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Indian Residential School,
Spanish, Ontario, Jan. 15, 1943.

Dear Father Provincial,
P.C.

I'll begin again--started a letter last week but didn't get it much more than started when interrupted. I'll make this somewhat staccatic so as to get everything down.

Mr. MacKenzie's throat is still bothering him--he went to the Soo but his doctor was sick so he couldn't see him. His throat got worse--prevented him from talking--his tongue swollen or something near his tongue--and it was quite painful. Father Mayhew took over his class. Dr. Hamill (Blind River) was here and removed a small lump of hardened secretion or something from the gland--it is somewhat better since and today he is taking his class half-time. He wrote to the Superior at the General Hospital, Soo, to have her let him know when the doctor would be able to see him--she replied that it would be better for him to go and see a specialist in Montreal. What do you think should be done, Father?

The wood question arises again. This year Father Hawkins is having a good part of the wood cut by Mr. Bishop--it will cost us more than last year but as I remember, you did not favour our having a camp back in the bush over so long a period as 6 or 8 weeks. But we would like to do our own hauling, that is, haul the wood, x after it has been cut, out to the road where it can be loaded on a truck. It would mean a saving of about \$150.00. It may take 7 or 8 days--at most two weeks. The desired plan is that Brother Vandermoor and Joe Savoie and 6 or 8 of the boys would go there, ~~remaining from~~ remaining from Monday to Saturday--they would not have daily Mass. The camp is there already. All of them would come back to the school here on the Saturday and be here over Sunday except Brother Vandermoor who would come back to the school here alright for Sunday Mass but would return to the camp after Mass in order to care for the horses. The camp is 14 miles from here--12 miles along the highway, then 2 miles into the bush. As I mentioned above, the whole job would only be a matter of 7 or 8 days, or at most two weeks, according to Father Hawkins. They would wish to begin perhaps at the end of this month or the beginning of next month.

I began our little battle for the grant increase at Ottawa. There were Father Walsh and two of the school children to go back that way also, so we drove. The Indian Dept. told me to send in a bill. We had to stay overnight at Pembroke--Father Walsh and I stayed with Bishop Nelligan who just happened to be home--he received us most cordially and warmly. We got to Ottawa quite safely and Father Walsh gave me pointers and contacts re securing an appointment with Gov't officials, etc., then he continued on to Montreal by train. I had a young lad to take home--he belonged to St. Regis--so the

next morning I took him as far as Prescott. The teacher at Cutler, one of Father Oliver's missions, left at Xmas without giving us any warning and we had to find another in a hurry--not easy these days. I had written to Mr. Bennet but received no answer. Miss Laferriere (Superior at the Girl's School here) gave me the name of a teacher in Mallorytown who had written in October for a position at Spanish or in the vicinity so I tried to locate her but couldn't--the name was remembered but no one knew of her whereabouts now. Mr. Bennett wired a few days later recommending a Mr. Hawkshaw but Mr. Laurence had managed in the meantime to secure a teacher from Massey so we are alright again. It's hard to get teachers with Ontario Certificates at present.

