

A CENTURY OF SCHOOLING: EDUCATION IN THE YUKON  
1861 - 1961



Marjorie E. Almstrom  
Whitehorse, Yukon Territory  
Revised: August, 1991

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Whitehorse, Yukon Territory  
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## PREFACE

Some years ago, realizing that no sequential account existed of the development of the Yukon's education system, I began to sift through the records to see what information was available. Before long, I found myself embarked upon a more complex search than one would suppose, given the region's small population and relatively short history.

This story of early Indian and white education in the Territory opens in 1861 with accounts of pioneer missionary-teachers, many of whom worked in almost total isolation, and traces in some detail the increasingly intricate administrative developments that culminated in the emergence a century later of today's integrated education system. Intended as a record of events rather than an analytical examination of sociological issues, this account also takes note of the aspirations and disappointments of the pioneer educators and administrators who--like their modern counterparts--tended to act in the light of what seemed best to them at the time and were pleased to record what they saw as the positive results of their labours.

The resulting picture is far from complete: many features of the Yukon's educational history remain to be described and there are many more stories to be told. Nevertheless, I would like to offer this account in tribute to the Yukon's pioneer educators and the children whom they sought to serve, with the hope that it may help others who require a chronological guide to the events within its scope to make the journey back in time a little more easily.

--Marjorie Almstrom



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Since I embarked upon this project, many persons have been kind enough to provide information based upon their knowledge of the Yukon and its history, particularly with respect to events connected with the schools. Their recollections gave impetus to my research, helped fill many gaps in the formal records, and frequently confirmed conclusions that I had only been able to draw by inference from the documents available to me.

My interest in this aspect of the Territory's past dates from the late 1960s, when I participated in a graduate course on the history of Canadian education at the University of British Columbia. Subsequent conversations with Mrs. Matthew Watson of Carcross and Miss Victoria Faulkner of Whitehorse, both of whom had attended school in Dawson City, encouraged me to begin my research; shortly thereafter, Dr. Hilda Hellaby pointed out the need to include a systematic review of the role played by the churches in the provision of schooling for the Yukon's indigenous people. The Yukon Teachers' Association was also strongly supportive of an undertaking of this type and scope.

Since then, many Yukoners have helped me to reconstruct the background and atmosphere of earlier days or have contributed specific details required for this survey. Among them I should like to mention especially Sarah Simon and Clara Tizya, respected Indian elders whom I have known for many years, as well as other long-time residents or former residents of the Territory, including Theos Whitney, Lillian Cheatham, Florence White, Bob and Nellie Watson, Lucille Hooker, Meta Turnbull, Renee Alford, Martha and "Cam" Cameron, Charlie and Betty Taylor, Charlotte Williams, Gudrun Sparling, Gertrude Squirechuck, Ellen Davignon, Carol Cawley, Pretoria Butterworth, Nora Garside, Margaret (Taylor) Lennox, Katie Johnson, Mrs. Ida Goulter, John Scott and R. J. "Jack" Meek. Among the pioneer teachers consulted were Pauline (White) Russell, Vera (Gillespie) Linton, Mary (Martin) Moses, Mary Gartside, Doreene Wahl, Ethel Stewart, Don Machan, Joan Adams, Estelle (Cameron) Wilson, Helen Wiegel, "Father Gene" Cullinane, and Gordon and Ruth McIntyre. To verify or supplement information in the records, I also consulted Lynn Bleiler of the Mayo Historical Society and retired missionaries Dr. J. H. Webster and the Reverend L. G. Chappell, while Isobel Greenwood's long association with the North was invaluable in helping me locate information concerning many of the more recent Anglican church workers and mission teachers. I am indebted to Iris Warner for research assistance, and to Mr. Arthur Tinney of Black Creek, B.C. and Mr. T. Kramer of Kent, England, for useful background information concerning pioneer teachers.

With respect to the Territory's Catholic schools, the personal experience and professional knowledge of Father E. Morisset, OMI, Archivist of the Vicariate Apostolic of Whitehorse, proved invaluable; in this respect I also gratefully acknowledge the assistance provided by a former Whitehorse teacher, Sister Phyllis Cusack, S.P., Provincial Superior of the Sisters of Providence,

Edmonton. John Ritter, in charge of the Yukon Native Language Program, has been very helpful with regard to linguistic matters. I would especially like to thank former Superintendent of Education Harry Thompson for his careful assessment of a portion of the text. I am similarly indebted to former Commissioner James Smith who, with C. D. Taylor, Gordon McIntyre and the late James Mellor, also helped me reconstruct some of the events that happened during their years as Territorial councillors.

To the Department of Education, especially Mr. W. Ferguson, Senior Consultant; the executive of the Yukon Teachers' Association; members of the Yukon Museums and Historical Association, particularly Linda Johnson, and to Dr. Julie Cruikshank, I would like to express my sincere thanks for their ongoing support and encouragement. Finally, I owe a special debt of gratitude to the Canada Council whose Explorations program made it possible for me to carry this project through to its conclusion. May I also add a word of appreciation to my son James for his careful proof-reading and technical assistance.

In a detailed account that covers events of a century there are bound to be errors and omissions, for which I assume the entire responsibility. My reward lies in the insight that I have gained during these past years into the Yukon's history and the contribution of its pioneer educators to the development of the Territory's present school system.

## CHAPTER I

### THE BEGINNINGS

(1861-1884)

The vast wilderness area known today as the Yukon lies above the sixtieth parallel in the far northwest corner of Canada. Its rugged landscape offers great variety, from the treeless open tundra of its northern regions to the wooded river valleys, lakes and mountains of its interior plateau, hemmed in on the west by the icefields of the coast range and on the east by the northernmost extension of the Rockies. This entire area was originally peopled by scattered bands of Athapascan Indians, speaking a number of related but distinct languages. In addition, a separate group with close ties to the Tlingit Indians of the nearby Pacific coast eventually became established in the southwest, while the Yukon's northern shores were visited from time to time by a number of roving Inuvialuit, or Western Arctic Eskimo. As hunters and gatherers, the Indians were constantly on the move, each band travelling within a certain geographic area in pursuit of its seasonal sources of food, its members relying upon their traditional skills and the land itself for all their needs.<sup>1</sup> Russian settlement along the Pacific and Alaskan shores had only an indirect impact upon these people; not until the mid-nineteenth century did the white man penetrate into the central and upper Yukon basin as fur traders, miners and missionaries extended their activities into this remote area.

As a political entity, the Yukon Territory came into existence in 1898<sup>2</sup> under the terms of the Yukon Act, the Klondike gold rush having forced the federal authorities in Ottawa to recognize the existence

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<sup>1</sup>For general information about the Yukon Indian people, the best source is Catharine McLellan's book entitled Part of the Land, Part of the Water: A History of the Yukon Indians (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1987).

<sup>2</sup>David R. Morrison in The Politics of the Yukon Territory, 1898-1909 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), traces the early political evolution of the Territory, giving details concerning the Yukon Act which created the Yukon as a separate Territory with legislative, executive and political institutions. Prior to 1898, the area was part of the North West Territories.

of this remote and little-known corner of the Dominion. The rapid influx of miners soon brought to the area sufficient families to warrant the establishment of a territorial school system, modelled on those in eastern Canada. It would be wrong, however, to assume that no schooling at all had been carried on prior to that date; a generation of native Indians had already received some exposure to the white man's "three R's": reading, writing and religion. The two educational streams, white and native, continued to develop quite separately, merging only some sixty years later when all Yukon children, regardless of racial status, at last shared the same classrooms in Territorial schools.

### Paving the Way: The Hudson's Bay Company

The first contacts between the native population of the Yukon and the white man came, as elsewhere in the Canadian West, as a result of exploration and the expansion of the fur trade. Since access from the west was barred by high mountains and the presence of the Russians on the coast, the Hudson's Bay Company sought entry to the Yukon from the east by way of the Mackenzie River. By the middle of the nineteenth century the Company had a well-established chain of trading posts in the southern Mackenzie area and had extended its operations as far north as Peel's River Post, better known as Fort McPherson.<sup>3</sup> From there a route led west via the Porcupine River, a major tributary of the Yukon. Near the confluence of these two rivers the Company in 1846 erected Fort Yukon, its most remote outpost, in the hope that a rich supply of furs would offset the risk of trading in what was then Russian territory. A small satellite post at the head of navigation on the Porcupine known as Lapierre House facilitated trade along the route, and the commerce that developed around these three posts brought the Indian people of the northern Yukon<sup>4</sup> into regular contact with white traders.

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<sup>3</sup>Allen A. Wright, Prelude to Bonanza (Sidney, B.C.: Gray's Publishing Ltd., 1976), p. 46.

<sup>4</sup>These Indians became generally known as the Tukudh or Kutchin people, but early visitors gave them the name of "Loucheux" (i.e., "slant-eyed," "squinting"). The various bands had their own hunting areas, ranging from central Alaska across the northern Yukon to the area around the lower Mackenzie River.

Life in isolated posts such as these was generally considered to be too arduous for white women and, in any case, the Company frowned upon the time and expense entailed by the long journey to eastern Canada or Britain should an employee wish to return home in search of a wife. Recognizing that married men would be more content to remain in such outposts, the Company appears to have reached a compromise in the matter by encouraging its northern employees to take native women as wives while at the same time requiring certain standards for the education and upbringing of their families. Company regulations stipulated that "all irregularity, or indolent habits" among the women and children were to be "checked and discountenanced" and that they were to be "addressed and habituated to converse in the vernacular dialect (whether English or French) of the Father," who as head of the family was also encouraged to devote part of his leisure time to teaching his children their ABCs and catechism, along with such additional instruction as his time and circumstances permitted.<sup>5</sup> Since life for most men at these posts involved considerable journeying, it seems improbable that time and circumstances permitted prolonged and systematic instruction of the children. As reinforcement in this respect, the services of a missionary were consequently very welcome.

The Hudson's Bay Company actively encouraged missionaries of all denominations and in its Red River and other more established posts had given them fairly regular grants, bestowed impartially on both Roman Catholic and Protestant missions alike.<sup>6</sup> Along the Mackenzie River, denominational supremacy resulted largely from chance, depending upon whether Catholic or Protestant missionaries reached a certain area first. The race for converts left the Roman Catholic

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<sup>5</sup>Minutes of Council, Department of Rupert Land, 1821-1831, Hudson's Bay Report, III (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1940), pp. 60-61; also Ethel G. Stewart, "Fort McPherson and the Peel River Area," M.A. Thesis, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, 1955, p. 182.

<sup>6</sup>These were the first educational grants in western Canada. F. H. Johnson, A Brief History of Canadian Education (Toronto: McGraw Hill Co., 1968), p. 59; also M. P. Toombs, "Educational Policy of the Hudson's Bay Company," Saskatchewan History, Vol. IV, Winter, 1951.

church more firmly entrenched along the upper Mackenzie while the Church of England, favoured by the Hudson's Bay factors at Fort Yukon and Lapierre House, pioneered the lower Mackenzie and extended that denomination's activities across the mountains by way of the Porcupine River into the Yukon. These early Anglican missionaries brought with them the educational philosophy and the teaching methods of their time.

### The Churches and Education

Our system of universal schooling and the technological advances of the twentieth century tend to obscure our appreciation of the educational situation in the 1800s and the role of the churches therein. In England especially, the now-familiar principle of government responsibility for education of the nation's children was slow to find acceptance; for many years it was considered preferable to leave this matter entirely to voluntary or private enterprise. Indeed, the authorities seem to have hoped that the "established" Church of England, along with the various dissenting churches, would eventually provide a comprehensive national system of elementary education for the masses--all at no expense to the government or the taxpayers. Although the financial burden involved ultimately rendered this approach impracticable, the churches throughout England responded valiantly to the growing demand for mass literacy and did in fact provide until the late nineteenth century a substitute for a public education system in that country.

To teach the basic skills to ever-growing numbers of children, they devised the inexpensive and relatively efficient monitorial schools,<sup>7</sup> in which the older or better scholars were used to teach groups of younger or weaker students. A review of the main features of these schools gives us an insight into typical educational prac-

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<sup>7</sup>Also known as Lancastrian or National schools, depending upon their denominational allegiance, they have been termed "the last major effort of philanthropy." They enjoyed their heyday in the Canadian provinces until the late 1840s. While designed originally for large classes, their techniques were adapted and continued in mission schools for many years. C. E. Phillips, The Development of Education in Canada (Toronto: W. J. Gage and Co., 1957), pp. 116-124.

tices of the time. Since children's books were practically non-existent, teaching methods relied heavily on rote learning and memorization. After mastering the alphabet, the pupils proceeded by way of a syllabarium to the reading of words and sentences and eventually scripture passages, Bible stories, and simple tales designed to edify the young. Basic arithmetic, some singing, and handwork such as sewing or knitting rounded out the program. Considered innovative and progressive for their day, these schools introduced wall charts, slates and blackboards along with new techniques such as the use of dictation to teach spelling, a simple grading system and a rudimentary form of teacher training. Length of attendance was usually short, ranging from a few months to a few years only, and children of all denominations participated, often attending the same school. Church-sponsored schools of this type spread rapidly throughout all parts of the British Isles and were carried to the colonies overseas by various missionary societies.

#### The Church Missionary Society in North West America

In North West America, the Church of England's connection with Indian missions began in 1822, with the appointment of the Reverend John West as chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company and agent for the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in the Red River area of what is now Manitoba. This society had been established in 1799 in the wake of the eighteenth-century evangelical movement within the Church of England, a movement that included many wealthy and influential lay persons, some of whom were members of Parliament. Concerned with moral and social issues of the time, such as the abolition of slavery, the CMS tended to emphasize the Protestant heritage of the Anglican church and held many points in common with the earlier Puritans and with the Wesleyan movement. With the expansion of British influence overseas, its members felt called (as did those of other denominations) to preach the Gospel to native peoples abroad. To support this work, sister societies developed, including the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), which undertook the printing and distribution of scriptural material translated into various native languages, and the Colonial and Continental Church Society (CCCS), founded in 1838 to work among British white colonials overseas. In the century that followed the Reverend John West's appointment in

1822, the CMS provided financial support and missionary personnel for the work of the Church of England throughout western and northern Canada. The two other societies also lent support, but the CMS with its strong emphasis on the importance of schooling as an integral part of its evangelizing mission was to have the main impact.<sup>8</sup>

The first CMS missionary to visit the Yukon was William West Kirkby, who visited Fort McPherson and Fort Yukon briefly in the summer of 1861 and again the following year. A young Englishman from Lincolnshire, deprived as a boy of the privilege of attending school, he had raised himself by his own efforts to the position of schoolmaster. Accepted and trained by the CMS as a missionary-schoolmaster, he was sent as a teacher to the Industrial school at Grand Rapids, Red River. He made such a good impression there that he was ordained two years later and sent in 1859 to establish the first Anglican mission house and church at Fort Simpson; from there he set forth to visit the Liard River and then the northern Mackenzie and Yukon areas, eventually reaching Fort Yukon in what is now Alaska. Possessed of an outgoing disposition and an enquiring mind, he returned from his first journey to those northern regions filled with enthusiasm for the country he had seen and fired with determination to open this new field of endeavour for the CMS before any rival denomination could gain a foothold there.<sup>9</sup> The urgency of this undertaking would, he felt, require the services of a young unmarried missionary, free to travel as needed throughout the region, while he himself, as a family man, continued to maintain the work at Fort Simpson.

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<sup>8</sup>Henry Venn, a secretary of the Society, in Retrospect and Prospect of the Operation of the Church Missionary Society (London: CMS, 1865), refers to the existence of over eight hundred CMS mission schools in a wide range of countries and colonies, including North West America and British Columbia.

<sup>9</sup>T. C. Boon, "William W. Kirkby, Pioneer Naturalist in the Yukon," Winnipeg Free Press, 18 March 1961; also "William West Kirkby, First Anglican Missionary to the Loucheux," Beaver, Spring, 1956, pp. 36-43. Kirkby spent nine years at Fort Simpson, then headquarters of the Mackenzie River fur trade and the Church of England's base in that area. He translated the gospels of St. Mark and St. John into Chipewyan and also prepared several primers in that language for his pupils at Fort Simpson.



Robert McDonald: Missionary to the Loucheux People (1862)

His appeal was answered by a young man who proved to be singularly well qualified for the task and who was destined to make an outstanding contribution to the Loucheux people among whom he lived and worked for more than forty years. "Country-born," (i.e. of part-Indian descent),<sup>10</sup> Robert McDonald grew up in the Red River area where he attended school and later served for a time in a Wesleyan mission. Attracted to the Anglican ministry, he resumed his academic career as one of the first students of St. John's College in Red River and upon completion of his studies was ordained as deacon in 1852 and priest in 1853. The next seven years he spent at Islington Mission on the Winnipeg River, resigning in 1860 for health reasons and thereafter travelling in Ontario, Quebec and eastern U.S.A. It was at this point that McDonald, then aged thirty-two, answered Kirkby's call to establish a mission among the Loucheux people of the North. To them he brought a gift for languages, excellence in academic studies and experience as a teacher, combined with skill in outdoor pursuits, a natural empathy with native people, respect for their culture and the ability to select and train leaders from among them.

