

Garnier Residential School  
Spanish Ontario  
Jan. 3rd 1947

Very Reverend Dear Father Provincial;

P.C.

There used to be square dance where the "caller" could ad lib to such an extent as to have the dancers in breathless befuddlement. It was heaps of fun and of course since it lasted a very short time people enjoyed it. I'm afraid that poor Fr. Belanger is the caller in the dance again!

Last week he was in one of his utterly impossible moods, nothing suited him. He claimed that you had told him he was to stay here live and die like it or lump it..etc..This was Russia (last week!) He wanted me to write immediately, not to you but to The Provincial of the Lower Province to have him immediately lifted from this awful imprisonment. He had row after row with anyone who approached him..I told him that he would have to write himself since he wanted to write and that anyone could write the letter but that I could not very well write it myself. I also told him that I was sure that you understood how hard it was for him and that you would by no means force him to stay if he were that terribly unhappy, but I also told him that he would not be happy anywhere else since his sickness was a heavy cross that would go right along with him. I do not see how I could refuse to send the letters although he had told me several times before to tear up any he might write to his Father Provincial ...you can imagine how the situation becomes very complicated.. *(Have just had a Fr. conversation with Fr. Richard!)*

Today he is very happy..has been for three days and is laughing at the whole matter. I find it rather trying to laugh with him, but he is a poor old sick man with whose whims no one could possibly cope. He now wishes he hadn't written the letters etc etc and I must refuse next time to send them. He was out of his head. We are all wonderful..this is Utopia Unlimited...and I myself have a headache trying to keep up with it all..Oh yes, we are all pardoned for

having misunderstood him and must not pay any attention to him. I think the best thing to do would be to let the matter ride and see how things go. He has begun to read the Office again and is quite delighted that he can follow it. As regards health he has not gained nor lost. I shall have the Doctor check him but I think he would be heart broken if he were told to go. I reminded him of the story of the lad who cried WOLF and he really seems a little afraid that that is what may happen to him sometime. You will let me know if there is to be further action. I would feel absolutely awful sending him off when I know it is really the last thing he wants. He has done so much for our missions and his good prayers mean so much for our house.

Mr Johnston is getting along very well and will be home in a day or two. Our boys come back today and it is awful to think of classes and all starting again. Your blessing on us all,

Servus in Xto..

Raymond Johnston

Garnier Residential School  
Spanish Ontario  
Jan. 3rd 1947

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Indian Residential School  
Spanish, Ontario  
March 11th, 1947.

Very Reverend Dear Father Provincial, P.C.

This letter is long due. Spanish is about the same. Father Penfold and Brother LaFlamme are back. Bro. LaFlamme is weak and nervous about his condition but will soon perk up and help around. Father Penfold is his usual self. He will of course not be of any help for a very long time. He is quite capable of looking after himself, says a late mass every day and sleeps endlessly, he is not as yet able to hear even a few confessions, to discuss his case further is superfluous. Father Sullivan is of course still on hunger strike and living on some diet of his own, mainly sugar as I understand. He shows up at meals but never touches a thing. He is weak of course as a result and we follow the directions given of never asking him for anything which if it be left undone does not affect anyone so that apart from the convent mass and mass Monday in the village he is free. The two older invalids are well enough.

Brother Vandermoor is fine now. He has got rid of the cast and wears some sort of belt which gives him much more freedom.

Mr. Epoch has been resting for almost a month. He is not very strong and was advised a rest by the doctor. We have been of course fairly busy as a result. We hope he will be well enough to resume full duties in a week or so. He was in bed only a few days but it looked like a case of rheumatic fever and we did not want to take a chance.

Father Hannin is doing the usual splendid job and the thought that we shall undoubtedly be so much worse off next year is not exactly cheering. Mr Brown has been the soul of generosity and devotedness, with these two gone...

We are looking for another teacher for our younger ones next year. It will be a financial burden since the number of our boys has gone down considerably, but will ensure of a fully staffed set of class rooms.

Obediently, servus in Xto.

