

Spanish Ontario  
July 31st 1946

Very Reverend Dear Father Provincial;

Your Reverence's letter this morning with the information regarding the status changes received and the information noted.

It was very kind to try and get Father Knott and Father Monaghan for the house here.

Our three old fathers are as well as could be expected and are a very hard trial on us all at times. It is what must be expected of men in the very advanced and in many ways helpless state of age.

Father Sullivan is as usual and now comes to no meals whatsoever. I shall have to get him to appear at some of them I suppose. Father Penfold from what I have seen is also on the very definitely invalided list and so we shall have to cope with that.

You will pardon us Father and not take it as ingratitude or murmuring I hope if I say that Fr. Hannin and Father McKey and I were completely gloomy today. I hesitated about writing and decided that before expressing any opinions I should call them and ask if they thought we were set for another hard year. It seems we are. It is very well to pass out lists of catechisms and points for brothers, a dozen offices entailed by a school of at least one hundred and forty boarders, a parish which demands at least some attention, the convent with catechism classes and confessions, spiritual direction and business with the department which must all be handled through us, and of seven priests in the house, since Father McKey is fully taken up with his missions, we are two sure of carrying on the work. We would appreciate very much if it were possible to have on other real worker along.

In any case we must prepare for the year. Mr. Brown of

course will not be available for teaching since with so many boys we must use two recreation men and the hours are very long. I had hoped to get relieved of such things as prefecting breakfasts and singing practices for chapel, odds and ends that break in on the day. But I feel that it is particularly hard on Father Hannin. We can put a stop to extra things like plays, that will help to some extent.

I hope there may be some relief for Father Tim in sight. It is going to be very hard for him to continue. I presume that we keep on sending Father Sullivan to Garden River every second week.

Father Costello has been a marvellous help at the Island. I have had to stick pretty well to the office work, with discharges and applications to answer. Father Hannin has prefected the boys who were here for work and been busy with repair jobs, it is difficult to force men to the island, Fr. Costello was glad to go and has been a life-saver. The girls go to camp at our place from the sixteenth of August until the end of the month, would it be possible for him to stay here and make the run every morning for mass for the girls and the ladies in charge. He can run the boat and our other two choices would be Father Penfold and Father Sullivan neither of whom could do so?

I am writing to Father Murphy to tell him that we have to get a half fare book for Brother Erwin. It would be quite expensive and even a little beyond our ordinary cash expenditure to send him full fare. I am presuming that he will agree to let Brother stay here and make his retreat in the meantime. He is a very fine religious and a very efficient and pleasant person.

Father Hannin tells me that he does not see the need for Father Maurice's coming. He will be doing no little of prefecting and would just as soon start the scholastics off himself. I am sure that he will manage well with the two scholastics. He knows of the difficulty regarding Mr. Brown and realizes that not much should be expected of Mr. Epoch, at least for the first while.

We shall all be relieved when something definite has been settled with Father Prômeau. It is very difficult to have him showing up around this country in full clergy and people are curious. Father Sullivan met him on the train Saturday 27th leaving Sault Ste Marie. He was on his way to Waubesa. If he could be persuaded to stay away from this section of the country it would be much better for his name and the name of the Society.

*Respectfully in  
Raymond Oliver*

Indian Residential School  
Spanish, Ontario.  
August 7th., 1946

Reverend Dear Father Provincial;

Your letter made me blush! In having an added brother we are greatly blessed, in having the two scholastics and a priest we can carry on moderately well. I assure you we shall not lose sight of right proportions again to the extent of expecting everything one hundred percent and no difficulties attached! At least I hope I don't! I want to thank you most sincerely for your very patient and encouraging letter.

Fathers Costello and McHardy have begun their retreats. We expect Father Divine in tomorrow, Fr. Rushman may make his retreat here as I understand it, he was to write to Father Wilson for direction and we have not heard from Fr. Rushman as to the outcome. Fr. MacPhee is well and divides his day between some very difficult Geometry, and some manual work which is of great value to the house. He is very much at home here and looks better every day. With the arrival of Frs. Penfold and of Father Hegarty we shall have the same difficulty as the lady in the shoe but we have room to no end once it is converted. It is grand to see that people feel at home and Fr. Hannin is very thoughtful.

Father Tim will be delighted to hear any news of a man coming to the Garden. I am sure that when the matter is definite he will be immediately relieved in his mind. The last time I was talking to him he was very worried about the spiritual care of Garden River since he is usually too tuckered out on Sunday for any instruction and his mind taken up with builders difficulties. If it is possible to have Fr. Hegarty go there it would mean a tremendous up for Fr. Tim's morale and he would easily carry on.

