

File Indian Missions



DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
CANADA

April 19, 1934

MEMORANDUM: -

To Heads of Church Organizations
conducting Indian Residential Schools

The question of the obligation of the Department of Indian Affairs in regard to residential school buildings, in which it has an interest, has recently been the subject of serious consideration.

In the past, there have been several instances where the Department has been requested to assume financial responsibility towards the capital cost of residential school buildings in which it does not exercise the right of ownership. Grants have also been requested towards the cost of additions, repairs and maintenance, and for the purchase of equipment and furnishings. Frequently, applications for these grants have been made after the work has been completed and without previous submission of plans and an estimate of cost for departmental approval.

In some instances, undertakings have been made on the part of the Department to furnish certain financial assistance, but many of the arrangements made have been verbal in nature and the terms are not of definite record. The lack of written records and agreements makes it difficult for the parties concerned to determine the nature and extent of the Department's responsibility.

For the purpose of dealing with these difficulties in future, the Department has decided to adopt the following policy:

1. The Department of Indian Affairs will undertake the payment of per capita grants and render financial aid towards the cost of buildings and equipment only when the prior authority of the Department has been obtained. This authority should cover such matters as site, size and nature of buildings, particulars regarding equipment and furnishings, and the cost involved.
2. Such authority in all cases shall be set out in a formal and definitely worded agreement between the Department and the Church authorities interested, for the guidance of both, as a matter of record, and for the purpose of avoiding future misunderstandings.

I wish to emphasize that, unless authority be first obtained, the Department in future will be averse to assuming responsibility for reimbursing Church authorities or principals of schools for any part of the costs incurred by them for erection of buildings, additions or repairs, or purchase of equipment and furnishings.

The foregoing proposed regulations should not be interpreted as implying a reversal of policy on the part of the Department. Applications for assistance from schools now operating by authority of the Department as recognized by the payment of per capita grants will, as in the past, receive such consideration as circumstances warrant and financial conditions permit.

St. Arrol W. Hill

Deputy Superintendent General.