McDonald reached Fort Simpson in August, 1862. An hour after his arrival there, Kirkby made his appearance, returning from a second hurried journey to the lower Mackenzie and the Yukon, and more than ever disturbed by news of planned incursions of Roman Catholic clergy into those areas. The two men discussed the situation and agreed that McDonald should proceed at once to establish himself at Fort Yukon, with periodic visits to Lapierre House and Fort McPherson. McDonald hastened to complete his journey, reaching Fort McPherson on September 8 and Fort Yukon some two weeks later, on September 23. His journal indicates that he lost no time before beginning his task:

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<sup>10</sup>McDonald's maternal grandfather, Robert Logan, had been in the service of the Northwest Company at Sault St. Marie. While there he married (c. 1805) an Ojibway woman. F. A. Peake, "Robert McDonald (1829-1913): the Great Unknown Missionary of the Northwest," Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society, Vol. 17, No.3, Sept. 1975, pp. 55-72. See also the article on Robert McDonald in The Church Messenger of Canada, Vol. 35, No.3, Mar. 1960, pp. 7-8.

September 23, 1862. Reached Fort Youcon at eleven a.m. A kind welcome from Mr. Strachan-Jones, officer in charge, also from a few Indians at the place. . . . Assembled all within the Fort square in the afternoon and gave them an address. Antoine Hoole, the Hudson Bay Company's interpreter, kindly undertakes to be interpreter for me. The Indians are delighted to have a minister among them.

Then he adds, "Began at once preaching and teaching."<sup>11</sup>

The preaching had to be carried out through the medium of an interpreter, but from the outset McDonald's concern was to teach the Indians to read so that they might have access during his absences to the word of God. Three days later, on September 26, we find him already pondering the matter of language: "Teaching them English may prove of very little use to them, but they are so eager to learn that I can not well put them off."<sup>12</sup>

Before long he was holding daily morning and evening prayers for the Indians and also night school classes for the men at the Fort who lacked what we call today "literacy skills." By late October, English prayers and school with the Indians had to be reduced to Wednesdays and Saturdays due to lack of space at the Fort, while night classes continued throughout the week for the Fort men. McDonald from the beginning set himself to learn the native tongue with Mrs. Eliza Boucher, the Indian wife of one of the Company employees, as teacher. Fortunately he was, according to Peake (p. 56), fluent in French, the language of the Boucher family. In return for her assistance as interpreter and teacher of the Indian language--a role whose importance is only now receiving recognition<sup>13</sup>--McDonald held day school as regu-

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<sup>11</sup>Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM), Archives of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land (AEPRL), MSS 4001, Robert McDonald Papers, microfilm copy at Yukon Archives (YA), R. McDonald, "Journal," 23 September 1862.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Sylvia Van Kirk, "Many Tender Ties", Women in Fur Trade Society 1670-1870 (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer Publishing Co., 1980?). For information concerning the role of Indian women as interpreters and teachers of language see page 65.

larly as possible for the Boucher children, though in what language is not recorded.

By the following spring, we find him accompanying a trading party from the Fort on a two-month journey among the Chandalar tribe whose territory lay north of the Yukon River toward the Arctic coast. Excerpts from his journal reveal his preoccupations at the time:

March 31, 1863. Before reaching the sea two days have to be made without any fire, igloos have to be made. Evening prayer with the Indians. Taught Boucher children.

April 5, 1863. (Easter Sunday) Morning and evening prayers with the Indians. In the evening, taught them the Apostle's Creed and a hymn which have been rendered into Tukudh by Madame Boucher. Held school for the Boucher children.

April 30, 1863. I am on the whole pleased with the result of my visit. . . . They have learnt five new hymns, three prayers, grace before and after meat and the Apostle's Creed most of which have been rendered into Tukudh by Madame Boucher. After bidding them farewell, set off for Fort Youcon.

After a quick trip to Lapierre House and Fort McPherson, McDonald became engaged in the search for a satisfactory written form for the native language. He first tried syllabics, a system already in use for other native tongues and with which he was familiar, but he soon encountered difficulties. The Loucheux language, he found, required "a larger number [of syllabic characters] than the Chipewyan."<sup>14</sup> He also felt hampered at this time by his own imperfect knowledge of this difficult and unfamiliar tongue.<sup>15</sup> So much, it seemed, had to be done, and so quickly! His final decision to abandon syllabics in favour of

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<sup>14</sup>R. McDonald, "Journal," 14 July 1863.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 22 July 1863.

the Roman alphabet appears, however, to have been influenced by consumer reaction:

August 1, 1863. English prayers and school for the Indians. They do not learn the syllabic characters quickly. The fact is they do not think much of it. They prefer the roman letters. I teach a few in english.<sup>16</sup>

Shortly thereafter McDonald set out again, this time with the Fort Yukon fur shipment to Lapierre House. Winter ice delayed the party on its return journey; an event which, though a hindrance to the Company men, provided McDonald with an opportunity to do some systematic teaching at Lapierre House for some weeks. He reached Fort Yukon finally on November 8 after a particularly arduous journey due to the early onset of winter. His first year among the Loucheux people had been a strenuous introduction to his life's work and another three or four years would still be required before he could dispense entirely with an interpreter and converse freely with the Indians in their own language.<sup>17</sup> Soon he was to discover that, while he had made a good beginning, such a pace could not be maintained for long.

William C. Bompas: Pioneer Missionary-Bishop (1865)

After two years at Fort Yukon, McDonald became seriously ill with what was then thought to be influenza but which, in light of his later periods of ill-health, may have been tuberculosis. Fearing that he would be unable to carry on, he asked the CMS to relieve him of his northern duties and in due course an urgent appeal for someone to replace him reached the Society's headquarters in London. Once again, an enthusiastic volunteer came forward in the person of William Carpenter Bompas, a thirty-one year old Anglican curate who had long

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 1 August 1863.

<sup>17</sup>Peake, "Robert McDonald," pp. 57-58.

desired an overseas posting.<sup>18</sup> Reared in the Baptist faith, Bompas had originally begun to follow family tradition by articling as a solicitor. However, in his mid-twenties he opted instead for ordination in the Church of England, serving for a time in a number of poor and rough parishes where he proved to have a sympathetic approach to his parishioners and a talent for teaching. The prospect of going to Fort Yukon delighted him; within three weeks he had disposed of all his possessions and begun the arduous eight-thousand mile journey to North West America. Six months later, on Christmas Day, 1865, he reached Fort Simpson where he learned to his surprise that McDonald had recovered from his illness and returned to his ministry in the North. Although keenly disappointed, Bompas agreed to remain as Kirkby's assistant in the Athabasca district, studying Chipewyan and teaching school at Fort Simpson for a time before beginning the extensive and almost constant journeyings that characterized the rest of his career and suited his restless and solitary nature.

In July, 1869, Bompas finally reached Fort Yukon and was present when the United States took possession of the fort on August 9th of that year. After wintering at Rampart House,<sup>19</sup> he travelled east, intending to spend some time with the Eskimo people along the Arctic coast. However, severe snow-blindness cut short this visit and forced him to return to Fort McPherson, whence he journeyed south to the Peace River country. In 1872-73 he paid a second visit to the Yukon River area, a happy experience which strengthened his affection for that part of the country and its people. During this visit, he received a letter from the CMS recalling him to Red River and thence to London where he was to be consecrated Bishop of the newly formed

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<sup>18</sup>In view of his later linguistic contributions, it is interesting to read that the CMS had refused to send him to China or India on the grounds that he was too old to learn new languages. H. A. Cody, Apostle of the North (New York, Dutton and Co., 1908), pp. 25-31.

<sup>19</sup>The Hudson's Bay Company, forced at that time to leave Fort Yukon, built (Old) Rampart House on the Porcupine River in order to maintain its trade with the Indians of the Fort Yukon area. Supposedly on Canadian soil, it too had to be abandoned when a later boundary survey placed it still in Alaska. Its replacement, New Rampart House, further upstream, was built in 1889. Wright, Prelude to Bonanza, pp. 127-28; 203.

Diocese of Athabasca.<sup>20</sup> Although he may have tried to dissuade the CMS from this decision, he accepted the appointment and was consecrated on May 3, 1874. Four days later he married a cousin, Charlotte Selina Cox, a sensitive and highly cultured lady who had lived for some years in Italy. Warning her not to expect a normal family life but rather that of a missionary, he set out with her at once on the long journey to Fort Simpson. He never again returned to England and in fact did not leave his beloved wilderness for another thirty years.<sup>21</sup>

### The Tukudh Mission: Organization and Workers

As the newly appointed Bishop of Athabasca, Bompas faced an overwhelming task. With only three clergy and a handful of catechists trained by McDonald he found himself responsible for "the whole of the enormous territories watered by the Athabasca and Mackenzie Rivers, and such part of the Yukon basin as was within British territory."<sup>22</sup> This latter portion--or as much of it as was then known to the outside world--had already for some years been designated by the CMS as a special area called the Tukudh Mission, with Robert McDonald, now residing at Fort McPherson, as missionary-in-charge. He was assisted for a time by his brother Kenneth, who joined the Mission as a lay catechist in 1871 and served devotedly throughout the area until he left in 1876 to enter the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company. As time passed, a number of native catechists were added to the Mission team: Henry (Venn) Ketse, John Ttssietla, and others. Finally in 1882 appeals to the CMS brought two newcomers, V. C. Sim and T. H. Canham, to the Tukudh Mission, both from England.

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<sup>20</sup>Originally, all western Canada formed one vast diocese of the Church of England, known as the Diocese of Rupert's Land, directed from Red River. British Columbia withdrew when it became a province in 1871. The administration of the remainder became increasingly unwieldy as population increased and in 1875 it was subdivided into four dioceses, one being the Diocese of Athabasca. Later, this diocese was itself further divided. Bompas always ceded the more established area and moved as bishop to the more remote district. (Cody, Apostle of the North, p. 144.)

<sup>21</sup>In 1904 he attended a conference of bishops in Winnipeg. Mrs. Bompas made a number of trips "outside" for reasons of health and to visit her family in England.

<sup>22</sup>Cody, Apostle of the North, p. 144.

Supervision of the Diocese of Athabasca soon proved too much for even such an indefatigable traveller as Bishop Bompas. Consequently, in 1884 the Diocese of Mackenzie River was formed, incorporating the Mackenzie River basin north of the sixtieth parallel and the whole of what is now the Yukon Territory. Bishop Bompas, in assuming charge of this new and somewhat smaller diocese, hoped at last to be able to devote more attention to the Eskimo and Loucheux peoples. By this time, both he and Robert McDonald had spent twenty years in the North. What progress had the church made in the educational aspect of its missionary venture in this part of the world?

### Literacy, the Handmaid of Religion

Certainly, despite the vast distances involved, the few clergy had achieved considerable success in their efforts to spread the Gospel among these semi-nomadic people. References in their diaries and letters to "teaching" consequently imply the imparting of basic Christian beliefs, supported by scripture passages, Bible stories, prayers and hymns. The Indians found little difficulty in committing these to memory,<sup>23</sup> no doubt because they were people of an oral tradition, used to remembering the tales and precepts of their own elders. In line with the CMS philosophy, education was viewed by the Tukudh Mission workers primarily as the handmaid of religion, since literacy provided direct access to scriptural material, especially in the absence of a missionary. As we have seen, the Tukudh missionaries used the Indians' own language for all instruction, with the help of interpreters if necessary.

### Techniques and Trials of Itinerant Teachers

The records left by these early missionary-teachers contain only brief references to their literacy classes, yet from these fragmentary glimpses we can reconstruct a general picture of the school-

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<sup>23</sup>Anglican Church of Canada General Synod Archives (GSA), Canham Papers, M56-2, microfilm available at Yukon Archives, Acc. #78/36, Item C-14, August, 1897.

ing of the period. Mrs. Bompas, for example, speaking of her husband's classes at Fort Simpson in 1874, comments:

My ears grew weary of the perpetual 'ba, be, bo, bu; cha, che, cho, chu'. These, with a few hymns translated into their language, and a little counting, were the first studies mastered by our Simpson scholars.<sup>24</sup>

Robert McDonald, writing in the same year at Lapierre House, observes:

September 26, 1874. School commenced with eight pupils three days since; all are in the alphabet. They were taught a little last summer, but had forgotten it.<sup>25</sup>

A month later he refers to there being ten pupils, although occasionally no school is held "for want of a room at the fort." By the end of the year he is able to report "very fair progress," adding:

December 16, 1874.

Two have learned to read pretty well in the New Testament in Tukulh. Half a dozen more would in less than a fortnight have been prepared to read in it. The number of pupils has averaged a dozen. It is a pity that they have to be left again for a while since many of them might be able to read well by next Spring.<sup>26</sup>

The following day, he had to leave Lapierre House to resume his duties at Fort Yukon.

Progress in learning was inevitably hindered by the endless travel required of the men attached to the Tukulh Mission. Robert

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<sup>24</sup>Cody, Apostle of the North, p.168.

<sup>25</sup>Public Archives of Canada (PAC), CMS Papers, microfilm, reel N61782, Robert McDonald, "Journal," 26 September 1874.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 16 December 1874.



McDonald tells of a visit made by his brother Kenneth in the spring of 1874 to three bands of Indians connected with Rampart House which were so widely separated that in order to reach them all he had to travel over fifteen hundred miles on snowshoes. He spent several days with each band and noted in his journal that "a considerable amount of Christian instruction was imparted." From that journey he returned to Fort McPherson to carry on the work there for a few months before setting out for Lapierre House in June.<sup>27</sup> Whenever the Indians were at one of the Hudson's Bay posts, classes were usually held in a room of the fort but when they left for their hunting or fishing grounds the missionary often went with them so that religious instruction and literacy classes might continue as usual. Kenneth McDonald tells of holding school for "about forty pupils" at a hunting camp with Indians from Peel River and Lapierre House. Of these, he reports that "eleven read in the New Testament in Tukulh, ten are learning the syllabarium, and the rest trying the A-B-C."<sup>28</sup> Shortly thereafter he comments upon the useful help that he is receiving from some of the better students:

February 9, 1876. John Tshietla holds school daily . . . . He learnt a good deal this winter at Fort McPherson and he, as well as the Lapierre House Christian leaders, is very diligent in imparting the little he knows to his countrymen.<sup>29</sup>

This was no isolated instance, for Bishop Bompas some years later speaks of his delight in hearing adults and children at each of the Tukulh Mission posts read from the Tukulh books printed for their benefit, adding that "as they have now begun to teach one another to read, our missionary will be somewhat relieved from the necessity of holding school for all."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 13 April 1874.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Kenneth McDonald, "Journal," 4 February 1876.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Cody, Apostle of the North, p.207.

### Early Successes: The Contributions of Bompas and McDonald

How did it happen that a handful of itinerant missionaries were able to develop even this degree of literacy in the face of so many difficulties? In the first place, records indicate that the Loucheux people from the beginning welcomed the visitors with enthusiasm and respect. The Hudson's Bay Company, whose men appear to have enjoyed the Indians' confidence, gave the newcomers strong support and the Indian wives of Company employees served often not only as translators but as cross-cultural mediators, helping them learn Indian survival skills and allaying native fears of new and foreign ways.<sup>31</sup> Most of all, however, the success of the Tukudh Mission is a reflection of the Loucheux people's eagerness to learn this new skill and the encouragement given them by both McDonald and Bompas.

These two pioneers seem to have shared certain qualities of intellect and personality that enabled them to work effectively towards their common goal. In the first place, both men possessed a talent for linguistic studies, along with the drive and perseverance required for translation work. Robert McDonald eventually translated not only the gospels but the entire Bible into Loucheux,<sup>32</sup> along with the Anglican Book of Common Prayer and many hymns--a truly monumental achievement. He also prepared a scholarly grammar of that language, a book of family prayers to be used in the native camps, and a primer for teaching reading. Bishop Bompas, himself fluent in several Indian tongues, prepared a number of primers<sup>33</sup> and insisted that new clergy coming to his diocese undertake systematic language studies. Bompas, however, was more interested in biblical scholarship and personal

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<sup>31</sup>Van Kirk, Many Tender Ties, Chapter 3, pp. 53-73.

<sup>32</sup>PAC, CMS Papers, reel M617B2, Bompas to CMS, 22 November 1876: "The Loucheux language is a hard one to read and write but I think the children will learn it, they are so persevering, and Archdeacon McDonald deserves great credit for the accuracy with which he has rendered the Gospels into Tukudh."

<sup>33</sup>Cody, Apostle of the North, pp. 337-338. For example, between 1870 and 1880 Bishop Bompas put forth four Indian primers in Slavi, Beaver, Dogrib and Tukudh, printed in London, and a portion of the prayer book (in syllabics) in Chipevyan in conjunction with Kirkby.

scriptural research than in translation and devoted such spare time as he had to studies in Greek, Hebrew and Syriac.

Secondly, both Archdeacon McDonald and Bishop Bompas displayed a readiness to adapt to wilderness life and to share the hardships of the people. A teacher, according to Bompas, must "be willing to surrender his life to a permanent residence among the heathen country as an adopted home," where he could teach by example as well as by precept.<sup>34</sup> After a visit to the British Columbia coast, he chose to return north "without even visiting the haunts of civilization on the ground that such a visit renders the mind unsettled or disinclined for a life in the wilds."<sup>35</sup> Both men spent their lives in the North among the native people there.

