

(COPY)

Duck Lake Boarding school,

Sept. 5th. 1917.

To the Indian Agent.

Duck Lake. Sask.

Dear Sir,-

I am by duty bound to acquaint you, and through your mediation, the Department of Indian Affairs; of certain events that have transpired at our school. Accidents of the kind must be conveyed to your knowledge.

In the spring of 1916, a few boys planned the destruction of the house by fire. The seniors surmising the mischief, routed the culprits and the plot fell through.

In the Fall of the same year, 1916, some little fellows were found in the act of setting fires. They were severely punished. At that time I intended asking the Department that I claim today; but my health impaired forbade me the accomplishment of any strenuous work; in fact I had to absent myself from home to take the rest I needed so badly.

Behold; on the 28th. of August at 2 O'Clock A.M. one of the staff was awakened by a crackling noise; from the window a light reflected on the church. In a moment the alarm was given, the whole household including staff and children (106) was on foot and out of the building. We feared an explosion; the fire having been set under a window near the gas plant. The night before at about 8 O'Clock a boy had been seen lighting a match at the very spot. Caught in the act he blew on the match and probably thought it was out, but the fire had caught between the boards at the Tar paper making it's way slowly but surely until a light breeze fanned it to a flame.

The fire was mastered with a few pails of water. If we escaped the disaster it is through a pure providential protection of which we cannot be too thankful.

You realize, dear sir, the consequences; useless to comment.

Does it not seem just and even necessary that we should take means to protect ourselves against such attempts? It is impossible for us to proceed without the help and sanction of the Department.

To remain silent, would be tacitly encouraging the children in their criminal propensities and expose the lives of many. To send the guilty ones back to the different reserves would be helping them to attain the goal; they would set fire at the first feeling of homesickness, sure beforehand of being expelled.

In my opinion such a child should be sent to jail or to a reformatory school. Such an example would prove beneficial to ourselves and other schools.

Among Indian children as among white there are characters who are not subdued, even by severe correction.

Of the boys who attempted to set the fire in 1916, one alone did not repent, and he is the most guilty. Today I dread him and it is for him alone that I would beg of the Department to decide his case and prosecute as soon as possible.

Respectfully yours,

(Signed) Rev H. Delmas, Pte. O.M.I.

Principal.

E. Pant Schmidt, Indian Agent,
Duck Lake, Sask.

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