I was fortunate enough to see ~~The~~ Hon. Mr. Crerar (Minister of Mines and Resources)--the Indian Affairs Branch comes under his Department. It's a long story to give completely--it may take up too much of your time--but I'll risk it. His private secretary, a Mr. Pratt by name, is a great hockey enthusiast--used to be quite a player himself and of course knows my brother Joe, or knows well of him--and I think it all helped a lot, because when I phoned to try to get an appointment with Mr. Crerar, he (Mr. Pratt) was more than courteous and obliging and though Mr. Crerar had a council meeting, he told me to come along, adding that he and Mr. Jackson wanted to talk with me anyway. So I went. Mr. Jackson was a new name to me--I had only heard of him that morning--he is "The" one apparently in the Department--he is the Secretary of the Department of Mines and Resources, is not a Catholic, is a lawyer and very quick and sharp, used to be Deputy-Minister out west or something, and I guess that's what he is really in the Dept. of Mines and Resources. I was told that he was a hard man, that he was the "stumbling block" to our designs. To understand the position of events at the time of my calling, I must tell you that I had sent in a requisition--it had passed through the Indian ~~Dept~~ Affairs Branch officials, but when it got to Mr. Jackson, he vetoed it and that was the end of it--that had happened just before Xmas. As a result I think they all thought I was down to kick about it--I am sure that such was Mr. Jackson's impression and that is probably why he requested me to go and have a talk with him. However I let him do the questioning, told him I hadn't come about the requisition, that I wasn't worrying about it. He asked me to speak out quite frankly, etc. so I did. He had just had the auditor's report recently (books were audited last August) and I had also fortunately heard that morning that he figured we were making money here as our books apparently showed money in the bank. So I proceeded to tell him quite frankly, as he wished, that the auditor's report was no criterion whatever of our financial state, that it merely showed how we spent the grant they give us, that it didn't show outstanding unpaid bills (that's our fault of course), that the bank balance simply meant we had enough sense not to pay out the last cent, even though owed, in case an emergency ~~xxxxxx~~ should arise, that we were going under, deeper in debt each year, that the "A" (I didn't refer to it as ~~xxxxxx~~ such however, simply said the "report") didn't in any way show the financial condition of our place here as a

unit, that is, as a Self-supporting institution. I explained to him that the staff here are not immortal, that they have to be replaced, that they are all doing the work of two or three men each, that others have to be trained to take their places, and that that can't be done for nothing, that as a result we are taxed an amount, that is but a pittance really, each year for each one, but that with the grant as it is, we cannot even pay the pittance, that we have been but going in debt more and more each year and that the debt was now between twenty and thirty thousand dollars. I reminded him of how the cost of living has increased, gave him instances, reminded him of the cost of living bonus the government obliges employers to pay, and that, instead of that, we have but received from the government a diminution, a cut in our grant. I told him it was impossible to carry on that way. When I told him of the debt, etc., he asked what would happen if I just didn't pay it. I told him that I preferred to shoulder my burdens and not (in so many words) be so unprincipled as to shirk them and throw the burden on someone else. I told him that though we were still living, it was at the expense of our buildings, etc., that in a short time we would find ourselves without any buildings (that is, beyond repair), as we were unable to do the necessary repairs. He wanted to know what it would take to put the building in a state of repair--that, I could not say at the moment as one would scarcely know where to begin. I told him the barn was ready to fall down (it needs repairs badly--we will fix it this spring), that the roof is leaking in twenty or more places (as it is), that the water comes up in the middle of my room and in the parlour when it rains, etc. (as it does). And so we went on--for about an hour and a half--I had a few minutes with the Minister (Mr. Crerar) alone in his office in the middle of it all, and I told him the impossibility of getting along under the present conditions. Incidentally I had just learned, by chance, that morning, at the Indian Affairs Branch, that the Minister of Mines & Resources has a meeting each year with the representatives of the various churches operating Indian Residential Schools throughout the Dominion, and that this annual meeting was scheduled for the following week. So when I met Mr. Jackson, he referred to it, or it came up somehow and I asked him ~~xxxxxxx~~ how it happened that we weren't notified about it. He said that they had been under the impression that Father Plourde (who represents the Oblates--the French Oblates) was the representative of all the Catholic Schools. It gave me a little edge on him (Mr. Jackson) for a beginning at least. And he invited me to be there the following Tuesday. And before I left, he told me to go ahead in regard to my requisition and that it would pass alright. On my requisition I had asked for payment of a bill for repairs to the convent last summer--I am asking for part of it only to the amount of \$ 153.60--also for 100 gallons of paint, 15 gallons of turpentine, a few paint brushes, and between two hundred and fifty and three hundred dollars for labour (a carpenter) to enlarge the dormitory. These are expenses that they will pay between now and Mar. 31st, the end of the fiscal year. Then we will