Bishop Bompas always realized that results would not come quickly. In 1867 he commented that

A familiarity with the Indians' habits and feelings and modes of thought, the hardening of one's own constitution to bear the exposure of associating with them in their tents, the best means of approaching them with the truth, etc., are all a matter of time, and in this country progress is slow.<sup>36</sup>

At the first synod of the Diocese of Athabasca in August, 1876, he admitted that, faced with the impossibility of carrying out systematic teaching with virtually no schoolmasters, the only solution was for the missionaries themselves to carry on elementary instruction, teaching the Indian children "by rote at their camps or wherever opportunity may offer."<sup>37</sup> Any dreams he may have had of organizing a training institution for native teachers in the far North,<sup>38</sup> or of es-

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 199.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>38</sup>S. A. Archer, A Heroine of the North: Memoirs of Charlotte Selina Bompas (Toronto: MacMillan, 1929), p.78.

establishing a diocesan school in connection with an "industrial farm" as an aid to acculturation,<sup>39</sup> were not to bear fruit for many years. Indian education continued for decades to follow the pattern established by the early itinerant missionaries along the lines indicated above and described by John Martin, a native clergyman who came to Ross River from the Peel River country in 1930:

I remember when I was 8 or 10 years old, every day we had five different schools made for us outside the Mission House. There was one white Minister--Archdeacon McDonald--the rest were all Indians teaching one another. When we came to the Fort, then every day we had service, yet we never had too much yet and it seems to me that the people of that time were better than the people now. We all went to school--young children and old people and it did not cost much . . . to run the school at that time for those Indians rustled for food at the same time. We had no school house, only an open place and the older people who learned before and who were taught by Arch. McDonald, these were the school teachers for the others. . . . Archdeacon McDonald died a long time ago, but the work that he did is working yet.<sup>40</sup>

No more fitting tribute could be paid to this well remembered pioneer missionary and teacher.

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<sup>39</sup>W. C. Boapas, Diocese of Mackenzie River (Colonial Church Histories, London, SPCK, 1888), pp. 32-36.

<sup>40</sup>YA, Anglican Church, Diocese of Yukon Records (ACDYR), Series 1-1.a, Box 5, folder 4, John Martin, typescript, n.d., 5 pp. In this document, John Martin gives an account of the language problems he encountered on coming to Ross River as deacon in 1930 and also tells something of the life and work of seven native catechists taught by Robert McDonald.



1. Mr. and Mrs. John Firth, Hudson's Bay Company  
Fort McPherson



2. Bishop Bompas helping with a raft,  
(from a drawing by John T. Campbell)

## SYLLABARIUM.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q  
R S T U V W X Y Z. a b c d e f g h  
i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z.  
Ba Be Bi Bo Bu Boo Bou Bei Bui Bar  
Da De Di Do Du Doo Dou Dei Dui Duk  
Ga Ge Gi Go Gu Goo Gou Gei Gui Gin  
Ha He Hi Ho Hu Hoo Hou Hei Hui Hun  
Ja Je Ji Jo Ju Joo Jou Jei Jui Job  
Ka Ke Ki Ko Ku Koo Kou Kei Kui Ket  
La Le Li Lo Lu Loo Lou Lei Lui Lik  
Ma Me Mi Mo Mu Moo Mou Mei Mui Mar  
Na Ne Ni No Nu Noo Nou Nei Nui Net  
Pa Pe Pi Po Pu Poo Pou Pei Pui Per  
Ra Re Ri Ro Ru Roo Rou Rei Rui Rre  
Sa Se Si So Su Soo Sou Sei Sui Set

3. *The first page of the Syllabarium  
prepared by Robert McDonald  
for use by the Loucheux people*

## CHILIG.

1.

- 1 Ttia trootshid tinjih dhantsej  
Thlih ha kwirzi tincho  
Kq kwirzoq tettiyn kirkhe  
Nersitchachyo dhitlit.
- 2 Tinjih nih kinjik thlechlne  
Trigwandyoth tettiyn  
Ei kenjit choog huinjitudhut  
Kidhun uttutazi.
- 3 Kq nih chersikoonchyo kirkhe  
Nit Tinji kwuntlantshi  
Tinjih Assi telya kenjit  
Jesus tinjih dhitlit.
- 4 Jesus tinjih tekit konjik  
Nersittichilchyo thlih  
Tinjih trigwandyoth kwinkdhej  
Nikyito kug gultsauk.
- 5 Kq Kreist tinjih ggut ninidhut  
Kwunde  
Kwunde khugwitaej  
Choog yoo oootyyn yih kinjizhit  
Trigwandyoth ttsut tizi.

4. *Archdeacon R. McDonald,  
Hymns in the Tukur Language,  
page one*

## CHAPTER II

### THE MOVE TO THE WEST (1884-1892)

#### Mackenzie River Diocese: New Problems Arise (1884-92)

After twenty years' activity among the tribes of North West America, the CMS was able to report with considerable satisfaction that the results obtained by the Tukudh Mission were highly gratifying. The simple faith and fervour of these converts was described as being "unsurpassed in any Mission field" while their system of appointing Christian leaders as catechists to their fellow tribesmen, "not ceasing from their hunting and fishing, and taking no pay," was an example which, in the Society's view, other more prosperous native Christians would do well to emulate.<sup>1</sup> With this foundation, it appeared that further efforts would surely result in continued progress as Christian knowledge and education were extended to other native bands in the region. The creation in 1884 of the new and somewhat smaller Diocese of Mackenzie River did not, however, bring the anticipated benefits: the territory was still too vast and the workers too few. Furthermore, great and unforeseen changes were beginning to occur in the western part of the Diocese as traders and gold-seekers moved from Alaska into the Upper Yukon basin, threatening the age-old lifestyle of the Indian people there.

Education continued to follow its established pattern as the accompaniment and support of religious instruction, although Bishop Bompas seems to have become increasingly convinced as time passed that the combined role of missionary-teacher was too great a responsibility to be handled effectively by any one person. Since for various reasons the CMS was slow in responding to his repeated appeals for lay schoolmasters, the task of teaching school remained in the hands of the few clergy in the area. For the Bishop the ensuing decade was a period of intense disappointment and continual frustra-

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<sup>1</sup>E. Stock, History of the Church Missionary Society (London: CMS, 1899), Vol. 3, p. 248.

tion as he shuffled his meagre staff from post to post in an effort to keep pace with changing times, new demands and unexpected calamities. Reports from the various mission stations tend to reflect the instabilities and stresses of the time and it is often difficult to reconstruct from these infrequent accounts a clear picture of life and events at each post.

#### Vincent Sim at Rampart House (1882-85)

At first, prospects seemed encouraging. Despite Archdeacon McDonald's absence from Fort McPherson<sup>2</sup> on an extended furlough in Winnipeg, his work among the Peel and Porcupine River Indians who traded at the Fort was maintained by Bishop Bompas, assisted by T. H. Canham, a recent arrival from England. The western area had since 1882 been in charge of the Reverend V. C. Sim who was showing indications of becoming a missionary-teacher in the tradition almost of McDonald himself. His accounts of his few years at Rampart House offer additional insights into the claims of the CMS respecting the Tukudh Mission and reveal the remarkable extent to which McDonald's influence and teaching had taken root among the Indians along the Upper Yukon.

Vincent Sim, a graduate of the CMS training college at Islington, near London, was ordained in 1879 and appointed briefly to the Athabaskan Mission at Fort Chipewyan. From there he was sent to Fort McPherson where, as assistant to Archdeacon McDonald, he gained a working knowledge of the Tukudh language in preparation for his assignment to Rampart House in 1882. Enthusiastic and hardworking, he taxed himself to the utmost in a series of long journeys to visit all the Loucheux and related bands from Lapierre House in the east to as far as Nulato on the Lower Yukon in Alaska and Fort Reliance on the Upper Yukon.<sup>3</sup> A born teacher, responsive to his students, he tells

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<sup>2</sup>McDonald had moved from Rampart House to Fort McPherson in 1871. Five years later he married Julia Kutug, one of his converts from Arctic Red River, nearly thirty years his junior. Peake, "Robert McDonald," pp. 67-69. She was to provide invaluable assistance to him in his translation work.

<sup>3</sup>Fort Reliance was a trading post six miles downstream from the present site of Dawson City. Built in 1874 by Jack McQuesten, a trader for the Alaska Commercial Company, it was the centre of trade on the upper Yukon until 1886.



us that wherever he went the Indians showed such desire for instruction that he could scarcely find time to sleep and that his voice and chest were severely affected by the strains of constantly teaching, preaching and singing. As his command of the language improved, he became more and more aware of the extent of McDonald's influence and of the Indians' potential for education. On the last of his long summer journeys he spent ten days with a distant band some two hundred miles up the Tanana River in "hard, but very happy work, from morning to night being constantly engaged in teaching." Here, despite scarcity of food, he found the people reluctant to let him go:

I was the first minister who had been to their country they said and they were glad, so I musn't hurry away, never mind if they were hungry. But although this was the first time a missionary had ever visited their country, many of them had been under Archdeacon McDonald's instruction when at Nyook-lakyet. . . . It was interesting also to see their desire for books. One of them had got possession of a Tukudh Prayer Book which was torn and distributed amongst them and I would often see them poring over their leaves and trying hard to read them.<sup>4</sup>

On his return to Fort Yukon Sim was pleased to learn that a native leader from Rampart House who had spent the summer among the Indians at the Fort gave a good account of their progress. Such contacts, Sim felt, should be encouraged, and he hoped that the Fort Reliance Indians would be similarly visited the following year. Although he had originally planned to go upstream as far as old Fort Selkirk, the onset of cold weather forced him to turn back at Fort Reliance and return to Rampart House after a three-month journey of more than 2,600 miles.

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<sup>4</sup>PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-113, V. C. Sim to C. C. Fenn, "Report to C. C. Fenn," 9 January 1885. Since the people of this area spoke the Han language, they were in effect starting to learn to read Loucheux from McDonald's translations.

In his report to the CMS in London, Sim clearly outlined the need for at least one permanent missionary in the area besides himself:

I have promised the Indians that I will visit them again next summer, but it is impossible for me to accomplish this journey every year. The Upper Yukon taxes all my energies with the still greater field of work in the lower Yukon. . . . To work this vast region which includes the greater part of Alaska there is but one Protestant missionary [i.e., himself] whose station and proper work lie within British Territory where the Indians require his first attention. . . . Then Fort Selkirk, the Pelly River and the country about the headwaters of the Yukon have never been reached. . . .<sup>5</sup>

This appeal for a helper was soon followed by the news of his death at Rampart House on May 11, 1885, the result of a three-month illness brought about by overwork and near starvation. His passing was a severe blow to the Tukudh Mission and to its native people for whom he had developed a deep and sincere affection. To quote a modern anthropologist:

It is a pity that he died so young, for had he been able to continue his work, not only would the Indians of that region have had the attentions of a sympathetic and enthusiastic teacher, but a good deal of valuable information about the Indians of these areas . . . might have been placed on record in his letters and journals.<sup>6</sup>

Sim's requests for aid had not, however, fallen upon entirely deaf ears. In England a Mr. T. F. Buxton responded with a gift of one

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Mary E. Wesbrook, "A Venture into Ethnohistory: the Journals of Rev. V. C. Sim, Pioneer Missionary to the Yukon," Polar Notes, No. 9, May, 1969, p. 44. The Journals of Robert McDonald also contain data on Sim. These, as well as Sim's own letters and journals and testimonials following his death, may be found in PAC, CMS Papers, reels A-75, A-77, A-103, A-110, A-111, A-113.

hundred pounds per annum towards the support of an additional worker for the Tukudh Mission, enabling the CMS in March 1885 to appoint J. W. Ellington to Rampart House, where he was to be trained under Sim for eventual work on the Upper Yukon. Unfortunately, Sim died long before Ellington could reach the North, leaving the entire Porcupine-Yukon basin with no resident missionary. Bishop Bompas, "doubly anxious for the return of our friend Archdeacon McDonald and the arrival of Mr. Ellington if Providence permits," waited impatiently as the months passed with no replacement for Sim at Rampart House.<sup>7</sup> The following January, Mrs. Bompas added her plea for reinforcements:

If a man be not sent out next May the whole of that Northern region will yet have been a whole year without a clergyman to minister to them. Mr. Ellington will, we hope go forward next Spring and will in time (i.e. when he knows the language) be useful as a catechist but you would not deem him qualified for any other position. . . .<sup>8</sup>

It seems as if doubts were already being cast upon Ellington's future.

#### Literacy in Alaska: McDonald's Proposal

It appears, however, that McDonald, despite his recurring bouts of ill-health, was at this time considering the possibility of returning to the Indian people among whom he had first laboured on the Yukon River in Alaska. Writing to the Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America (as the Anglican Church had come to be known in the U.S.A.) and to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, he offered to serve in Alaska should his health improve and the CMS agree to his transfer. This correspondence reinforces Sim's accounts of the gradual spread of literacy among the various tribes there, using the tools that McDonald himself had developed:

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., reel A-113, Bompas to CMS, 13 August 1885.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., Mrs. Bompas to C. C. Fenn, 4 January 1886.

Having learnt that other tribes have been taught to read on the eastern [i.e. Canadian] side of the border a strong desire has sprung up among them to have the same privilege. A few have since been taught to read by the Christian leaders of Rampart House in the Territory of Canada. So great is the desire to be taught to read that one of them three years since made a journey of about six hundred miles, from Nuklukayet to Rampart House on the Porcupine River, in order that he might have the opportunity of learning to read.

In the same letter McDonald informs us that two native Christian leaders from Rampart House had visited these Indians at Nuklukayet previously "for the purposes of instructing them" and that

at one place an American fur trader, whose name is McQuesten, hearing that one of these leaders had come among Indians living about fifty miles from his Trading Post found his Indians so desirous of being taught to read that he sent for the Christian leader and accommodated him in his house to afford his Indians an opportunity of being taught, and in order that he might be able to assist them after the departure of the Christian leader he himself learned the syllabary formed for the native tongue.

Trader "Jack" McQuesten, in addition to his other accomplishments, appears to have some claim to being one of the early supporters of Indian education along the Upper Yukon.

In writing to the U.S. authorities, McDonald proposed that a share of their federal grant for educational purposes in the Territory of Alaska should be allotted to him so that he could superintend the further training of native Indian teachers for that area; if this were done, he says, he would be willing to become a resident of Alaska, predicting that before many years "we might naturally expect such a development of the work as would soon overtake them all."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Quotations in this and the preceding paragraph are from Ibid., R. McDonald to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington, U.S.A., 2 June 1885.

His negotiations, however, proved unsuccessful. The American Episcopal Church, lacking workers of its own in Alaska and totally unaware of events in the Tukudh Mission, countered his offer by requesting instead that the CMS lend Sim and another worker to the Diocese of Alaska, while the Indian Affairs authorities in Washington--who disapproved of education given in the native tongue--did not follow up his proposal. The time was not ripe for an intensive literacy crusade on the Alaskan side of the border, an effort which might well have benefited the Loucheux people of the Yukon Territory who travelled back and forth across the boundary in their seasonal migrations. As for McDonald, he remained in Winnipeg for the winter of 1885-86 to complete his translation of the Psalter into Loucheux; finally, in April, 1886, he sent Bishop Bompas and the CMS the welcome news that he would return to Fort McPherson the following summer, adding, "I am thankful to say that my health is fairly good."<sup>10</sup>

J. W. Ellington and G. Wallis at Rampart House (1886)

Meanwhile the Tukudh Mission had been plagued by further setbacks, this time occasioned by the Riel Rebellion which, by cutting off the movement of supplies, had brought many posts along the Mackenzie River to the brink of famine and had also affected Bompas' incoming party of recruits, detaining them for a year at Red River. For Ellington this delay was beneficial since it enabled him to pass the winter of 1885-86 at an Indian mission on the Rainy River where he learned the rudiments of the Salteaux language and gained useful experience teaching at the school there. When he finally reached Fort Simpson in August, 1886, Bishop Bompas--impressed with "the most commendatory reports of his winter's work"<sup>11</sup>--ordained him as deacon and began at once to teach him Loucheux in preparation for his northern posting. The Bishop seems to have found no grounds at this point for doubting the young man's suitability for the mission field, to judge from his enthusiastic report to the CMS:

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., R. McDonald to CMS, 2 April 1886.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., reel A-114, Bompas to C. C. Fenn, 8 August 1886.

Mr. Ellington gave me much satisfaction in his examination as he has done since in his daily study with me of the Tukupdh language and in Christian intercourse. . . . He has also considerable knowledge of the Salteaux language . . . and he is acquiring the Tukupdh language faster than I should have thought possible.<sup>12</sup>

The CMS, either because of Sim's sad experience or because its selection committee had detected a certain lack of maturity in Ellington, had requested that he not be left to work alone. Consequently, the Bishop arranged for him to spend his first winter at Rampart House in company with another young Englishman who was due to arrive shortly to fill the vacancy there left by Sim's death.

This young man was the Reverend George C. Wallis who since early May had been waiting in Winnipeg to travel north with Archdeacon McDonald and his family and studying the Loucheux language under the guidance of Mrs. McDonald<sup>13</sup> in preparation for his future work at Rampart House. Leaving Winnipeg in July, the party made what was then a quick trip, arriving at Fort Simpson on September 20, 1886. Here Wallis spent a week with Bishop Bompas before he and Ellington set out with the McDonalds for Fort McPherson. A month later the two young men, filled with optimism and a sense of adventure, were on the last stage of their journey to Rampart House.