Several of the fathers have told me that I should

get off somewhere! Now that is rather a nuisance but I decided that my nerves were getting frayed. I have found myself getting very nervy about the old missionaries and their continual complaints which hitherto I had accepted with sympathetic noises appropriate for such occasions made me jumpy. So..today I am getting Father McKey to take Father MacPhee and me to Wikwemikong for a visit. We shall return here tomorrow. It will give me a chance to see Mr Johnson the Manitoulin agent about some business and to see Mr Howitt about some of his children and give me the change. I thought that I could risk this without asking permission from you beforehand since I was not sure of being able to take the trip. We have not been out for months, as a matter of fact we are quite happy as a rule right here. Fr. MacPhee has promised to sing for us on the way. Since I have never heard him it may prove interesting.

Father we have a chance to get a Victor talking machine on the instalment plan. The whole cost of the machine would be something just over five hundred dollars. Our first payment would be two hundred and twenty or so..it is difficult to be exact. This would be bought from the Government account of course with a few donations solicited for the recreation fund which would go for the machine. We are quite able to carry it without difficulty and it would be very valuable for the visual education programs which we have weekly for each class. We cannot get worthwhile films for the silent sixteen machine and our machine is old and very poor. As for the expense of film rental of talkies, they would come to us cheaply since the few we have each year could be rented for Sunday from the man who runs the show in the village here. One in every three or four of his films are worthwhile and he would be glad to make a few dollars for the little trouble of sending the films down here since he cannot ship them on Sunday at any rate. Which ever way your "everence decides in this matter will be perfectly acceptable to us. I should have said that I had a meeting of the consultors regarding this..excepting Mr. Howitt, and they knowing the financial status and the reasons for and against, agreed we should ask you.

If it were possible we should like very much to have your visit and if a few days rest in our lovely country would tempt you, be assured you are most welcome, the boat is running well the camp is a grand place for daily picnics and we know you will feel at home here. May I ask your blessing on the community?

Gratefully yours in Christ,  
Fr. Raymond Olive

Indian Residential School  
Spanish, Ontario  
August 10th., 1946

Reverend Dear Father Provincial;

I had intended mentioning in my letter that Brother Vandermoor had met with an accident, fortunately not too disastrous. He fell from a load of hay and hurt his back very badly. We had the ambulance come from Sault Ste Marite and he was x-rayed there put in a cast which will have to be kept on for about ten days. He will stay there in all for something over two weeks. We were all so happy that he had not hurt himself far more seriously. There was not much work left at the hay. Brother Voisin and Mervin finished it with the boys. Even with the cast Brother Vandermoor is able to get around a little in the hospital.

It was grand news about Father Hegarty and I hope that he will come. As for his coming here until he gets established at Garden River, he would be most welcome. If, however he is to work there under Father Tim, the latter may have other plans. In the case of his coming we shall wait directions from you.

Mr. Epoch is settled and likes the place and the boys very well.

Father Divine is here and seems to enjoy himself. He is very much in need of a period of relaxation. After his triduum is over he will have time for fishing and will pick up quickly. As in the case of Father MacPhee I think it wiser not to get faculties from the Bishop since the word gets round and demands are made for ministry. Even our own missionaries are bound to ask for any visitor just for the week-end but it spoils a real rest. If I should do otherwise would you please let me know?

The day at Wikwemikong was grand and made me realize that such a trip once in a while is a tonic for the weary. Father Joe is fine, Fr Flaherty was having some teeth fixed at the Sault. We visited Fr. Howitt and he is happy and in good health.

Indian Residential School,  
Spanish, Ontario.  
August 18th., 1946.

Very Reverend Dear Father Provincial; P.Xti.

Everything went well on the vow day though we regretted very much that you could not be present. Everyone realizes the amount of work that you must have right now and how precious time is, but we still hope you may get a day or two of rest in this grand country.

The Inspector of Separate schools was here yesterday and will, I am sure be very co-operative in the matter of the high school. He brought up the question of the separate school grounds here. We own the land and by some new regulation the Separate School Board must have the ownership or else be deprived of their claim to grants. To avoid difficulty (and there was no end of it in the past) I think we should sell them the play yard at a very nominal or rather low price with the condition that should the building cease to function as a school belonging to the S.S. Board etc...we buy the land back at the same price and that we have first option at that price. We must protect our selves from some road house keeper who would take the place over in the advent of the school being moved to the village, there was already question of this. The matter has been taken up with the consultants who advised some protective process and agreed that it was dangerous to delay and thus cause a financial crisis at the school. May we have your permission to proceed. The yard has been used by the school for years and would stay the same size.

