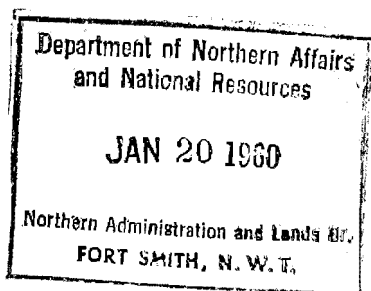


Anglican Residence,
Inuvik, N.W.T.,
Jan. 15th, 1960.



Mr. W. G. Booth,
Chief Supt. of Schools,
Fort Smith, N.W.T.

Dear Mr. Booth:

We are mailing under separate cover, by registered post, our rather delinquent quarterly reports. No-one has been more frustrated over these than I, and the move to Inuvik added to this immeasurably. There was some delay over a few applications then our Inuvik marching orders arrived, bringing with them many new problems and unexpected tasks which consumed many extra hours.

Great care was taken to keep the office records etc. carefully together so they would arrive intact at Inuvik and work could commence on them immediately. The local moving men were asked to tie the filing cabinet so that it would not come apart - they tied it alright but not through the handles. On the way to the truck apparently they tipped it the wrong way and all the drawers fell out scattering the files and papers in every direction. They just picked them up, stuffed them back into the drawers, fastened them properly and said nothing to anyone. What a mess - it took weeks of sorting to obtain even the necessary papers for immediate attention. Then the box containing the quarterlies and other current papers, clearly marked - IMPORTANT OFFICE FILES - PLACE IN RESIDENCE OFFICE arrived at Inuvik and fell into the hands of a helper who couldn't read English and ended up stored away with the foodstuffs. We searched for weeks before locating it as warehouse space was at a premium and everything was piled almost to the roof. This, plus the endless stream of little problems which arise when opening and setting up a new building of this size, plus workmen running all over the building day and night, was almost enough to drive one to distraction. Somehow we managed to cope fairly well and everything is now ship-shape.

In your letter of March 2nd (File 119/22 - 2) you mentioned that the criteria did not make provision for children who were orphaned, who come from broken homes, who are in poor health, whose parents are destitute or whose parents are in hospital, and that these children, before they could be admitted, must be placed under the custody of the Superintendent of Child Welfare through the proper channels and then if he approves, they are eligible for admission to Residential School. This seems very good on paper but it appeared at the time that they had gone ahead and drawn up criteria without having the necessary machinery to make it function. I'll be blown if I could find out from anyone the meaning of "through the proper channels" - and what happened to the children while we navigated our way through the proper channels.

You see for years, down here, the local custom has been that if the parent or parents took sick, especially with T.B., the mother died, family became too destitute, children neglected or the parents going out on the trap line for the winter, the children were placed in school and then, for the former cases looked after until the parents etc. recovered and set up housekeeping again and took their children home or the children were looked after until the case had been investigated and some decision made about setting up a proper home for them and the parents given assistance. It worked very well, the child or children were looked after first and other matters ironed out afterwards. Some suggested that the proper channels meant taking the matter to Court and having the children made wards of the Territorial Government but past experience has shown me that this is easier said than done. Your case has to be well prepared, witnesses available and proof positive presented or the Court will not carry it through, and in many ways this 'apparent' stickiness of the Court is well founded and justified. Then, too, came the question of who was to lay the charges or make the complaint, in this field everyone seemed reluctant to take the first step.

There was one school of thought, which went out of its way to denounce Residential Schools to all and sundry, claiming them to be the biggest curse of the north, and unfortunately quite a following was gained from those who had no previous knowledge of the schools, why they were founded, what they had done in the past and were presently doing. Foster Homes were the only thing, Residential Schools and Hostels should be banned forever. We all agree that Foster Homes serve a very useful purpose but you have to have the machinery set up to administer them and most important you must have the Foster Homes available. There are only one or two Homes in all Aklavik which could be classed as suitable or satisfactory. The homes here are already too small for the families in them and for the most part are dirty and unsanitary to say the least and adding any more to the already overcrowded household merely aggravates an already too heavy burden.

In some instances, no doubt, the criticism of Residential Schools and their tactics may have been well founded but I knew it didn't apply to All Saints (for the past 22 years we have always had more bona fide applications than we had beds to take them) I could not take offense. Oddly enough the criticism came at a time when the Department was already building even larger Hostels at Inuvik so it all boiled down to a ' voice crying in the wilderness'. The critics and their queer notions have long since departed while the schools and hostels remain, although at times it was a bit hard to take and still remain on an even keel.

The formation of the Committee of three to decide on cases which do not fall into any of the classes provided by the criteria was an excellent move and no doubt further improvements are impending.

Everything is running very smoothly here in the Anglican Residence, the children are all (or at least seem to be) very happy and healthy. Every child has gained from 6 - 8 pounds, some much more. The sickly looking ones from Aklavik, who always looked undernourished and completely fatigued, now look rested and have a healthy colour in their cheeks. Am also very pleased to be able to say that there has not been one disciplinary problem and that is a pretty good for a residence of 240 odd children with the age range 6 - 18 years.

Yours sincerely,

Leonard R. Holman

The Eastern Arctic & Coastal children are "gems" almost too good to be true.