The winter there passed smoothly enough. They proved compatible and shared with enthusiasm the duties of the mission, Ellington apparently doing the cooking while Wallis used his carpentry skills to build furniture for the new church. Both men shared in the preaching, at first through Mr. Flett, the interpreter, until by mid-January Ellington was able to report that they could read the ser-

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., Bompas to CMS, 15 September 1886.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., reel A-113, Rev. Abraham Cowley to C. C. Fenn, 14 May 1886. "I pressed upon our young friend the necessity of close application [to his Loucheux studies], and showing him the immense advantage he has in the presence of Mrs. McDonald, charged him not to allow anything to interfere with this duty. . . . I do not think any previous missionary enjoyed such facilities."

vices "in Loochew" [sic] well enough to be understood by the people.<sup>14</sup> As for teaching, Wallis writes of holding classes every alternate week not only for the young children but for the young men and women also. In the same letter he outlines the many duties that kept him fully occupied, such as "looking after the church, keeping school, visiting camps, dispensing medicine, learning the language, attending to the Indians when they come in, and seeing after the household affairs," and concludes by requesting permission to marry so that he may have a companion to share the load once Ellington has left.<sup>15</sup> Permission was soon forthcoming but some years were to elapse before he found an English bride willing to venture to so remote an outpost.

#### Ellington at Fortymile (1887-90)

Ellington remained at Rampart House until the middle of May, 1887, when he set out for Fort Yukon, journeying thence downriver to St. Michael's on the Arctic coast to obtain supplies for his next year's work. Returning to Fort Yukon in early August, he then proceeded upstream to the mouth of Fortymile Creek, the proposed site of the new station which was to be named Buxton Mission in honour of his sponsor in England. Although shocked--as many have been since--by the high cost of goods and services in the North,<sup>16</sup> he seems to have made an earnest attempt to adjust to the lifestyle and duties of an itinerant missionary. His reports indicate that he began at once to hold school and services for members of the two Indian bands that frequented the Fortymile area, referred to as "David's" and "Charlie's" bands, both of whom apparently welcomed him warmly.<sup>17</sup> Archdeacon McDonald, who that same summer made a circuit of the Porcupine and upper Yukon missions, going beyond them for the first time

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., reel A-114, Ellington to Boapas, 15 January 1887.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., G. Wallis to Boapas, 14 January 1887.

<sup>16</sup>The bookkeeper at St. Michael's at the time that Ellington bought his first year's supplies is said to have reported that Ellington, on learning that the freight rate was \$125 a ton, went to his room and began to pray vigorously to the Lord that the rates might be lowered. Ibid., reel A-115, "Life on the Yukon River," The Chicago Evening News, 23 September 1891.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., reel A-117, Ellington to C. C. Fenn, 13 June 1888 and Ellington to Mr. Gray, 19 June 1888.

to the Stewart River area, commented favourably to the Bishop on Ellington's work at his new post.<sup>18</sup> The following summer Ellington decided upon the final site for the mission buildings and set the Indians to work on them while he himself undertook a journey upriver to the mouth of the Stewart. On the way he stopped for a time with the Fort Reliance band and also with a few of the interior or "Stick" Indians before returning to his home base, where he found that the mission house was nearing completion and that a beginning had been made on a separate school building. In an article that he wrote at this time for the magazine of his former school in England he describes his project:

If I have my way the Buxton Mission (i.e. the church, school and mission house) will form a kind of triangle, and if we can get funds I shall have a boarded path and paling. The School House will be heated by a furnace, the walls of which will be built with rocks. Four feet furnace iron or soapstone will cover the space between, the walls of which will be built perpendicularly of rocks, mortared together with fireclay or mud; of course a stovepipe will go out a hole in the roof.<sup>19</sup>

However, the only structure that he completed was the two-storey log mission house, for his plans for the other buildings as well as his dreams of training native catechists were cut short by a wild gold stampede to the Fortymile area. Before long, hundreds of miners were attracted to the district, creating a situation for which the inexperienced young man was quite unprepared and under which his sanity eventually gave way. Mr. J. E. McGrath of the Yukon River Boundary Survey, who spent some time at Fortymile in 1890, is reported as saying that Ellington had never known anything of the world and that "while he was a pious, zealous and conscientious man, he was almost as unfit to be left to himself in a wild country like

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Bompas to CMS, 30 December 1891.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., reel A-115, J. W. Ellington "Buxton Mission," The Georgian, Christmas, 1888. In this article Ellington also tells something of the country and the native people.



this as a 12-year-old schoolboy would be."<sup>20</sup> He soon fell victim to the miners' practical jokes and into debt with the traders, while the Indians--claiming that his Peel River accent was hard to understand and resenting his tendency to criticize them for laziness--grew increasingly disaffected. Although the Bishop had asked Mr. Canham, then stationed at Nuklukayet, to provide financial and pastoral supervision for him, the eight hundred miles of river travel that separated the two posts, while not too great by northern standards, rendered any frequent communication quite impossible. In June, 1889, Ellington, overwhelmed by a sense of failure, attempted in desperation to leave the country. Pausing in his flight to visit the Canhams, he allowed himself to be persuaded to return to Fortymile where his mental condition rapidly deteriorated. A year later he had to be escorted home to England, leaving Buxton Mission vacant.<sup>21</sup>

As for Rampart House, Wallis' activities during his years there do not appear to be documented in any detail. He became fluent in Loucheux and was considered by both Bompas and McDonald to be an active and effective evangelist.<sup>22</sup> In the absence of information concerning his literacy classes, we may assume that he continued to hold school at his post and in the camps as regularly as the nomadic pursuits of his people permitted. He laboured alone at Rampart House with the assistance of a native catechist until his furlough in 1891 when, having found a young lady who was apparently both suitable and willing, he returned to England to marry, planning to return north with his wife the following summer.

#### Bompas: The Move to Fortymile (1892)

Meanwhile Bishop Bompas, depressed by difficulties in the Mackenzie River area and frustrated by the impossibility of effectively su-

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<sup>20</sup>His letter forms the basis for the article from the Chicago Evening News quoted above (17) which bears the subtitle "How a Missionary was Driven Mad."

<sup>21</sup>Psychiatry being then in its infancy, Ellington's family seems to have felt that his condition was largely the result of severe sunstroke; the American doctor at St. Michael's diagnosed it as "softening of the brain." On reaching England the young man was committed to an asylum. He died in 1902. Ibid., reel A-117, M. A. Ellington to Mr. Furness-Smith, 30 July 1891 and Bompas to CMS, 30 December 1891.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Bompas to CMS, 22 March 1888; also reel A-118, G. C. Wallis to C. C. Fenn, 17 October 1893.

pervising the more remote Tukudh mission stations, had for some years been pleading for a division of his diocese that would free him to move west into the region that had become for him almost a "promised land." As early as 1885 he had indicated his longing for such a move. "I have a feeling," he wrote, "that having been appointed myself twenty years ago to the Yukon country, I should not like another again to be sent to take my place there if I can avoid it."<sup>23</sup> Increasingly perturbed by the detrimental influence that he felt the white miners would have on the Indian people if the western missions were not strengthened, and preoccupied with a sense of his own failing health, he continued to press the CMS for permission to spend his remaining years in the Yukon.

In 1891, his wish was finally granted: despite its small population the Diocese of Selkirk, comprising all the present Yukon Territory, was separated from the Diocese of Mackenzie River and he was free to move. In the summer of 1892, after wintering at Rampart House in Wallis' absence, Bompas set out for Fort Yukon. Here he met the Alaska Commercial Company's little steamboat, the Arctic, on its way upriver from St. Michael's with supplies for the various trading posts. On board were his wife, whom he had not seen for five years, and a party of mission workers consisting of Wallis and his bride, along with Mr. and Mrs. Canham who had just completed a five-year term with the Episcopal Church in Alaska and Benjamin Totty, a new CMS recruit from England. At this point the Wallises left the group, setting out by canoe on their journey up the Porcupine to Rampart House; the rest of the party remained on board the Arctic, the Canhams going directly to Fort Selkirk while the Bishop, Mrs. Bompas and Mr. Totty disembarked at Fortymile. This raw new mining camp, the site of Ellington's ill-fated endeavours at Buxton Misson, was to be Bompas' first base in his new diocese.

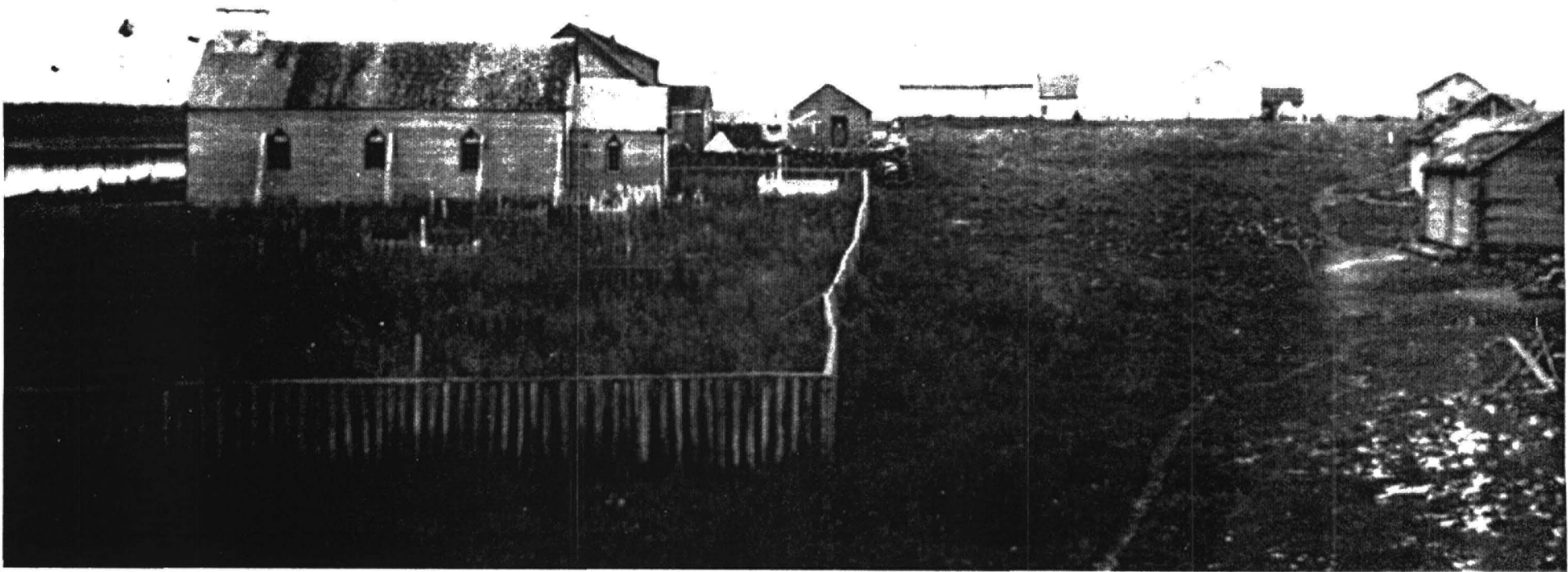
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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., reel A-113, Bompas to the Rev. W. D. Reeve, 25 September 1885.



5. *Reverend Vincent Sim,  
Rampart House, 1882-85*

Fort McPherson



6. Anglican mission at Fort McPherson, overlooking Peel River

## CHAPTER III

### THE YUKON: A TIME OF TRANSITION

(1892-1896)

Once Buxton Mission had been made habitable, the Bishop began to consider ways of reaching the native people in the more remote parts of his new diocese. His health had improved, his spirits had risen, and for the moment at least he had sufficient ordained clergy to maintain his few missions, while Mr. Totty was in reserve, learning Loucheux and studying for deacon's orders.

#### New Opportunities and Added Responsibilities

The Bishop, ever eager to press on to new areas, was soon making plans to go to the Hootalinqua district where he had heard that the Indians were "numerous and very pitiful."<sup>1</sup> Further inquiry led him to report optimistically to the CMS that he had heard that "the country round Lake Le Barge, Lake Marsh and Lake Tako" was favourable to a Mission, and that "the best hope of success there would be in teaching the Indians to build and to farm, in growing wheat, barley and vegetables, and even in introducing sheep and cattle."<sup>2</sup> As always, he had a strong desire to undertake outreach work among the Indian people himself, since he felt that his talents lay in that direction. Before long, however, the increasing number of white miners in the Fortymile area forced him to make some provision for them in his ministry, thereby placing a severe strain upon his limited resources of men and money and preventing his immediate departure for the southwest part of the Diocese. The Yukon had embarked upon the transition from "a savage wilderness," as Bompas expressed it, "to a civilized white man's home."<sup>3</sup> His own dream of returning to the simpler pattern of his early northern years had once more to be set aside.

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<sup>1</sup>PAC, CMS Papers, microfilm, reel A-117, Bompas to C. C. Fenn, 6 August 1892.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Bompas to CMS, 1 September 1892.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., reel A-119, Bompas to CMS, 24 May 1895.

### Pre-Goldrush Schools

As regards education, the church continued to be the sole agency for the promotion of literacy among both children and adults. Within a few months of the Bishop's arrival at Buxton Mission in 1892 three Indian schools were reported to be operating in the Diocese. Of these, one was associated with a new station at Fort Selkirk, one was the ongoing school at Rampart House, while the third was an embryonic boarding school at Fortymile where schooling was also offered to the native people in regular day classes. These were the Yukon's pre-goldrush educational institutions, although their small size and woefully limited facilities scarcely merit so dignified a name. Nevertheless, they represented a further stage in the evolution of the Yukon school system and were also instrumental in bringing to the Territory a nucleus of workers who remained to shape the pattern of Indian education there in later years.

#### Fort Selkirk: T. H. Canham and B. Totty (1892-96)

At Fort Selkirk, classes began in the summer of 1892 with the arrival of the Reverend and Mrs. T. H. Canham. Although originally intended by the CMS for work among the Eskimos of the western Arctic, Mr. Canham had by this time gained such knowledge of the country and people along the Yukon River and such mastery of their languages that he was considered a pillar of the Tukudh Mission's work there.<sup>4</sup> He and his wife now volunteered to open a new station at Fort Selkirk among a band of interior Indians whose previous contact with the church had come only through brief visits from McDonald (1887), Ellington (1888), and perhaps an itinerant native teacher. Leaving Nuk-

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<sup>4</sup>Canham had been sent out to Fort McPherson in 1882 through a special donation of one thousand pounds offered by Bishop Bompas' brother for the express purpose of evangelizing the Eskimo people of the western Arctic coast. (Stock, History of the CMS, Vol. 3, p. 247.) He remained there for language study, worked with the Peel River Indians during McDonald's absence, and spent some months with Sim during the latter's last illness. Bompas reported to the CMS that Canham "had made so successful a journey down the Youcon [1886] to the Pacific and so wide a field was open there before him, that I have authorized him to repeat his visit thither and, if so disposed, to remain. . . ." Ibid., reel A-117, Bompas to CMS, 17 February 1887.

lukayet near the mouth of the Tanana, where they had been on loan to the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska,<sup>5</sup> the Canhams in the summer of 1892 proceeded directly upriver to a point some two hundred miles beyond Fortymile where an independent trader had begun operations near the site of a former Hudson's Bay Company fort.<sup>6</sup> Writing to the Society in February, 1893, Mr. Canham records his first impressions:

In August . . . having by God's providence made a prosperous and most enjoyable trip, we landed at Selkirk amidst the most uncivilized looking Indians I have seen yet. Nearly six months have passed since then, which have given us a little insight into their character. They are we find wretchedly poor and very dark and superstitious and more or less indifferent about matters of religion.<sup>7</sup>

He found preaching difficult, since the language of the Selkirk Indians was unfamiliar and the Tukudh books "so valuable and helpful at Fortymile and elsewhere" proved useless, nor did he have the services of an interpreter as had previously been the case in similar circumstances. He did his best, however, reading from the Tukudh New Testament and using pictures to illustrate the message and arouse the interest of his hearers. Although the language barrier was a major hindrance to literacy classes, Canham made the best of the situation, as he tells us:

In the day school for children where of course nothing but English is taught we have all along made it a point that the children shall teach us and give us all the help they can in acquiring a knowledge of their tongue. The result of this is a vocabulary of some 250 (probably more) words which is certainly not to be despised.

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<sup>5</sup>An article in the Rupert's Land Gleaner, June, 1892, indicates that St. James Mission there, built by Mr. Canham, included a school that would accommodate 200 children. Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Fort Selkirk, built by Robert Campbell in 1848, was destroyed by a raiding party of coast Chilkat Indians in 1852. (Wright, Prelude to Bonanza, pp. 59-75.)

<sup>7</sup>For this and following quotations, see PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-118, Canham to C. C. Fenn, 17 February 1893.