Mr Archambault has not written to me directly but has told several people that he is not coming back. It will be a relief to us, we could not very well have refused him since I was forced to promise him a two year contract when we got him last year just a day before school, it is one of those things which I shall jot down to experience...at any rate we shall need a teacher for our grades one and two. Since we shall be doing some teaching ourselves, at least I shall and possibly Father Hannin, we will need an auxiliary

teacher and not a full time one. I do not know if you made the acquaintance of the Laroques here. I spoke to Virginia Laroque, the station agent's daughter of the possibility of getting her to come for an hour and a half in the morning and the same period in the afternoon. She has full high school and part of her college course, stays at home to run the house for her father and has much free time. She would board at home and be here for her classes only. Financially it would be excellent for us since we would pay but half the ordinary salary, we have been advised many times to get a lady teacher for the primary and it would be interesting to see if that would make any difference. She would come for her classes only and not clutter up the place with her presence afterward. If you approve I shall ask her, if not we shall find other ways to arrange classes.

Brother Vandermoor must wear his cast for six months. It is very trying on him but he is very holy and so carries the cross cheerfully. He is able to go around and to take meals with the community, follow the regular order but will be incapacitated for work during the six months. With the help of the boys Brother Voisin will carry on the essential farm work. We are most thankful that we will not have to depend on wood this winter. Our cellar is stocked with coal.

Brother Erwin is still here. I suppose we should send him when Brother Westaway arrives although he would like to make his retreat here.

Father Dimine is out fishing this afternoon. He seems quite relaxed now, but has a great deal of trouble with his stomach.

Father MacPhee seems fine, there are times when he does not sleep but he feels he has improved greatly. He has been a wonderful help here with his knowledge of carpentry and building. He has almost finished the fire escape, a real necessity for the large dormitory. It has saved us a great deal of money, in fact we could not have afforded the labor.

Father Tim was down for the vow day and he has those terrible pouches under his eyes which are in his case a sign of great fatigue. Father Joe was here to and was worried, I told him that good hopes were held out for a man in September.

The scholastics seem happy. Mr Brown settled right in and seems to have good authority. He has a great deal of energy and I am sure Father Hannin can keep it harnessed and in the right direction. He is very earnest and it is a grand thing to see that he has taken the extra year very cheerfully or at least has not showed a single sign of resenting it.

I have felt very much more like work since the trip to Wikwemikong. Whatever you shall advise I shall be glad to do, but this would be a very difficult time to leave since there will be daily mail to answer as regards applications and discharges. We have begun a campaign to get some of the girls from here sent back to their day schools in order to make room for cases from the back missions, children who are ten and twelve years old and have not made first communion. I profited by my trip to the Island to get the information I wanted and have made application for the discharge of twelve. If the correspondance is not kept up to date these matters are shelved at Ottawa. Then there is the question of arranging the class programs. I planned rather on going the last two weeks of September to Guelph and making my retreat there, having a day or so at Toronto and a day with Father Hawkins. If I may have this permission I think it would fill the bill. Father Hannin plans on his retreat in October when I shall be back. He will have a certain amount of buying to do in Toronto and if you see fit I should like him to take four or five days there, his relatives are in the city. He is most admirable and to him is due the grand spirit of the community since they are so well cared for. He has been very steadily at the job for months and should get a few days at his retreat time. I know he will spent much of it looking for something or other for the house but the change will do him a great deal of good.

Our veterani, are well and happy. Thank God none are bed-ridden. Father Richard stills says mass three or four times in the week. The others say mass every day. I have asked Father Belanger to say a special mass once a week for all of us in the community. I am sure it will bring God's blessing on our house.

We should be glad to have Mr Wardell come at any time. There is no question of our doing any work on the chapel this year but we would be glad to have the plans in order to get the material necessary little by little. We did not make arrangement with anyone else since there do not seem to be any architects in this part of the country. The firms usually send them in.

We do not own the land at Ayrd Island and therefore it could at any time be bought and spoil all our hopes

for the future vacations of the summer children. It is necessary to have an engineer come and have the land surveyed and then we must buy it from the government since it is crown land. We have it from good authority that the land itself sells for a pittance but that the surveying comes dearly. Some figure that it will be around two hundred dollars. We have tried over and over again to contact someone who would do it gratis but the time has come when we must act or risk losing the site and our buildings. May we have this permission. We might have to hold over our mass stipend for a while but this has been done before and Father Brennan realizes our financial state.

