

117-2-1
INDIAN AFFAIRS
BRANCH



Indian Affairs Branch, Department of Mines & Resources, OTTAWA, Ont.

Re: Cote School

I visited this institution on Saturday morning, the 26th instant and naturally there were no children there at that time, but I went over the place and had a long talk with the Rev. Miss Corner, who is the teacher there.

Repairs

The school is in fair shape but there are a certain number of repairs that will have to be made - for instance; a new cistern in the basement. I was informed, and I saw the cistern, that it has gotten full of little holes. This was caused by the zinc gradually rusting. The furnace is also in bad shape. This was a misfit in the first place and 28 years ago I wrote reams of letters regarding this furnace and I finally got it changed so that it would heat the school. Mr. Bryant is going to get Mr. Barrie from Pelly, who is a tinsmith, to look at the furnace and the cistern, also some eave-troughing that has fallen off the school, and find out what it will cost to effect the repairs.

The fence around the school also needs repairing. Probably all new posts will have to be put in. Mr. Bryant will also attend to this in due course.

..... The attendance

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Attend-
ance

The attendance at the school is what caught my attention. There are 29 on the register and I suppose a lot more of school age that are not registered, but the attendance would I do not suppose average 15 during the year. However, the Department have that information. I talked very seriously on the matter of attendance with Miss Corner and she admitted frankly that she had done her best to get the Indians to attend but just simply could not awaken them to the fact that their children had to come to school to get an education. For instance; she informed me that the two that were her star pupils in attendance had lost 17½ days during the year. Others stayed away for days and days at a time. In fact these are her exact words "if the children want to stay at home the Mothers will let them do so" and you know the result. I talked to Mr. Bryant, the Agent, on this matter and he made the statement that he did not try to encourage the older boys to attend school as Miss Corner could not handle them. The Rev. Miss Corner seemed to be quite a fine woman but she may not have the necessary qualifications for making a good teacher. No doubt she has the education, but whether she has the qualities to pass this on to the children is more than I know. However, to start with the management of the school is not what it should be. As you know this is what they call an Improved Day School. Five bedrooms upstairs and several rooms downstairs. It has a large furnace where cordwood sticks are used. In fact I think the furnace box is 48" long. Miss Corner

..... told me herself

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told me herself that it was an awful job for her to put on the furnace. In her own words she stated -" I have to drag the sticks over to the furnace and then get some of the children to help me put them into the fire box." As a result the school was terribly cold last winter and never got warm until night.

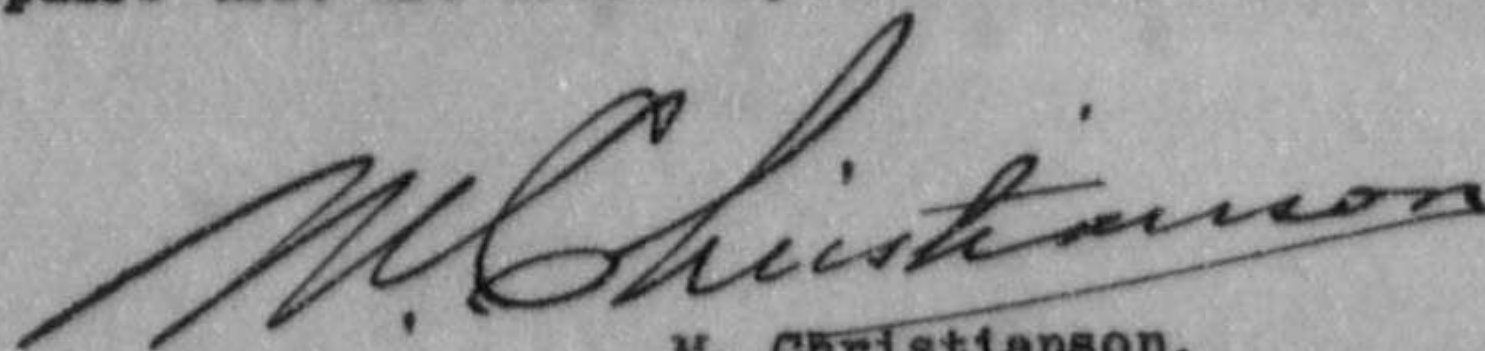
The other lady that was at the school broke down about three months ago and had to go east.

You know probably better than I do, because I am not a teacher, that children do not get much of an education unless they go to school more or less regularly. Therefore you might say that the way the school is going at the present time, with only 50% attendance, it is more or less of a joke.

I had an opportunity of speaking to one of the Councillors before I left there, John Pelly, who has a fairly good education and speaks good English and I asked him to speak to the band and tell them that unless these Indians sent their children more regularly to school it would probably be necessary for our Department to close up the Institution, and John realized this. Whether my advise to him will be followed by the other Indians or not I do not know. He was the only one I had an opportunity of speaking to as I left in the afternoon.

I realize that teachers are very hard to get, but whoever is there it takes a man to fire the furnace.

The repairs that are necessary will be taken up later.



M. Christianson,
General Superintendent of Indian Agencies.

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