From this beginning he was able in the next few years to develop written material for the use of the Selkirk band leading to the production of "a small book consisting of a few short Bible lessons, hymns and prayers, printed in 1897 and later revised and added to," as well as an English-Wood Indian vocabulary, published by the SPCK in London in 1898.<sup>9</sup> In March, 1894, he made the long journey on the winter ice to Fortymile where he reported to the Bishop that his mission buildings were "fairly completed," with a daily attendance of about thirty Indian children at school.<sup>9</sup> Until he had mastered their language, his lessons seem to have been limited to the alphabet along with a few simple hymns in English and although much progress towards literacy could not be looked for, he noted that at least "kind words and actions are understood the world over."<sup>10</sup> However, in the summer of 1894, after only two years at Selkirk, Canham's efforts were cut short by an emergency that necessitated his immediate transfer for a time to Rampart House. He did not return until 1898.

Abandoning any thought of moving his own headquarters to Selkirk, Bishop Bompas sent Benjamin Totty to carry on the work that Canham had so recently begun there. For the next two years he and his part-Indian wife maintained the work at Selkirk; the latter, a daughter of the pioneer trader Alfred H. Mayo and his native wife from the Rampart House area, proved invaluable in speaking to the Indians for her husband who--hampered by deafness--was slow to learn the Selkirk language.<sup>11</sup> Although the Tottys together translated a few

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<sup>9</sup>"Wood Indian" is Canham's term for the language and people now known as "Northern Tutchone." Mr. Canham spent much time in language study and in his "Notes and Jottings" (1897) speaks of "having laboured during 15 years in three different dioceses under one Bishop and in four stations, each with a different language or dialect." Except for two years at Rampart House (1894-96) followed by a furlough, the Canhams remained at Fort Selkirk from 1892 to 1909, when they moved to Carcross in the southwest corner of the Diocese. Mr. Canham was Archdeacon of the Yukon from 1892 to 1924. GSA, Canham Papers, Section C.

<sup>9</sup>PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-118, Bompas to CMS, 15 May 1894.

<sup>10</sup>GSA, Canham Papers, C-14, August 1897.

<sup>11</sup>Mrs. Totty, the former Selina Mayo, lived with Bishop and Mrs. Bompas at Buxton Mission for two or three years prior to her marriage. The Bishop thought highly of her. PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-119, Bompas to CMS, 9 August 1894, 24 May 1895 and 13 January 1896.



hymns, prayers and Bible lessons into the Selkirk Indian tongue, they lacked a syllabarium and other tools for teaching the natives to read so that progress in that respect could not have been great. Then, in the summer of 1896, the Bishop decided to recall them to Buxton Mission so as to free himself to spend some time at Fort Selkirk with a new recruit, F. F. Flewelling. There Bompas intended to learn the language of the Selkirk band while preparing Flewelling for an eventual move to the neglected Hootalingua district. Events, however, decreed otherwise: on August 17, 1896, the dramatic Klondike gold discovery focused his immediate attention upon that area and before he could make other arrangements for the work at Selkirk, nature intervened. An unusually severe cold spell in the early fall of that year prevented the arrival of the supply boat from Alaska and forced the Bishop to close Selkirk mission for a time. Regular activities were not resumed until the Canhams returned from furlough to reopen it two years later.

#### Fortymile: A Difficult Year (1892-93)

In the meantime, significant developments had been taking place at Buxton Mission. Soon after their arrival, the Bishop and his wife had found themselves in charge of a number of Indian or metis children who were, for various reasons, in need of care--a situation not at all unusual at a time when churches generally carried out many functions of our present-day social welfare agencies. Other clergy in the Diocese were similarly caring for homeless or abandoned children, as we learn from a letter written by Mrs. Canham in 1896:

The Bishop hopes that we shall bring back with us a married schoolmaster either from England or Canada, in order to set up a boarding school; he and Mrs. Bompas have had as many as eleven children in their house, and we have had four--the state of my health prevented us from taking more--and Mr. Totty had I think two or three with his own child. . . .<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>GSA, Canham Papers, B-3, Mrs. Canham to Miss Large, September 1896.

As early as 1892 the need for a teacher had become apparent at Fortymile, where the Bishop's Indian school met twice daily with an attendance that at times reached thirty to forty pupils, mostly adults. His chief assistant that first year was his wife, who cared for the Mission house and the "family" of boarders, sharing school duties with her husband on alternate days<sup>13</sup> unless other duties called him away. Then in her early sixties and far from robust, she carried on classes as best she could, since Mr. Totty's usefulness was limited to practical tasks around the Mission until he gained a measure of fluency in Loucheux. In his first six months the Bishop had been able to make only two short trips, presumably to visit the Fort Reliance Indians, as well as a tour of the busy Fortymile mining district, the latter "a strange contrast to the usual loneliness of winter travel in the North."<sup>14</sup> Not surprisingly, he began to grow increasingly impatient with the CMS authorities in London and the fact that he could expect no reply to his letters for six months to a year exacerbated his irritation.

Although he had long been urging the Society to send lay workers to the North, it seems that the CMS had become particularly reluctant to provide a grant for this purpose: money was in short supply and the demands of the "teeming millions" in India and China seemed to outweigh by far the needs of a few hundred native people in remote North West America. In view of his urgent need for assistance, Bompas tried to suggest alternatives. "Even if you refuse a grant for it," he wrote, "still you need not defer sending a schoolmistress. In the last resort my brother would I expect pay her passage money. . . . The parents of the half-breed children would I think be willing to pay about [one hundred pounds] a year for their board and schooling." As an additional spur to the Society he added, "If no one will offer us a grant for a schoolmaster or schoolmistress to be a stay on the Jesuits I still wish to have one out all the same and take the burden on ourselves for looking for Government aid."<sup>15</sup> He

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<sup>13</sup>Archer, Heroine of the North, p. 133.

<sup>14</sup>PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-118, Bompas to CMS, 20 January 1893.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., reel A-117, 22 July 1892.

did indeed soon begin to seek government aid, first from Alaska and later from Canada, but the Americans had other plans and it was some years before Ottawa provided any support for the education of Indians in the Yukon, then only a vaguely known component of the vast North West Territories.

A Teacher for Fortymile: Susan Mellett (1893-)

In May, 1893, he was relieved to learn "from private sources and with much thankfulness" that he was to be aided by a schoolmistress from Ireland, a prospect that gave him particular satisfaction in view of his concern for his wife's health.<sup>16</sup> Although the source of funds for the teacher's passage and salary is not clear, it is certain that the CMS refused to contribute to her support since she would be teaching metis children for whom the Society accepted no responsibility.<sup>17</sup>

In any case, Susan Mellett arrived at Fortymile in July, 1893, having made the long journey from Ireland via San Francisco and St. Michael's. She was the first unmarried white woman in the Diocese and the first person employed specifically as a teacher in a Yukon school. In her memoirs she recalls her first meeting with the Bishop and her impression that he was somewhat disappointed to find her "a meek little person" in her early twenties. Nevertheless, she proved a valued addition to the Buxton Mission staff, as she had already had some experience as a teacher, having taught for a time during the Irish Rebellion in the "ragged schools" of Dublin.<sup>18</sup> Her feelings of inadequacy in her strange new surroundings soon disappeared and she seems to have had a saving sense of humour that carried her through

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., reel A-118, Bompas to CMS, 22 May 1893.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 3 January 1894. The CMS refused to take responsibility for the schooling of children of Indian women if they had a "putative white father."

<sup>18</sup>"Susan Mellett Bowen (1870-1962)", Five Pioneer Women of the Anglican Church in the Yukon, Yukon Diocesan Board, Women's Auxiliary, Anglican Church of Canada, Whitehorse, Y.T.: 1964, pp. 1-5. The "ragged schools" were 19th century institutions maintained through charity to provide elementary schooling and other services for poor children.

the difficulties that came her way. Many years later, recalling her experiences in the North, she described her duties at Buxton Mission:

My chief work was the school and in between everything from papering the house to cleaning of floors. The children were good little helpers and when taught to do things took delight in doing everything as well as possible. I taught them to knit and their sewing was very good because they could copy anything. . . . The school was a great mixture, all sorts and sizes and ages came to learn to read, men, women, and children, many of the women with babies on their backs. One had nothing to help explain what one was trying to tell them, no pictures, no maps, no globes. But as time went on we improved. The natives were so willing to help, it was their first school and they loved it. They enjoyed singing and when the day's work was done, stories had the preeminence. The greatest punishment was the omission of the story telling period.<sup>19</sup>

It was not all quite as straightforward as she implies. For example, "wall papering" (an attempt to seal out drafts and brighten the room) involved covering the logs with cotton drill, which was then in turn covered with a thick layer of red paint. "The schoolroom," Mrs. Bompas tells us, "was the last to be papered, but we fear it will be lost labour here, for the cold was so severe (that is, 50 below zero) that the paste froze on the walls before it could dry (in spite of a large fire), and all the paper is cracking."<sup>20</sup> It was obviously a process that both women long remembered.

Few additional details regarding the early classes at Fortymile have survived. Language must have been of some concern since as early as January, 1893, Mrs. Bompas noted that the variety of dialects spoken by the Indians of the district was a problem, adding

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<sup>19</sup>Mrs. R. J. Bowen, "Greetings on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Diocese of the Yukon, 1891-1941," typescript, 9 pp., YA, ACDYR, Series IV.3, Box 52, folder 11.

<sup>20</sup>Archer, Heroine of the North, p.143.

by way of illustration that although there were but five mission children boarding with them at the time, "amongst these there are three distinct languages."<sup>21</sup> Under these circumstances, the Bishop's linguistic gifts were invaluable and although he chafed at being tied for long to one locality his continuous presence at Buxton Mission at this time enabled him to act as interpreter and to give regular instruction in Loucheux to Mr. Totty and Mrs. Bompas and later to Susan Mellett. It would seem that he himself took charge of at least the Indian language reading lessons at the school during her first year there. In fact, by December of 1893 he was able to report that the Indians had made such good progress in learning to read in their own language that they were now also being taught English in school,<sup>22</sup>--a necessity since they were now coming into increasing contact with white miners and traders.

Susan Mellett's presence seems to have made a real difference to life at the mission and that winter, in spite of the cold and the limited diet of porridge and fish,<sup>23</sup> the daily routine went along peacefully and happily. Mrs. Bompas gives her much credit, noting that the children were devoted to her and that she kept them "in first rate order." "One comfort," she adds, "is that she has good health and is not troubled with nerves,"<sup>24</sup>--a malady to which Mrs. Bompas herself seems to have been rather susceptible. In his report to the CMS the following spring, the Bishop took obvious pleasure in praising his teacher's success with the boarding pupils, who he said had made "good progress in school and religion, are living in harmony and setting a good example for others." At the same time he reminded the Society that small thanks were due to them, since Miss Mellett was in their view excluded from the mission staff.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>22</sup>PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-118, Bompas to CMS, 10 December 1893.

<sup>23</sup>Archer, Heroine of the North, p. 144.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-118, Bompas to CMS, 15 May 1894.

### Diocesan Problems (1894)

His satisfaction with his teacher's work was soon outweighed by new problems. To his irritation with the CMS was added his concern for the mission at Rampart House, left vacant in 1893 by the sudden departure of Wallis and his wife after a stay of less than a year. Since this was considered a key location, Bompas had been forced to dispatch Mr. Totty, whom he had been training for Indian work at Buxton Mission, to hold the Porcupine area until a replacement for Wallis could be found. Once again he was short of workers, and in addition life among the miners at Fortymile was causing him considerable uneasiness, particularly in view of the increasing liquor traffic among the Indians. Advancing age was beginning to sap his energies, disturbing news had reached him concerning the health of the Canhams at Fort Selkirk and his patience was wearing thin. "During the winter," he writes despondently, "I have had to sustain unaided the Sunday services and school in the week and the care of a numerous household with an ill-built house and a temperature close to 70 below zero."<sup>26</sup> More workers were obviously needed.

The only bright light in the situation that summer was the arrival in July, 1894, of a second schoolmistress, destined originally to assist the Canhams at Fort Selkirk. She was a Scottish girl, Margaret MacDonald, whom Mrs. Bompas refers to as "a young lady friend of mine"<sup>27</sup> and who again may have been supported privately. A month later, realizing that the season was too far advanced to permit arrival of any additional staff that year, the Bishop bitterly attacked the CMS for failing to send him a replacement for Wallis or anyone to extend the work to Hootalingua and other unreached areas. His many requests for a married schoolmaster for a separate boarding school where all children needing care could be together under one

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid. It was at this time that the Bishop began requesting Ottawa to send a NWMP detachment to Fortymile.

<sup>27</sup>Archer, Heroine of the North, p. 147. Since she was intended originally for the Indian mission at Fort Selkirk, Bompas informed the CMS that he had authorized Miss MacDonald to draw the expense of her passage from the CMS block grant to him. Her stipend, if any, may have come from friends in England. PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-11B, Bompas to CMS, 4 June 1894.

roof had also brought no results. Although claiming to be ashamed of his "impatience," he nevertheless repeated his accusations, asserting that during his thirty years in the North the CMS had neither sent him sufficient workers nor paid sufficient attention to education. To emphasize this point, he concluded his argument by stating plainly his opinion that "little or no work is needed for [the Indian population] beyond schooling, men, women and children alike."<sup>28</sup> In this statement he echoes a previous letter in which he had urged the CMS to follow the example of the Roman Catholics who consider the school to be "the nursery of the Mission"<sup>29</sup> and give education the support it merits.

#### Rampart House: A Time of Decline (1893-96)

Bompas' plans to send Miss MacDonald to Fort Selkirk did not materialize. Instead, the urgent need for an experienced worker at Rampart House caused a major shuffle of diocesan staff in the summer of 1894. Mr. Totty, recalled to Buxton Mission, married Selina Mayo and, as previously described, proceeded to take over the work at Selkirk for the following two years. Meanwhile the Canhams, although long overdue for a furlough, accepted a transfer to Rampart House, where the Bishop hoped that Mr. Canham's fluency in Loucheux and his familiarity with the area and its people would compensate for the loss of Wallis. Since Mrs. Canham was far from well, the Bishop sent Miss Mellett with her to assist with the foster children and to serve as schoolmistress, her place at Buxton Mission being taken by Miss MacDonald. He himself would carry on the Loucheux classes at the Indian day school there. In this way, after only one year at Fortymile, Susan Mellett found herself on her way to the most northerly and lonely mission in the Diocese.

Conditions at Rampart House had changed drastically since Sim's death in 1886, altering the habits of the Indians of the region. During his stay there in the winter of 1891-92, Bompas had sensed their restlessness and attributed it at first to excessive liberality on the

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 30 July 1894.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 3 July 1894.

part of the missionaries.<sup>30</sup> However, he soon became aware that other factors had been at work. In 1889 a boundary survey had forced the Hudson's Bay Company to move its Rampart House post to a new site farther up the river; in addition, the more aggressive methods and superior goods of the American traders had begun to encourage the native people to take their furs to Fort Yukon or Herschel Island. Consequently, by 1893 dwindling profits had forced the Hudson's Bay Company to suspend its operations west of Fort McPherson; from that time on regular river traffic along the Porcupine ceased and the mission at New Rampart House was left on its own in almost total isolation. Wallis, returning there with his bride in 1892, discovered that the Indian people no longer came that way as often as they had previously. Mrs. Wallis, to whom the long journey had been an ordeal and who was, in addition, subject to respiratory ailments, found winter conditions there unendurable;<sup>31</sup> as a result, the following spring Wallis took his wife back to England. Uncertain as to whether or not they would return, the Bishop sent Mr. Totty to carry on the work at Rampart House for the 1893-94 season and when it became clear that Wallis would not come north again, he persuaded the Canhams, together with Susan Mellett, to take up the challenge.

Susan Mellett has left an account of her adventures on the journey up the Porcupine River in the summer of 1894. Since their boat was small, two trips were required to convey the party and their supplies from Fort Yukon to Rampart House. Mrs. Canham, Miss Mellett and the four foster-children went first, reaching their destination seventeen days later after a mishap involving the death by drowning of one of their Indian boatmen. On arrival they found the house far from suitable for family occupancy, especially in winter, but they set

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<sup>30</sup>"I find the Rampart House Indians spoiled and inclined to make tea and tobacco their gods. I would not willingly spend another winter with them on account of their begging propensities . . ." Ibid., reel A-117, Boompas to CMS, 22 July 1892.

<sup>31</sup>Susan Mellett met them at St. Michael's on their way "outside." She comments that "Mrs. Wallis had nothing to say in recommendation of the country. Had I met them before I left Ireland her conversation might have influenced me, but seeing I was only eighteen hundred miles from my destination Fortymile I pressed on." Mrs. R. J. Bowen, "Greetings on the Fiftieth Anniversary. . ." p.3. The Wallises later returned from England to a parish in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia.



to work to make the best of it. Mr. Canham arrived safely a month later, bringing their supplies, and they settled in for their two-year stay.<sup>32</sup>

They had a difficult time. When it was all over, Mrs. Canham sent the following concise but graphic account to a friend:

Only one bale reached us last year, the second we found at Old Fort Yukon on our arrival at that post last summer. . . . Not receiving the second bale was a great loss, as it contained several mufflers and shirts that were much needed. We were in such straits that petticoats that were of any length had to be turned into shirts, and every available scrap of wool was knit into mufflers, stockings and cuffs. The winter was unusually cold and long, and my health at times causing anxiety, made it very trying to us all. We had a kind friend in Miss Mellett, who helped us in every way she could, and although at times provisions were scarce . . . we never really wanted for anything. The Indians were not successful in hunting, so that at times we had very little meat for ourselves or dogs, sickness visited our people also, and a few deaths took place, but at a distance from the Mission.<sup>33</sup>

Susan Mellett also recalls the near-famine conditions, as well as the fact that no mail reached them for eighteen months. Of the school she tells us very little, only that it was "very flourishing while the Indians were in the encampment, but they were away a great deal hunting and fishing."<sup>34</sup> Since they lacked oil for their lamps, one may assume that reading was at a minimum, at least in the dark winter months. Mr. Canham found his work discouraging as more and more Indians were drifting away to Fort Yukon or to Herschel Island where it

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Canham Papers, Mrs. Canham to Miss Large, September 1896.