go after more for repairs next Spring and summer. I must say I found the same Mr. Jackson quite intelligent and I really think he could see our argument and situation--he may be hard-boiled, as they say, but I have hopes that he is also reasonable. Mr. Morris, one of the officials in the Indian Department, who is a great friend (for 25 years) of the Minister's secretary (Mr. Pratt) told me afterwards that they like it much better when one goes straight to them without, if I understood rightly, trying to pull a lot of strings, bringing in other ministers I suppose, etc. I think you must have been praying hard because I had no trouble, just ~~we~~ got the phone number from Mr. Phelan and phoned direct to the Minister's secretary without passing through any of the subordinate officials. And I really think we did get somewhere. At least we got something for the present and I think our situation is better appreciated by them now and more clearly, though there are still some things to tell them and to straighten out. I didn't want to bite off too much at the first meeting. Maybe I'm imposing too much on your time--but you can read this in instalments perhaps. You might be interested in knowing who is who in the Department. You have probably heard considerable of Mr. Phelan--he has been here several times, used to come up every year. But Mr. Phelan, friendly as he is to us, is at the bottom of the ladder. He does, I am sure, help us a good deal, but as I say, he is at the bottom. The ladder is more or less like this:

Department of Mines & Resources

Minister---Mr. Crerar --{Mr. Pratt; Minister's
Secretary--Mr. Jackson Priv. Secr.

Dr. McGill--Director of Indian Affairs
Branch.

Dr. Moore

Mr. Hoey

Mr. P. Phelan

Mr. Morris

Mr. Doucett
Mr. Arneil

Dr. Moore is in charge of the Medical Division of the Indian Affairs B.

Mr. Hoey is Superintendent of the Welfare and Training Divisions

Mr. Phelan is Chief of the Training Division

Mr. Morris is in charge of the Welfare Division

Mr. Doucett is charged with organizing Manual Training, etc., in the Schools as far as I could gather.

Mr. Arneil is in the Welfare Division--establishing goats, etc.

Mr. Morris is also a Catholic, an ardent hockey enthusiast too, used to Manage Ottawa's Senior teams, he and I get along famously if I may be presumptuous (just because his interests have always been in hockey and he followed Joe a good deal--and now his interests also lie in Indians, so we have common ground to work on). He put in a very good word ~~for~~ us with Mr. Jackson.

Mr. Arneil was most affable and friendly--he knew my Dad in Toronto.

I was fortunate in finding them all in Ottawa at the time. I didn't want to remain till the following week so I returned here and then went back by train for the meeting, the annual meeting with the Minister. It was a fairly formidable delegation--and the representatives were much more numerous than usual as the question at issue, as the Minister had told me, and the others also, was precisely that of the Residential Schools and their financial conditions. The Archbishop of Ottawa, (Archbishop Vachon) attended to add a bit of ecclesiastical weight though he said nothing, Bishop Belleau, O.M.I., (Bishop of James Bay--he is the one that I made that trip north with two years ago last summer, along with Father Couture) was there, Father Plourde (representing the French Oblates), a Father Phelan (representing the English Oblates), two Anglican bishops (the Bishop of Ottawa, and one from the West--I'm not sure if they were both Anglicans or not), three other Protestant ministers, three ladies (I don't know if they were mistresses or what, but they were representing schools, I was told), Dr. Doré (Toronto--the representative of the United Churches), Dr. Wisgate (or a name something like that) from Winnipeg, representing some Church or other or school. There were also present the Minister of Justice, if I mistake not his folio (St. Laurent is the name), and various officials of the Department (including our Mr. Jackson). Dr. Doré was the mouthpiece of the Delegation and put the case quite clearly--explained the present conditions, increase in cost of living, substantiated by statistics, quoted the government's own statistics that the cost of living has gone up 18% (that for organized districts--therefore more than that in unorganized ones), that the Government imposes penalties on all those who do not give a cost of living bonus to their employees, etc. The delegation asked for a return of the 7.76% cut in our grants, and for a cost of living bonus. Another request was that the children should not be discharged from the schools until they are eighteen years old. The session with the Minister lasted nearly two hours. The Minister promised (of course) that the matter and representations would receive every consideration--they make up their estimates now to submit to the ~~XXXXX~~ Treasury Department--then they are voted upon by the House in April I believe--at any rate sometime after the 31st of March. We'll have to ask Heaven to make Mr. Ilsey propitious to us. Something will surely come out of it all. If nothing big enough happens from that, then I can try to get our per capita rate raised--I think we are about the lowest, if not the lowest. Our per capita rate here at Spanish is 160 dollars a year. Some schools get 180 dollars, others 200 dollars, depending on their location, cost of transporting necessities, i.e. freight facilities, etc. It's surprising all the little things one picks up here and there in talking with the different ones and when they are all put together, I find our position much clearer to me. It was encouraging to learn that, despite all, our school apparently ranks fairly high in Department estimation. They (the Department) are trying a new policy in regard to our young girls that graduate. There are always some who either have no home to return to or whose home conditions are not wholesome or suitable. So Mr. Morris (Welfare Division) has placed some of them at the Water Street Hospital in Ottawa. Two of the