Raymond Oliver

Indian Residential School  
Spanish, Ontario  
March 27th, 1947

Very Reverend Dear Father Provincial, P.C. *MB*

Your letter of last week very much appreciated. With hopes of two good replacements next year will be quite as liveable as this one has been. When the happy day comes that will bring us more vocations to the missions and we can fully equip the house for the High School work and the parish, then the Good Lord will undoubtedly see fit to give other crosses. We do strain at the seams somewhat here and there but have kept everything going especially as regards the classes which are in excellent shape.

As regards the Garden River incident, I do not believe that any importance should be attached to it, the motions were proposed and seconded by protestants, the "excellent Catholics on the board, Jones from Sagamok and Meawassige from Cutler (Serpent River) are very peaceful lads and with the overwhelming number of Protestants who generally run the Garden River meetings, plus the fact of it being held in G.R. territory, would silence them. Neither Cutler nor Sagamok would favour public Schools. I have all the copies of the "Special Joint Committee etc..for the Examination and Consideration of The Indian Act."..So far all the Schools visited by members (I mean schools run by Religious) have been given an excellent Recommendation. The extreme views of certain re-actionaries of the Garden River type are being completely refuted by these visits every where. Cape Croker R.C. School got high praise as did the Christian School. Those in this district have not been visited yet. It looks as if the main complaint from all the members is not too much on education but more on health and social conditions. I do believe they will also insist on better teaching, I.E. the employment of qualified teachers. We should be visited by Mr. Farquhar but it is pleasant to be sure that at all events he

will find the classes up to the mark and the children happy and of course will be told a doleful tale of how inadequate the finances are. Father McKey will write about the G.R. meeting as will Fr. Tim when I have the occasion to tell him.

Regarding the summer vacations of the Theologians here: The river has been condemned for bathing on account of the refuse dumped in at Espanola from the pulp mill. There have been many complaints made and petitions signed but no headway yet. It will mean that the boys will have to forego the usual June swimming and wait for the Island vacation. From other points of view if it is to be a help we would be glad to cooperate. It will mean some difficulty of course but nothing unsurmountable. The fact of the swimming rather bathing facilities being at four miles distance seems to rather dampen the enthusiasm of the consultants... Your Reverence will forgive the very mixed and rather "wet" sentence. There is of course the possibility of the matter being cleared up, but it went on all last summer and nothing was done. The result is that fishing is out in this section.

Retreat begins tomorrow evening. Brother O'Keefe will have to keep on teaching, Brother Westaway will have to stay at his job and Mr Brown will stay at his prefecting and teaching. When the time comes for each to go for retreat I shall write for the permission.

We had permission last year to fix up a temporary chapel. We are desperately in need of rooms and with Father Dufresne gone we do not require this chapel, especially since the warm weather is here and Frs Belanger and Penfold may use the Domestic Chapel. Your Reverence asked that when we wanted to convert this chapel back to ordinary use we were to write and mention that it had been set up temporarily.. may we have the permission? Our main difficulty is that Bro LaFlamme and Fr Belanger must be kept on the first floor, the former at least six months unless the Doctor decides otherwise.

Be assured of our prayers and send us your blessing  
Obediently in Our Lord

Raymond Oliver

Indian Residential School  
Spanish Ontario.  
April 17th 1947

Very Reverend Dear Father Provincial, P.C.

We had Mr. Epoch make his retreat during the Easter retreat preached by Father Kehoe and hoped that he might be well enough to undertake the ordinary work afterwards, since he has been off duty (with the exception of five or six days) since the 13th of February. Dr. Donnelly told me last week that there was nothing very much the matter and that Mr. Epoch should begin in a day or two. He lasted one day and I did not have the heart to keep him at it. After asking the opinion of Fathers Hannin and MacKey and Frs Tim and Joseph Dwyer (who were all of the opinion that from his look he could become mental, I find it best to ask permission for a month's rest for him. The complete change of environment and the company of several scholastics would, we think, cheer him up and give him a chance to get a grip on himself. He looks the extreme picture of dejection. We have been kind to him here and all along the way have taken away any burden of work from him. He has cheered up visibly at the prospects of a visit, and I have taken the liberty to say that I am asking for Toronto since he became really depressed and scared at the mention of Guelph. I inquired from Father MacCaffrey as to the possibility of room there (he is on retreat here) and he tells me that right now is the less congested time... due to people finishing their courses and going out to the colleges to help. We shall not be any worse off here and to drag this case on may be fatal. He is generous and has a very attractive personality. He could probably do grand work. If there were question now of his leaving I am afraid that he would become mental. He needs to recover and then face things. I discovered this from the fact that he is brooding over a delay in minor orders and the accompanying necessary reminder that he had not yet proved up to standard. I shall wait the permission anxiously and hope that I have made the case clear.