<sup>34</sup>Mrs. R. J. Boven, "Greetings on the Fiftieth Anniversary. . . ."

was feared that they were being demoralized by contact with the American whalers and exposure to the liquor traffic.<sup>35</sup> He tried to encourage them to visit Rampart House by buying their furs, which he then handed over to the Alaska Commercial Company,<sup>36</sup> but it was too late; the established trading patterns had broken down and by 1896 very few Indians frequented their old camps on the Porcupine River.

On June 6, 1896, the mission party--no doubt thankfully--left Rampart House for Fort Yukon. There they camped for five weeks on the river bank awaiting the arrival of the steamer that was to take Susan Mellett back to Fortymile and return a week later for the Canhams, at last on their way to a well-earned furlough in England. To their surprise, they found that Bishop Bompas had already been at Fort Yukon for some two weeks, holding school daily from eight o'clock in the morning until eight at night. One of his classes was especially gratifying to him, as it proved that earlier labours had borne good fruit. "It was a pleasure to me," he reports, "to hold a daily afternoon class of middle-aged men, at which several chapters of the New Testament were daily read by them, with intelligence and interest, in their own tongue, by way of exercise and at their own request."<sup>37</sup> Susan Mellett's arrival was particularly timely since she was able to share the teaching load; together they maintained a busy schedule until the steamer arrived to take them back to Buxton Mission.

#### Changes at Fortymile (1894-96)

Many changes had occurred there during her two-year absence. Miss MacDonald had left, apparently for health reasons,<sup>38</sup> as had Mrs. Bompas, recalled to England by illness in her family. The Reverend

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<sup>35</sup>PAC, CMS Papers, Reel A-119, Bompas to CMS, 24 May 1895.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., T. H. Canham to B. Gould, 25 November 1896.

<sup>37</sup>Cody, Apostle of the North, p. 277. Mr. Canham had also carried on classes for the Fort Yukon Indians while he was there in 1894 on his way to Rampart House.

<sup>38</sup>"Miss Macdonald [sic], whom the Bishop got to come out from England for a period of three years was obliged to go home after two years on account of ill health. She was obliged to pay her own passage." GSA, Naylor (family) Papers, M75-10, H. A. Naylor to Father and Mother, 15 April 1898.

and Mrs. Totty had just returned from Fort Selkirk to carry on the Indian day school at Fortymile and the CMS had at last come to the Bishop's rescue, sending out Mr. R. J. Bowen in 1895 to be trained for the native ministry. Within a short time, however, Bowen found himself diverted to work among the white miners in the surrounding area, and in the summer of 1896 he was transferred to Circle City, Alaska, where a new gold find had occurred, attracting many potential members of his Fortymile congregation.<sup>39</sup> Soon after Susan Mellett's return to Buxton Mission two new workers arrived, this time from eastern Canada: Mr. F. F. Flewelling, already mentioned, and the Reverend and Mrs. H. A. Naylor who were assigned to carry on the work Bowen had begun among the miners. Fortymile itself had become a quieter community, partly because of the exodus to Circle City and partly because of the arrival in 1895 of Inspector C. Constantine of the North West Mounted Police with a detachment of twenty men. At the Mission, Miss Mellett assumed full charge of the boarders, now eleven in number, and when the Bishop was away took over such duties as the weighing of the gold dust paid to the Indians by the white men for whom they had worked.<sup>40</sup> At this point her role seems to have been in effect that of matron in charge of the boarders, although she no doubt shared teaching duties at the day school as required.

#### Indian Schooling: The Peel River Area (1892-96)

Although the main developments in education in the Territory between 1892 and 1896 occurred at these Yukon River mission stations, native peoples in the eastern part of the Diocese were not neglected. The Peel River Indians who frequented the lower Mackenzie area between Lapierre House and Fort McPherson, while affected to some degree by the presence of American traders on the coast, remained faithful to the Hudson's Bay Company and continued their regular round of visits to both these posts. At Fort McPherson, Archdeacon McDonald supervised their instruction while at Lapierre House the literacy classes were maintained by John Ttssietla. One of the earliest

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<sup>39</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series IV.3, Box 52, folder 11, R. J. Bowen to Archbishop W. R. Adams, 25 January 1952.

<sup>40</sup>Mrs. R. J. Bowen, "Greetings on the Fiftieth Anniversary. . . ."

native catechists trained by McDonald, he was admitted to the ministry by Bishop Reeve of the Diocese of Mackenzie River on July 15, 1893--the first native within the Arctic Circle to be ordained.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately he died only a few years later, victim of an influenza epidemic that took the lives of many of the Indians with whom he was making a winter trip from Fort McPherson across the mountains to the Mayo area.

#### Eskimo Schooling: I. O. Stringer at Herschel Island (1893-)

As for the Eskimo people at the mouth of the Mackenzie River, the CMS had been interested in placing a worker there since Bompas' first visit to them many years earlier. Regular contacts finally began with the arrival in 1893 of a young theology student from Ontario, Isaac Stringer. Directed for the sake of convenience by Bishop Reeve of Mackenzie River diocese, his work proceeded smoothly; Stringer quickly won the trust and friendship of the Eskimos and made rapid progress in their language, which Canham had been unable to do. In 1893 and 1894 he visited Herschel Island, where he found the whalers kind and hospitable and the younger Eskimos anxious to learn to read and write. By 1895 Bishop Reeve reported to the CMS that the whalers had appealed to him to establish a mission on the Island and had raised "about one hundred pounds" to meet the expense.<sup>42</sup> It must have been gratifying to Bishop Bompas amid his many cares to know that one of his early hopes was at last about to be realized.

The increasing complexity of the situation in the Yukon was a constant concern to the Bishop. His correspondence with the CMS between 1892 and 1896 reflects his preoccupation with matters of education as he pondered ways of meeting the needs of a growing white community that he mistrusted and those of the native people whom he wished to protect from contaminating influences. In moments of dis-

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<sup>41</sup>Stock, History of the CMS, Vol. 3, p. 622.

<sup>42</sup>PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-119, W. D. Reeve to CMS, 15 July 1895. Both Bompas and Reeve had appealed for a worker to help Stringer with the Eskimos. The Reverend C. E. Whittaker arrived for this purpose in July 1895.

couragement he tended to feel that his entire thirty years in the North had been of little use. Yet the scattered accounts now available indicate that slow growth was indeed taking place in spite of many hardships and difficulties.

#### Changing Trends in Native Education (1892-96)

Throughout this period Indian education continued to be directed mainly towards the teaching of literacy skills to the native population as a support to the propagation of the Gospel. However, classes now tended to be centred at the mission stations where resident clergy or other workers taught the Indian people their letters. This trend may be seen as a reflection of the growing ability of the native people themselves to use the printed materials prepared for them by McDonald while on their seasonal journeys; it also indicates a change in the lifestyle of the Indians living along the upper Yukon, who were beginning to find work on the fringes of the mining camps and who therefore visited the settlements more frequently. Perhaps the family ties of the married clergy also tended to keep them closer to their home base, since few white women could accept the long months of separation that Mrs. Bompas endured during her earlier years in the North. While the need to itinerate had not disappeared, native Christian leaders were now carrying a larger share of this aspect of the mission work.

#### Instructional Content, Materials and Techniques

Since instruction was given in the Indian language of an area, a missionary was required to spend some years in serious language study in order to acquire not only the written form of the Peel River Tukumh adopted by McDonald for his scriptural translations but also the local idiom of the band being taught. English reading and writing was specifically introduced for some pupils at Fortymile when it was noticed that the younger Indians were learning it from the miners and its usefulness had become apparent. The missionaries' wives introduced Indian girls and women to knitting and other new sewing and household skills; all schools included singing and some general information about the outside world and direction in matters of cleanliness and personal hygiene.

Records indicate an extreme shortage of teaching materials. Some pictures seem to have been available, usually of Biblical scenes, while reading charts based on McDonald's Loucheux syllabarium were provided by the SPCK in England, who also printed the primers and scriptural material that he (and later Canham) prepared. Other supplementary supplies seem to have come from private donations in the mission bales sent from England or eastern Canada, since Mrs. Canham has left us a list requesting clothing, toys and "school materials."<sup>43</sup> Since the latter items were always extremely scarce, it is doubtful that any of these early schools were better supplied than the one at Fort Yukon taught by Mrs. Bompas in 1897:

Mr. H[awksley] and I keep school daily. We have as many as fifty children, and it is very interesting work, only we are terribly handicapped for want of school materials. We have no slates, only a few broken pieces [and] fragments of slate pencils; no copy books whatever, only some sheets of whitey-brown paper which I begged from the Company's stores. I have to write out alphabets and spelling and copies on this paper for the standard lesson books for our elder classes; I have to compose thrilling stories and adventures of Rose and Ben. Our schoolroom is also used for the church services, but it is far too small for our numbers. For benches we put planks on empty cases, and for seats blocks of wood. In spite of all difficulties, however, the children are getting on and by degrees taming down, for a wilder or more undisciplined set of little ruffians than they were at first would be hard to find out of the Zoological Gardens.<sup>44</sup>

Certainly the teacher's inventiveness and resourcefulness were strained to the utmost under such conditions.

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<sup>43</sup>Canham Papers, Mrs. Canham to Miss Large, September 1896.

<sup>44</sup>Quoted by Archer, Heroine of the North, pp. 156-157. Mrs. Bompas, returning from England, was stranded for the winter of 1897-98 at Fort Yukon. During these months she helped the Reverend Mr. Hawksley, the missionary in charge, with the Indian school.

### Administrative Changes and New Plans (1896)

The remoteness of the area and the lack of any regular mail service were a hindrance to effective administration of the Diocese in these times of rapid change. The resulting delays and misunderstandings finally led the Bishop to notify London of his intention to proceed as he saw fit without waiting for CMS approval of his decisions: if this procedure were unacceptable, he offered to resign his office. Since he refused to return to England for personal consultations, the Society apparently made the required allowances, for he carried on as Bishop for another decade. However, the appointment in 1896 of the Right Reverend Peter Rowe as the first resident bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska relieved Bompas of responsibility for the work that the Tukudh Mission had for so long maintained at Fort Yukon.<sup>45</sup> Bishop Rowe's arrival enabled the CMS to withdraw from Alaska apart from lending staff for a time until American missionaries were available.

Two major problems still remained: the need to provide for children of mixed race and the need to serve the Yukon's growing white community. The CMS, as already noted, did not acknowledge any responsibility for the education of the offspring of white men and Indian women, nor did its mandate permit it to provide clergy to minister to the miners. For the time being, Bompas continued to encourage metis children to attend his school at Fortymile; the Bishop also entered into negotiations with other Anglican church societies to obtain funding and workers for the men on "the creeks" since any religious influence upon them would, he felt, help prevent demoralization of his native converts. By the summer of 1896 his plans had advanced sufficiently to enable him to publish a proposal for future development, soliciting gifts for "special objects" in the Diocese of Selkirk, including a number of new schools. Contributions were requested for

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<sup>45</sup>Although for a time in 1883-84 it had seemed that the American government was prepared to make Bishop Bompas a grant of \$1,000 a year in support of the mission school at Fort Yukon, the plan had failed to materialize, leaving Bompas to maintain the work there as best he could. PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-118, Bompas to CMS, 3 January 1894.

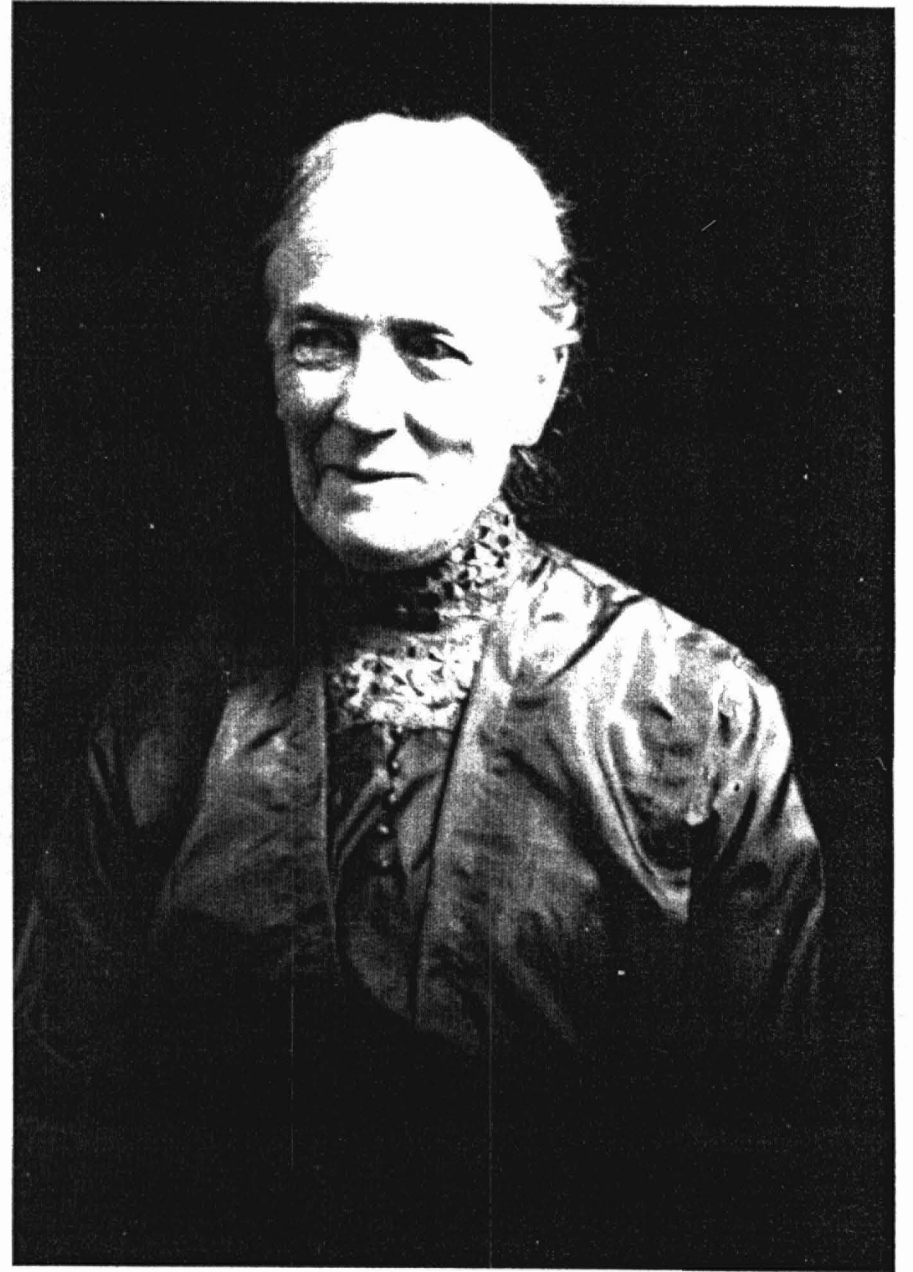
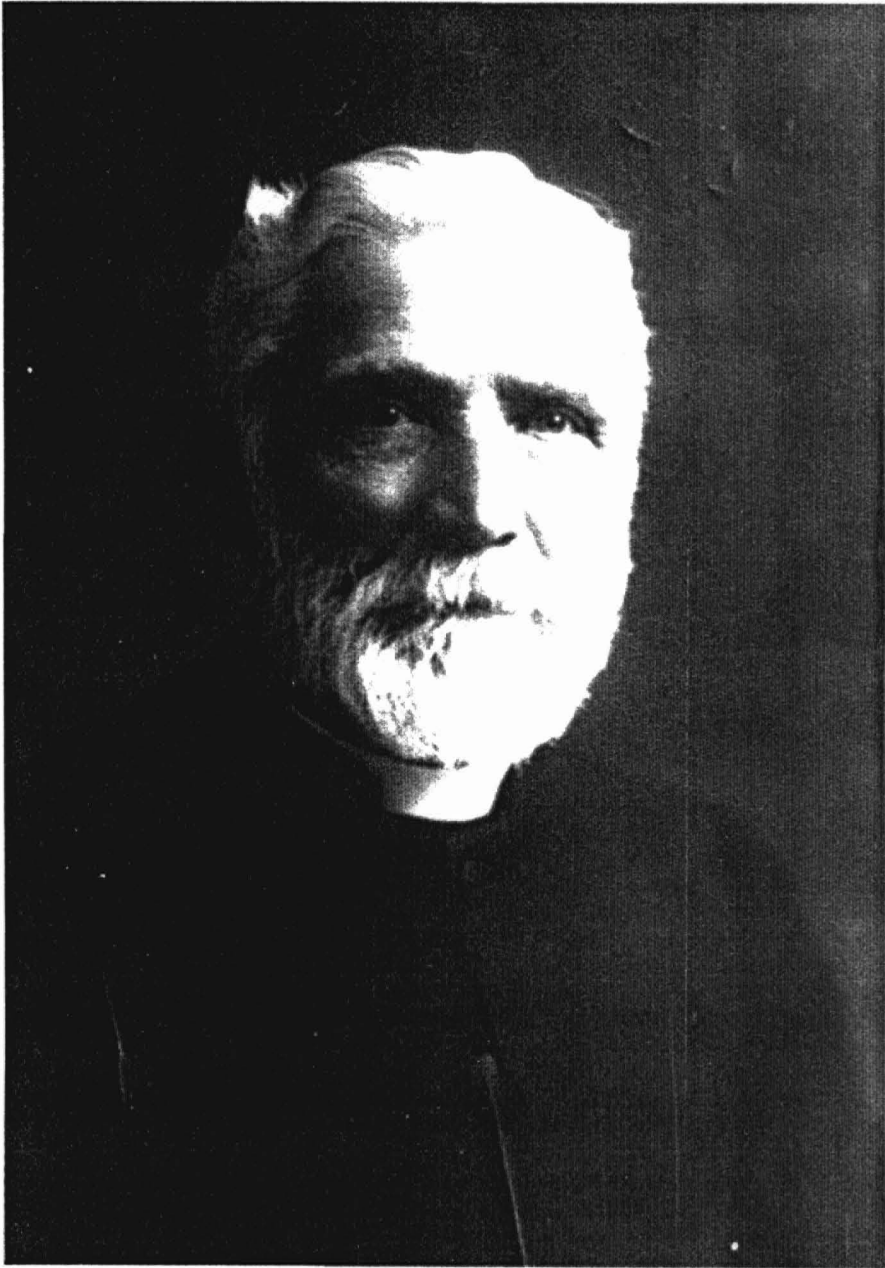
1. A church for the miners at Fortymile and a Mission House and School-Church at Hootalinga [sic];
2. A Girls' School for the Indians, to be established at Fort Reliance with a married schoolmaster, intended both for boarders and day scholars, and a similar Boys' School to be founded at Sixty-Mile;
3. The Selkirk Diocesan Fund, on which fall the salaries of the mission agents and all other Mission expenses beyond those defrayed by the Missionary Societies of England and Canada.<sup>46</sup>