four

graduates of last years class went there. There are now ~~xxxx~~ of last year's class in Ottawa and altogether there are seven of them there from the last couple of classes. Of the ~~xxxx~~ ^{four} that went last year, one is now working at Senator Wilson's, and one at Mr. Wilgress' (the Canadian Ambassador to Russia). They are still only children, one not yet 16, the others 16. They didn't know a soul in Ottawa. The families they are in are very good, but not Catholic. It is good training for them and will see them through what would possibly be disastrous years for them if they had returned to the reserves. The one at Wilgress' has not a suitable home to go to, her parents are separated (Garden River), etc.--the one at Wilson's has no mother, and those at the Hospital are all without Mothers too I believe, except perhaps one, but she doesn't know her mother is living. Mr. Morris is quite pleased with their showing in Ottawa so far. He told me that Mr. Crerar (the Minister) would like one of them, I mean, one of the graduates from the Girls' School here. At Ottawa our two schools are treated as one--the Spanish School. I think the problem of their being orphaned in Ottawa is partly solved. You may have noticed in the papers that Mr. Wilgress left with an embassy for Russia. His family accompanied him to New York and they were leaving the little one from Spanish all alone in their home in Rockcliffe. She came to the Hospital and told me--she didn't know where she could stay. Fortunately the Sisters of Service are in Ottawa so I made arrangements for her to stay there and also for her to go there and bring the other Spanish graduates there--^{and then} they have "Rosary Hall" just precisely for such out-of-town girls--they have their social activities, study-club, bowling, etc. It's called St. Anthony's club. The Sister Superior was most kind and will help them along a good bit I am sure if they go. I landed there just in time for their annual Xmas dinner of the St. Anthony's club. Met a kind old lady there--a spinster--who knew me when I was a matter of months old, she was a great friend of my Mother and grandmother, etc. and knows all the family--I had never met her before. She lives with her two spinster sisters--they must all be between 60 and 70--and she welcomed our Spanish graduates to visit them any Sunday evening, so that made another home for them where they can find some distraction and motherly care. They told me later ^{when I was back} that three of them had come for a Sunday evening and apparently enjoyed it. I really think Mr. Morris' plan is a good one as long as someone keeps an eye on them and keeps them in the right company. Living in such homes is bound to elevate their ideals somewhat, as long as the spiritual side is protected. I think the Sisters of Service will do that, if the girls go there regularly.

We are going to start enlarging our dormitory space as soon as our carpenter arrives--Mr. Ed Joncas, the one who built the chicken coop addition. He only charged .45¢ an hour last time so is not expensive, and did very good work.

While I was at Ottawa, Father Dwyer (Father Joe) phoned from Wikwemikong to say that Father Belanger had erisypêlus and wanted someone to help for the Epiphany so Father Hawkins sent Father Sullivan. Then they wrote (I think it was by mail) to have him remain as Father Dwyer wanted to go for his retreat, so Father

Hawkins said alright until further advice. I don't know if Father Dwyer wrote to you or not. I should have written last week but didn't get it written. He is still there(I mean, Father Sullivan).