Father Tim is extremely discouraged. I was not going to write of it first since there does not seem to be any solution to getting real help. He begins building next month as I understand, Father Sullivan who really should not be entrusted with the work still must go to Garden River second and fourth Sunday. He cannot

be heard, acts strangely and does us no good in the Sault by running from one Grocery to another and causing much talk when he goes to the Hospital and refuses to eat or sleep in a room etc. Neither Fr. Hannin nor I can supply up there since we have the three masses and two sermons here each Sunday making it necessary to alternate alternately. We cannot use Fr. Sullivan for precisely the same reasons that he is useless at Garden River...the people at Spanish complained over and over again until we dropped him. To get into the discussion with him over the why and wherefore is impossible altogether, it depends on calories and the amount of energy left with which to preach. At any rate he is as I understand not to be given any work, the omission of which would cause a loss on anyone's part. He took regular meals for a week or two some time ago and now is back on his usual routine. At least if a man is named at Garden Fr Sullivan will be less of a cause of miratio among the people and although he will be no help here on Sundays he will be no harm.

You may already know that the ladies are leaving both Garden River and Wikwemikong this year. It is definitely settled and the Bishop has been notified, they will try to staff the convent here more adequately.

Brother LaFlamme is improving steadily although he cannot do any work yet. He is cheerful and is preparing his technical course for the boys in May.

Father Penfold is his usual self and throws dark clouds all over the place. He is an influence we should be glad to see depart. As far as his being spiritual father to the boys it is the last thing we would have him undertake, his advice about all and everything is to let slide and his criticisms of anything run by the Society are very often the cause of bitter remarks. All this of course is due I presume to his mental attitude since the heart attack, or at least the faculty has been exaggerated by the depression, he was altogether useless to us in the fall before the attack took place, he will not be of any use in the future, for if a man believe that sermons are useless that benedictions should be abolished that catechism is of no use etc etc then his future is his present.

Father Voisin mentioned in a letter that he might be coming up this way sometime during the summer. It would be a real help to have someone come soon to do something about the parish visiting.



I should also very much appreciate having such a man take over some of the catechism classes, the Sunday sermons etc. There is definitely no lack of work. We have had I think one conference this year in the house and one to the sisters! We were better off last year because we had two steady prefects in recreation and Father Hannin had more time. Since February he has been continually on a prefect's job. Fr. Brown has taken the infirmary and so Fr Hannin dormitory, I have the two studies and the senior recreation till Fr Hannin is relieved. We must delay litanies till one of us is free, since of course none of the other four can say them. Fr. MacKey is here one day or two at the most since he has many missions and is doing a very splended job of them. He usually arrives tired out and we cannot ask him for help. He is very generous in hearing the confessions on the days he is home. Fr Penfold has heard confessions three times since he has been here. He never shows up for the boys' confessions. He is not well enough.

If there is a man loose at all we hope and pray that he will be sent to Garden River ..if by some miracle there should be two then we could really use one here and would rush with open arms to meet him.

We are all eagerly looking forward to the end of the year and the departure of the boys. Fr Hannin has had a very stubborn cold for weeks and bad pains in his side. I had the doctor examine him and the latter said he should get an exray when the clinic comes this week. I think it was pleurisy, but he is a fighter and must carry on.

The community is happy enough and things keep rolling, we ask your blessing and realize that men are few and mission vocations still less, but feel that we must give the dismal picture as it is. We have very much to thank God for and among other things the excellent health and spirits of the boys and of the normal members of the community, none of whom are unhappy nor difficult, but are examples of real devotion and self sacrificing zeal, especially the wonderful brothers. I did not want your Reverence to think that I was toying around with a revolver at hand while writing the first part of this letter.

Sincerely and obediently in Our Lord,

Raymond Oliver