These projects never developed. An extension of native schooling did indeed occur in the following decade but on a lesser scale than the Bishop had hoped and in areas of which he as yet knew very little. Within a few months of this appeal, Fortymile itself had become almost a ghost town and the greatest gold rush in history was drawing thousands to the Klondike. Long-term planning, then as now, was no easy matter in the Yukon.

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., reel A-119, Bishop of Selkirk, Diocese of Selkirk, c. 1896, 11 pp.





7. and 8. Archdeacon and Mrs. Thomas H. Canham

# VOCABULARY

## ENGLISH-WOOD INDIAN

DRAWN UP BY  
ARCHDEACON CANHAM

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

LONDON: NORTHUMBERLAND AVENUE, W.C.

1898

ENGLISH-WOOD INDIAN

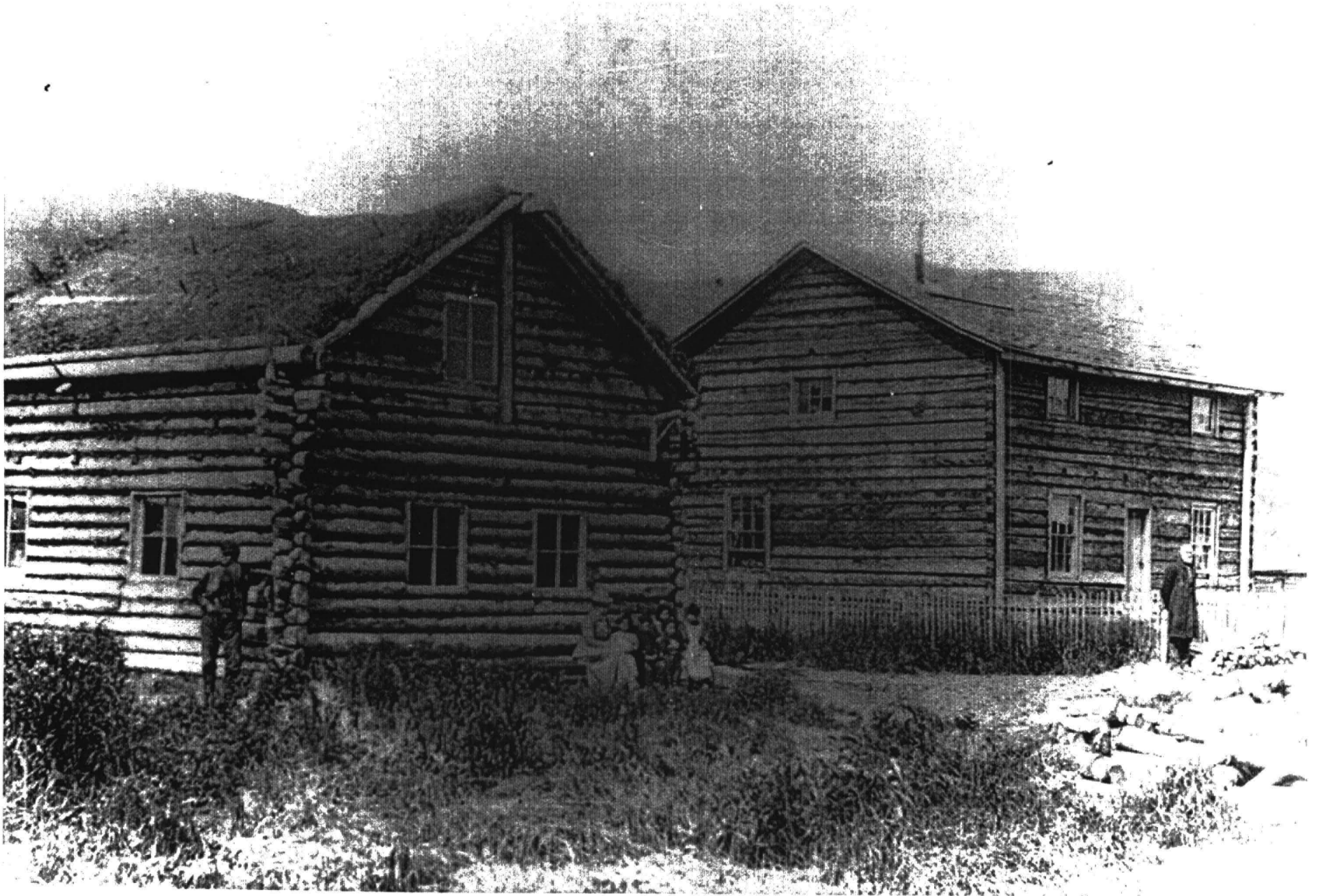
7

brown	<i>dettsik</i>
brush (pine)	<i>tlök</i>
but	<i>eyutti</i>
butter	<i>hidethoh</i>
butterfly	<i>lokra</i>
button	<i>kitchen ttoh</i>
by and by	<i>uttlannti</i>
camp	<i>nimbar</i>
candle	<i>shildekkon</i>
cap	<i>ootsat</i>
cat	<i>neddyi</i>
ceiling	<i>duzzhut</i>
chain	<i>mezzun khel ootlel</i>
chair	<i>ookadetlitsutsdyih</i>
cheeks	<i>ooneemoor</i>
chicken	<i>gambeea</i>
child	<i>dooninh</i>
children	<i>dooninhnu</i>
chin	<i>ooyidsea</i>
Christmas	<i>Neijanchu</i>
church	<i>khutsunde kkwon</i>
clock	<i>seealagachun</i>
cloud	<i>kkoh</i>
cloudless	<i>kkoh adooh</i>
coal-oil	<i>toeohkon</i>
cold	<i>ettli, eentli, eddli</i>
cold	<i>whoohkoh ; (very) whutsutchoh</i>
come	<i>annee ; (-ing) dunadolh</i>
come	<i>natitalh</i>
comb	<i>thlooyeeul</i>
cone	<i>datsoon</i>
cord	<i>tlilul</i>
cotton-wood	<i>ttoh</i>

9. A page from Reverend Canham's Vocabulary in the Wood-Indian Language, prepared for the Indians of Fort Selkirk area.



10. *Charlotte Selina Bompas with an Indian child.*



11. *School house and Bishop's Palace, Buxton Mission, Fortymile, Bishop Bompas in doorway.*



12. *An Indian from the Peel River area.*



13. *Indians from the Peel River area.*

## CHAPTER IV

### THE GOLD RUSH YEARS: INDIAN SCHOOLING (1896-1906)

The Klondike gold strike (August, 1896) ushered in a decade of social and political change that ended forever the old patterns of life in the Yukon. The first area affected was Fortymile which was virtually emptied overnight as its miners rushed off upriver in a mad exodus from which that community never recovered.<sup>1</sup> A decade later Buxton Mission was closed, abandoned even by its native population, while its missionaries had moved to stations in communities near the gold fields or along the new access route from the South. Although other religious denominations arrived during the period to share the ministry to the white inhabitants, the CMS workers and their colleagues remained committed to their original task among the Indian people of the Territory. As before, schooling continued to be one of their principal endeavours despite the many pressures of this difficult period and a chronic shortage of workers and money.

#### F. Flewelling: Missionary to the Klondike (1896-98)

The first of the new missions was established in October, 1896, when Bishop Bompas, fearing that the "large influx of excited miners in their immediate vicinity" would expose the Indians to "grievous temptations,"<sup>2</sup> hastened to place Frederick Flewelling as a full-time worker in their village on the Klondike where they were accustomed to gather in the salmon fishing season. His experiences there are not unlike those of the earlier Tukudh missionaries, except that thirty years of occasional contact with itinerant missionaries and Christian leaders from Rampart House had already given this band some knowledge of the Gospels and a degree of literacy. A good number of them, according

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<sup>1</sup>An eyewitness account of this exodus from Fortymile may be found in an undated typescript by H. A. Naylor, YA, ACDYR, Series IV.3, Box 52, folder 11.

<sup>2</sup>PAC, CMS Papers, Reel A-118, Report from Bompas to the CMS, The Church Missionary Intelligencer, Vol. 23, January 1898.

to Canham, could by this time read and write in their own language<sup>3</sup> and a few had even acquired a little rudimentary spoken English. Since the village, located at the confluence of the Klondike and Yukon Rivers, was not far from the new mining claims, these Indians were soon drawn into contact with the white miners; some found employment in the gold fields, while others began selling meat, fish and even their cabins to the newcomers.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the townsite of Dawson City was springing up nearby, further increasing what Bishop Bompas saw as detrimental white influences.

Upon arriving at his new post Flewelling erected a small log cabin in the Indian campsite to serve as living quarters, church and school and then settled in for his first northern winter. "I have school in my cabin from ten to twelve each morning," he notes in his journal,<sup>5</sup> adding, "Prayers in the Tukudh language at three o'clock. And all my housework, which I find very dreadful." His inquisitive parishioners were a sore trial to his patience and love of order until he learned to accept their constant interruptions and made four simple rules which he tried to enforce, namely "that all must knock before entering, must take off their hats, must not spit on the floor, and must leave the fire alone." School was popular, he tells us, with twenty or thirty pupils of all ages learning their ABCs and attending regularly until the band dispersed to hunt in late December. With the departure a little later of two young Indian lads who had been staying with him, the winter darkness and solitude became oppressive; it was, he said, "to be dead alive." His ordination in March, 1897, raised his spirits and by the summer he was happily at work building a larger mission and schoolhouse on a forty-acre site that he understood was to be reserved for the Indians. The North West Mounted Police, however, had a prior claim and the band was offered the choice

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., T. H. Canham, "The Diocese of Selkirk, its Work and Workers."

<sup>4</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 14, folder 6, Supt. C. Constantine, NWMP, to the Deputy Minister of the Interior, 19 November 1896.

<sup>5</sup>Frederick F. Flewelling, a native of New Brunswick, came to the Yukon upon completion of his theological studies in Toronto. He kept a careful record of his first year in the Klondike, revealing a sensitive and idealistic nature. For a typewritten copy see Ibid., Series IV.1, Box 51, folder 6.



of a new location either up the Yukon River or a few miles downstream below Dawson City. They chose the latter, selecting a site at the mouth of Moosehide Creek where a parcel of land was duly surveyed and set apart for their use. On this ground Flewelling set to work late in the season to build yet another small cabin from which to continue his ministry. That winter he held no school "for want of a school house," as Bompas records in a reproachful letter to the CMS, and at the beginning of July 1898, he quietly resigned and left the country, apparently because no money was available for his support.<sup>6</sup> Although his departure was a loss, the work that he had begun was carried on by Mr. Totty, who moved to Moosehide that September and began a day school there which was to operate continuously for another fifty years.

#### Staff Changes at Buxton Mission, Fortymile (1898)

During this period little had yet occurred to alter the established routine of the Indian day and boarding schools at Buxton Mission. In January of 1898, however, the marriage of Susan Mellett and Richard Bowen prompted the Bishop to exchange places for a time with Bowen, then rector of a small church for the Anglican adherents at Dawson City, so that the young couple could be together in charge of the "family" at the Mission until Mrs. Bompas returned from a visit to England. This exchange proved unfortunate as the Bishop, long out of touch with the white man's world, found himself by his own admission out of his element in Dawson, unpopular with the miners and faced with dwindling congregations. In late April, weakened and depressed by a severe attack of scurvy,<sup>7</sup> he returned to Fortymile where Susan

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<sup>6</sup>Both Naylor and Flewelling had been sent to the Yukon by the Canadian [Anglican] Church Missionary Society, but with no provision for their stipends other than some private donations. Bompas assigned Naylor to work with the miners of the Fortymile area, thereby obtaining a grant for him from the Colonial and Continental Church Society (CCCS) in England. The CMS, restricted by its mandate and unable to believe that Moosehide, so close to Dawson, could still be a self-contained native community, refused to support Flewelling. Bompas' own diocesan funds were at this time practically non-existent. PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-120, Bompas to CMS, 4 May 1898.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 28 April 1898. Bompas apparently thought that scurvy was contagious, and blamed the miners for spreading it.

Bowen set him on the road to recovery by sending the Indian children to gather the first green shoots of spring to make herbal teas for the invalid. He slowly recovered, and by August, 1898, his preoccupations with financial worries and the loss of Flewelling were somewhat offset by the safe return of the Canhams to reopen the mission and school at Fort Selkirk. That winter he and his wife shared the Indian work and care of the boarders at Buxton Mission where, as Mrs. Bompas tells us, life went on much the same as ever: "The mining excitement [i.e., at Dawson] does not affect us. Bishop holds school twice a day, except Tuesdays and Fridays when I have a sewing and music class. . . ." <sup>a</sup> Another difficult year, however, lay ahead.

The CMS committee in London, unaware of the extent of the changes then occurring in the Yukon, had arranged for the Tottys to leave Moosehide in the summer of 1899 for a year's furlough in England. Unfortunately, their departure coincided with that of the Bowens, both in poor health following the typhoid epidemic that had afflicted Dawson that winter, so that once again a major staff shuffle was required. As a result, the Naylor's moved from Fortymile to replace the Bowens at Dawson, while the Bishop decided to take charge of Moosehide himself for the coming year, since the CMS did not provide replacements for workers on furlough. By a fortunate coincidence, another pioneer CMS worker was available to fill the vacancies that these moves created at Buxton Mission.

#### John Hawksley: From Fort Yukon to Buxton Mission (1898)

John Hawksley had come to the North in 1887 in response to an appeal by Bompas for a lay carpenter to erect mission buildings at Fort Liard, a Hudson's Bay Company post some two hundred miles up the Liard River from Fort Simpson. Following his ordination a few years later, he served at a number of Mackenzie River stations, including Fort Simpson, Fort McPherson and Fort Norman. Bishop Bompas, who thought highly of his work and linguistic accomplishments, encouraged him to move west and in 1897 sent him on loan to the

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<sup>a</sup>Archer, Heroine of the North, p. 160.

Diocese of Alaska to reopen the mission at Fort Yukon, at that time frequented by many Indians from the abandoned Rampart House station. As already noted, Hawksley carried on a day school there for some fifty pupils and also held evening classes for the adults. At the end of his two-year contract he left Fort Yukon in charge of William Loola, a native catechist, and came to Bompas' aid at Fortymile.

There he faced a particularly heavy task as the only missionary for both whites and Indians, with visits to mining outstations more than a hundred miles distant. To ease his load the Bishop decided to disband the boarding school for a time. One child stayed with the Hawksleys and two went to Moosehide with the Bishop, while Mrs. Bompas remained alone at Fortymile in a small cabin with two young Indian boys in her care.<sup>9</sup> Since she was then approaching her seventieth birthday this arrangement proved more arduous for her than anyone had anticipated. In addition, she was worried about her husband's health, for he was notoriously inattentive to his own personal needs; after a few months she "kicked the traces," as she says, and--being a woman of considerable spirit--went off by dog team at forty below zero to rejoin him, leaving the children for a time with the Hawksleys.<sup>10</sup>

#### Bompas at Moosehide (1899-1900)

At Moosehide they proceeded to maintain services and hold school twice daily for the rest of the winter under living conditions that would have tried the endurance of persons half their age. Flewelling's mission house had been hastily enlarged for the Tottys' use by annexing to it an Indian cabin; the resulting area suitable for use in the winter measured eighteen by twenty feet and was divided

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<sup>9</sup>Information concerning Mr. Hawksley and the boarding school from 1899 to 1902 may be found in a handwritten document entitled "Account of Hawksley's Missionary Activities," GSA, Stringer Papers. Well-acquainted with the Loucheux people and fluent in their language, Hawksley served for many years in the Yukon, finally becoming the first Indian agent for the Territory, a post he held from 1914 until his retirement in 1934.