The Diocesan Drive is on and Father Costello will preach at Blind River next Sunday, then he will be back and forth helping Father Tim if that is agreeable. Father Costello will really be fit for the year when he goes for he has spent a very great deal of his time out-doors. When Father Penfold comes I presume he will take up the parish work and with it the Drive.

It might interest you to know that Fr. Tim is having electric lights and a furnace in the residence! The house as I understand it is in position with a new basement finished, the installation for bath room ready and the furnace on the way. Since the hydro runs by the door the lighting will be easily settled and it begins to sound royal! The moving of the house made all the papers up this way and, I understand even got into the Globe and Mail.

As soon as word comes for Father Sullivan he shall be on his way. It would be grand if something could be done for him since he is so very intelligent and active.

Father Divine has been anxiously waiting for a letter from you. I hope that I am not being over bold in mentioning it. I suggested that I would mention it and he asked me not to, but I knew that you would not mind. I believe that in a couple of weeks he will be fully ready to face the work in the west since he has been able to forget all his difficulties and relax excellently.

I do not think there is anything else to mention. Be assured of our prayers and give our community your blessing.

Respectfully and sincerely,

Servus in Christo,

*Raymond Oliver*

Spanish, Ontario  
November 30th 1946

Very Reverend Dear Father Provincial..P.C.

Welcome back to Canada! I had intended putting off this letter till next week, but thought it better to write immediately.

Brother Laflamme has had a fairly bad heart attack. I have not had final word from the doctor attending him, but he is in bed, out of danger and a rest will fix him up. Brother Vandermoor will be able to keep us going in light and water and Mr. Brown will give out iodine and what ever is necessary to cure the smaller ills. God has been especially good to the children this year and we have hardly had one of them in bed...and no epidemics. Brother Vandermoor is getting along fine and will have his cast removed in January. The fact that we bought sufficient coal for heating cuts down the fuel problem as regards labor..we could not have coped with it..it gave us a financial headache which will be over in January! Taken all in all Brother Laflamme's rest will not overburden us and will bring him back. After a week he will be able to circulate and take his meals down on the first floor in the men's dining room along with Fr. Belanger who is able to move slowly around, and will be able to go to mass in the chapel which is adjoining his room.

Fr. Belanger says mass everyday and is able to look after himself fairly well. Fr Richard keeps him busy reading, and the same Father Richard although he cannot say mass is proving our salvation as a confessor to boys girls and all comers. Fr. Dufresne is still strong and walks miles per day in the corridors. He has been very much piqued since we put him in the small private chapel for mass. He began dropping hosts and creating general mayhem in the big chapel

2

and insisting on his mass at seven or seven thirty. Very often the poor man could not say it and the days he did say it he started early etc etc. Now he never misses and everybody is happy that he has his own stamping ground. There were several who came with worries as to his completing the words of consecration. I asked Father McKey to watch him for several mornings and Fr McKey says that he is perfectly solid.

Fr. Sullivan is as usual. He comes to table every meal and goes to sleep, never touches a thing. There was some difficulty about his putting on huge fires at night in the kitchen and absconding with twenty five or thirty pounds of sugar at a time..so we had to forbid him the kitchen. On Sundays Fr. Hannin and I alternate binating between here and the village... Fr. Sullivan was not strong enough to preach loudly enough even in the village to be heard. The result was that we had continual complaints. I suppose we shall hear some news of his report when there is more time at Your Reverence's disposal. We realize that there are many things to settle.

Fr. Penfold is slightly better. He has been in the hospital now for nearly two months, probably more and the last news we had of him from the Mother Superior there she said that he was very weak still. I hope that he will stay at the hospital as long as he is a bed patient since he would be a first floor candidate too and we are filled up! His illness and the care necessary for him and Fr Belanger what with endless trips and trays wore Brother Laflamme out in the early fall, with all the good will in the world they were patients who demanded much attention. However we shall cope with the situation as it comes.

Mr. Brown is doing splendidly and Mr Epoch will learn much from him this year. The former is a splendid man for discipline and very orderly, Mr Epoch has all the good will in the world but lacks experience, he will have much more grip on things next year.

Brother Westaway is very happy and is an

asset of untold worth.

We have not seen Father Tim often. He is well though and I understand the basement of the church is to be used for mass tomorrow for the first time. He was down just once since Septwber and stayed an hour or two so that I have no idea what he plans as regards the church there.

Father Hannin is doing a splendid job. The house is spotless, the living conditions excellent and there is a fine spirit among the boys.

Asking your blessing on our community.

Servus in Xto.,

Raymond Akre 27