We received an invitation to Father Cadot's jubilee. Would you think it well for Father Dufresne or Father Richard to go?

That's all for now--enough you must say to yourself. Please continue to remember us at the altar--with God's help I think we may get better assistance from the Department--I really think too that we have been perhaps a bit passive, distant from them, out of contact with the ones that really have the deciding word.

With kindest regards,

Your obedient servant in Christ,

Cecil Pimeau S.J.

A little postscript. While East, I took advantage of it to see the lady who has the little one. The child is in excellent health, has never had a cold yet, is really waxing strong. The Sacred Heart has surely blessed everything so far. I had expected a storm at Xmas but all went well apparently. As long as the grandmother remains calm, all is well, and the Sacred Heart seems to solve each difficulty--but only one at a time--it surely engenders confidence however and has banished the worries of a year ago. Perhaps you will have a little prayer of thanks with me to the Sacred Heart for all the graces It has given, with the hope that they will always continue.

Sincerely,

C. A. Sullivan, Jr.

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Indian Residential School,
Spanish, Ontario,
March 23, 1943.

Dear Father Provincial,
P.C.

Father Vandriessche died at 11.40 p.m. on Thursday, Mar. 18th and was buried here yesterday morning at 11 o'clock. He died in the St. Joseph's General Hospital at Blind River. Father Richard was with him at the last moments--he, Father Richard, stayed with him from Monday till his death on Thursday night. The cause of death is given by the doctor as Endocarditis. He took no nourishment for the last few days and just grew steadily weaker and weaker. He was anointed again before he left here on Wednesday March 10th.

He was exposed in the Domestic Chapel here--we removed the Blessed Sacrament to the big Chapel. We brought him back from Blind River on Friday, the 19th.

His Excellency Rt. Rev. R.H. Dignan, D.D., Bishop of Sault Ste. Marie came on Sunday and remained with us overnight. The funeral mass was yesterday (Monday) morning at eleven o'clock--a low mass, which I said, followed by the Absolution given by His Excellency. Before the Absolution, His Excellency spoke a few words--most appropriate and appreciated. We had the Office for the Dead just before the Mass at 10.40 o'clock. Father Tim Dwyer came on Sunday evening for the funeral. Father Porcheron arrived by train on Monday morning (yesterday) but as the train was late, he was not in time for the Mass but was in time for the burial. Six of the Indians of the district were pall-bearers, the Brothers and Fathers being honorary pall-bearers and walking behind the coffin from the Church to the cemetery. Father Vandriessche is buried beside Father Papineau, the last one of ours to be buried here--back in 1931. As the roads are all blocked on the Island, Fathers Belanger, Barker and Joe Dwyer couldn't attend. Father Prud'homme would have come but one of his flock died on Drummond Island on Friday and was buried yesterday so that Father couldn't come.

I sent accounts of his (Father Vandriessche's) various statuses to the Sault Star and to the Sudbury Star. There was a broadcast over the Sudbury Station this morning but I didn't hear it.

Should Father Vandriessche's writings, etc. be sent to you or to the Provincial of the Lower Province?

Also, should one of ours write his necrology? If it is to be one of ours, whom would you wish to do it?

Brother Grubb is wondering now about his retreat. He made it with Brother Vandermeer last year--and of course, seeing Brother

Vandermoor off to Guelph for his retreat, Brother Grubb has conceived the idea that it would be nice if he could do the same. However I believe that he is due to take his Last Vows next February if nothing prevents them--so that it seems to me that it would be better for him to wait till then to make his retreat elsewhere. Perhaps he could make this year's one right here as he did last year. Or what would your Reverence suggest?

Still 5 below zero yesterday morning and this morning--but the days (the last two days) have been nice and bright--last Friday and Saturday were not so nice. You should see the snow! But I guess you have plenty of your own.

Asking your remembrance of us at the altar,

R.V. Servus in Xto,

C.A. Prunier, S.J.