<sup>10</sup>Archer, Heroine of the North, pp. 163-64.

into three tiny rooms with no upstairs or cellar, a floor below ground level that flooded in the spring thaw and a sod roof that leaked in rainy weather.<sup>11</sup> Once again they seem to have gathered the "family" around them, and by April, 1900, the Bishop was again appealing for a school teacher, this time to Naylor in Dawson:

Do you think you could see some of the ladies who have tried schooling in Dawson and have failed and propose to them to try teaching at Moosehide, including the care of our Boarders at a salary of \$100 per month. Or if it is troublesome for you to see them, could you obtain their addresses for me to call on them when I am up on Saturday.<sup>12</sup>

No suitable person came forward and in June Mrs. Bompas returned to Fortymile suffering from bronchitis and fatigue, while her husband confided to Naylor that he thought it "best for her and for me for her to be separated if possible from these children as she fusses rather nervously over them."<sup>13</sup> It would appear that "cabin fever" had taken its toll.

#### The Rev. Lamont Gordon's School: Fortymile (1900-02)

For some years the Bishop had, in fact, been seeking to relieve his wife of the care of foster children, now more than ever beyond her physical capacities although she enjoyed their company. That summer an unexpected opportunity to place the boarding school on a more formal basis and to lighten Hawksley's workload presented itself in the form of a dynamic and rather mysterious newcomer to Dawson, the Reverend G. Lamont Gordon. Impressed by his apparent qualifications and his willingness to establish a boarding school for both white and native children at Fortymile, the Bishop in August, 1900, transferred the children to Mr. Gordon's care and began arrangements

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<sup>11</sup>PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-120, B. Totty to Mr. Furness-Smith, 21 February 1900.

<sup>12</sup>GSA, M75-10, Naylor Papers, Bompas to H. A. Naylor, 9 April 1900.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 8 June 1900.

to move his own headquarters to Caribou Crossing (soon to be known as "Carcross") in the southwestern part of the Diocese where it seemed that his cherished dream of a life of semi-retirement among the native people of that area might at last be realized.

Mr. Gordon was an Englishman in his early fifties, widely travelled and highly accomplished, according to an article appearing in The Greater Britain Messenger, a CMS publication of the time:

Rev. G. L. L. Gordon, M.A. of Oxford, and first ordained to Deacon's Orders in England . . . has passed a noble career as Principal of various educational establishments in various parts of the world for many years, such as South Australia, South Africa, Japan, and lately in America. He has lately arrived in Dawson, intending to open a high-class private school there, but is thwarted by the opening of a Government public school.

Mr. Gordon has been accustomed to unite Mission work with school work. He used to go twenty-one miles to take a Kaffir service in South Africa. He speaks four or five native South African tongues as well as Dutch, French and Spanish, not to mention his knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew.<sup>14</sup>

At a salary of \$2,000 per annum, met in part by a grant from the Colonial and Continental Church Society (CCCS), he settled with his family into the former Naylor house at Fortymile as assistant priest of St. James' Church for the white people and principal of an institution known as Selkirk Diocesan School. This school had two departments, one for white and one for native boarders, but it is not clear what arrangements were made for the Indian day classes. Presumably these remained in charge of Mr. Hawksley, at least as far as any instruction in Loucheux was concerned, since the new principal, however

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<sup>14</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series IV.3, Box 52, folder 10, Letter from Bompas "The Diocese of Selkirk", The Greater Britain Messenger, c. 1900, p. 152.

talented, could not have had time to gain fluency in that language. A number of white families placed their children in the school as boarders and in the spring of 1901 Mr. Gordon wrote optimistically to The Greater Britain Messenger that attendance was "small but encouraging," adding his opinion that "should the country get more permanently settled, as most likely it will . . . we shall have a good high-class institution, which will be a great boon to many who hitherto have been compelled to send their children away to be educated."<sup>15</sup>

These plans were quite unrealistic, for the mining boom was already on the wane and thousands were leaving the Territory, lured by new gold discoveries in Alaska. Activity in the Fortymile area, after a brief resurgence, was again on the decline, while families that had stayed in the Klondike now found government-supported schools available. Moreover, it appears that questions had arisen concerning Mr. Gordon himself and that resulting enquiries had aroused some doubts as to the validity of his educational and ecclesiastical qualifications.<sup>16</sup> In 1902 he left Fortymile; Mr. Hawksley resumed charge of both Indian and white work, while the Bishop himself came from Carcross to reorganize the schooling along its original lines and to initiate two new teachers into their duties.

This time he was more fortunate in his selection of recruits. Two young women from the Maritimes, Mary Mellish and Mary Ellis, volunteered for service in the Yukon at a salary that was more within the Bishop's limited means: \$250 a year each, in addition to their transportation and living expenses. Both were qualified teachers and one, Mary Ellis, had already had some experience in teaching Indian children at an Indian school in southern British Columbia.<sup>17</sup> For most of that fall and winter the Bishop remained at Buxton Mission until,

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., Letter from Lamont Gordon dated 14 February 1901, The Greater Britain Messenger, April 1901, p. 65.

<sup>16</sup>BSA, Naylor Papers, H. A. Naylor to his father, 13 August 1901. See also PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-121, "Precis of Correspondence from N.W. America," September 1902.

<sup>17</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3962, John T. Ross to Department of Indian Affairs, 10 November 1902(?). In this report Ross notes that Mary Ellis had come to the Yukon from the Industrial School at Yale, B.C.

satisfied that matters were in good hands, he felt free to return to Carcross.

#### New Missions: Carcross and Whitehorse (1900)

This little community, which he had first visited briefly during the summer of 1899, suited his needs well. Quieter than the mining camp of Fortymile in its heyday, it was now the main entry point into the Territory, with good communications and sufficient activity to be interesting. "We have railway trains passing here many times a day," he wrote during his first weeks there, "and a Steam Boat most days and a Sawmill employing 60 hands. We have a small store and Post Office and a drawbridge for the Railway across the narrows between the two lakes Bennett and Tagish which is constantly on the swing. . . ."<sup>18</sup> Its greatest recommendation in his eyes, however, was the opportunity it afforded him to extend the CMS influence to the headwaters of the Yukon River and to work personally among another band of Indian people. Abandoning his earlier plans for a mission at Hootalinqua, he made Carcross his "See" and at the same time decided to build a church at Whitehorse, then emerging as the transit point between the newly opened White Pass Railway from the coast and the riverboat service to Dawson. In August, 1900, the Bowens returned from England to complete the construction of a log church intended primarily to serve the white residents there, although the Bishop hoped that Bowen would also visit the Indians whenever they were in that locality.<sup>19</sup>

From their beginning the missions at both Whitehorse and Carcross offered day classes for any native people who wished to attend. At Whitehorse the classes begun by the Bowens and continued by their successors never developed a consistent pattern since few Indians

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<sup>18</sup>PAC, CMS Papers, reel A-121, Bompas to CMS, 27 August 1900. Although he deplored many modern trends, the Bishop welcomed technological advances that improved travel and communications between scattered northern communities and the outside world. His work in the Mackenzie area had been greatly eased by the advent of the Hudson Bay Company's steamer Beaver in 1887 (Ibid., reel A-115, Bompas to CMS, 3 March 1888). Bompas was also instrumental in having the name "Caribou Crossing" changed to "Carcross" to eliminate postal confusion.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

stayed in the vicinity for any length of time. Carcross, on the other hand, soon became the centre of a small but ongoing day school<sup>20</sup> taught at first by the Bishop in his home, a former "road house." By the summer of 1901 he had engaged a certificated teacher, Miss Nellie Brown, who at times also taught a few white children from the community and attempted to reach the adult native people as well. When she left in March, 1903, the task again reverted entirely to the Bishop. Unable to obtain a replacement for her, he decided that June to close the boarding school at Fortymile and to bring Mary Ellis and the six or eight children then in her care to Carcross where he housed them in a small log cabin near the railway station. The Hawksleys and Mary Mellish continued the day school at Buxton Mission until in 1905 that school too was closed because all the native people had moved across the border to Eagle, Alaska. The mission at Fortymile, no longer an active centre, was replaced by that at Carcross which, as the Indian school grew, became a focal point for native education in the Territory.

#### Financial Problems: Federal Funding for Indian Schools

Throughout this decade the Bishop had faced ever-increasing financial problems. The CMS, originally his main source of support, was itself short of funds and had begun to seek relief from its responsibilities in Canada; the Canadian Anglican Church, centered in the eastern provinces, was not yet in a position to assume full charge of the CMS missions across the western provinces and in the North. The flow of private donations, always an important source of support for missionary activities, could be maintained only by means of energetic personal campaigns. During her occasional visits to England or eastern Canada Mrs. Bompas had conducted appeals, as had the Canhams and other workers returning home from time to time on fur-

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<sup>20</sup>In a letter to the CMS dated 21 March 1900, Bompas indicates that some schooling may have been offered at Carcross before his arrival, referring to "a voluntary and unpaid Lay Reader Mr. Johnson a Trader at Caribou Crossing who not only holds successful services for the whites but also Sunday School for the Indians with School Lessons from the Black Board," and adding, "I hope to be permitted to follow up this effort in the course of the coming season." (Ibid., reel A-120) That he did so is indicated in his letter to Naylor dated 4 September 1900. (YA, ACDYR, Series I-1.a, Box 5, folder 15)



lough, but such visits were too infrequent to ensure an adequate number of committed supporters. Church authorities in both England and Canada had repeatedly urged the Bishop to leave his diocese for a time both for his mental and physical health's sake and for the publicity value of such a visit, for he had by now become almost a legendary figure. This, however, he steadfastly refused to do, clinging to his isolation and maintaining that his duty lay in daily mission work rather than personal fund-raising. Now, faced with ever-increasing costs brought about by the gold rush, he began to seek other sources of income. The missions for white miners and their families could be supported by contributions from their congregations and by grants from other church societies; for the Indians, always his major concern, the only recourse was to appeal for federal aid.

The Indian people of Canada had become wards of the federal government under the terms of the British North America Act of 1867; in 1885 the Indian Affairs Branch, then within the Department of the Interior, had acquired a school division which provided partial aid for denominational schools across the country. Some reports of this development had reached the Bishop and in the mid-1890s, encouraged by news that assistance was being extended to schools for non-treaty Indians in the dioceses of Athabasca and Mackenzie River, he began to request support for his schools. In June of 1896 he wrote to the Acting Minister of the Interior urging the claim of the Indians of the Upper Yukon upon the federal authorities for "schooling and medical attention as some compensation for [their] being forced to surrender all the wealth of their country to the whites," pointing out (according to the rather tattered letter that survives) that "the expense would be trifling, and it would repay the Government . . . a hundred fold" because the Indian "would be [grown] into a useful and law [abiding] citizen."<sup>21</sup> In August, he followed this letter with a more specific request to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at Ottawa, enclosing the register of school attendance at the day school at Buxton and at the same time referring to the schools that the CMS had been operating at Rampart House and Fort Selkirk, as well as the need for teachers'

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<sup>21</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3962, Extract from Letter, Bonpas to the Department of Indian Affairs, 18 June 1896.

salaries and school supplies. These petitions, further strengthened by a visit from Mr. Canham to the Minister of the Interior in October, were received graciously and on December 5, 1896, the Bishop was told that, while the Department regretted exceedingly having no funds at its disposal from which a grant could be made at that time, an item would be placed in the next year's estimates to provide him with "the usual grant made to similar schools outside Treaty Limits, viz. \$200 per annum."<sup>22</sup>

An appropriation in the federal estimates did not guarantee that a cheque would soon be forthcoming, as the Bishop was to learn to his cost over the next few years, or he might not have embarked upon his venture with Mr. Gordon at Fortymile. Much of the delay in providing support for his schools seems to have stemmed from federal ignorance of conditions in the Territory along with the involvement of a third party in the form of the emerging Territorial government, whose officials were themselves in many cases newcomers to the area. By 1902 the original annual grant of \$200 for one day school (at Buxton) had been increased to \$600 for three day schools and consideration was being given to increasing the appropriation to \$5000 provided some basis of payment could be found that was agreeable to both federal and territorial authorities. This stipulation created a further delay in payment, since each person consulted on the matter had a different opinion concerning the extent to which he felt the Yukon Indians could or should be educated. Matters dragged on, complicated by the belated federal discovery that there was also a boarding school requiring assistance whose estimated costs, apparently double those for similar schools in other parts of the North West Territories, could have absorbed the entire allocation. Finally, in an attempt to settle the issue, the Honourable James Smart, Deputy Minister of the Interior, requested John T. Ross, the Territorial Superintendent of Schools, to visit the existing Indian classrooms and report to him upon conditions there. His report, submitted

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Superintendent of Indian Affairs to Bompas, 5 December 1896.

in November, 1902, provides the first professional review of native schooling in the Yukon.<sup>23</sup>

#### Yukon Indian Schools: First Official Reports (1902)

Superintendent Ross' inspection indicated that four schools were in operation at that time, at Moosehide, Caribou Crossing (Carcross), Fort Selkirk and Fortymile, with a total enrolment of ninety-four pupils, and that "regular" (i.e., certificated) teachers were employed at Caribou and Fortymile, the other two schools being taught by the missionary in charge. His report implied that very conscientious work was being done at Fortymile, where at that time the newly appointed women teachers were also being assisted by Bishop Bompas, but that the children's progress in the other schools was far from satisfactory owing to the irregular attendance of the pupils, the short and broken school sessions and the pressure of other work upon the missionaries or teachers. This report, along with other information reaching Ottawa from various sources, was seen by officials of the Department of Indian Affairs as reinforcing their already pessimistic views regarding the future of Indian schools in the Yukon Territory.<sup>24</sup>

#### A Funding Agreement Reached (1903)

The Bishop, persisting in his appeals, continued to press his case and turned to local political figures for assistance. A letter to the Honourable J. H. Ross, a former Commissioner of the Territory who had recently become the first elected Member of Parliament for the Yukon, outlines his views:

Caribou Crossing, Yukon Territory, Canada  
7th March, 1903

Honourable Sir/

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<sup>23</sup>Correspondence concerning these negotiations as well as Inspector Ross' reports on the church schools for 1902, 1903, 1904 and 1906 are to be found in the Indian Affairs records, Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., Martin Benson to Deputy Superintendent-General, 23 January 1903.

You were kind enough to recommend while Commissioner of this Territory that assistance be given to our Indian schools and that Medicine chests be supplied to our Missions. I believe your action in this matter is endorsed by the present acting Commissioner but we have as yet received nothing though our expences [sic] for our Schools have been very heavy and indeed have been increased in reliance on Government aid.

I suppose our Indian schools cost us about \$5,000 last year and about half that sum annually for several years before and we had promise of Government aid five years ago but without any fulfillment of it. . . .

You are aware, Sir, that I think our Indians are also entitled to claim for the Government Treaty rights and privileges and some compensation for the injury done to them for their lands with the minerals being possessed by the whites and the wild animals greatly thinned by the white hunters till the Indians are reduced to straits to make a living either by hunting or trapping and they are likely before long to become utterly destitute.

Our poor Indians in this part have had few advocates and the number of Americans residing here are likely to influence others to treat the natives as in their own country with unmerited contempt contrary to our traditions on the British side of the border.

Believe me to remain  
Honourable Sir  
W. C. Bompas, D.D.  
Bishop of Selkirk<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

A few days later Major Z. T. Wood of the NWMP, then Acting Commissioner of the Yukon, wrote to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs at Ottawa to point out at Bompas' insistence "the pitiable state of the Indians at Whitehorse and vicinity," many of whom were in need of care. While stressing the welfare role of the missions, Major Wood also took the opportunity to point out that the Indian schools had not as yet been assisted in any way by the Government.<sup>26</sup> Despite the negative attitude of his successor, Commissioner F. T. Congdon, who expressed the view that any money spent on Indian education would be money thrown away,<sup>27</sup> these appeals must have carried some weight. In June, 1903, the Territorial comptroller received a cheque for two thousand dollars to be allocated in whole or in part to the Bishop for his schools, subject of course to the approval of the Commissioner. In early July, Congdon forwarded the entire amount to Bishop Bompas at Carcross, subsequently commenting to Ottawa that from all enquiries he now thought that sum "a moderate bonus for the . . . services rendered by the[se] schools."<sup>28</sup> Although disappointed at not receiving the full amount of the appropriation, the Bishop was nevertheless happy to accept two thousand dollars, seven years after his first application for federal assistance.

While the full appropriation was theoretically still available, Ottawa remained cautious with regard to any increase in expenditures for Indian schooling in the Territory. Policy concerning grants to the Yukon is clearly set out in a memorandum to Commissioner Congdon:

The opinions of all officers [i.e. of the federal department concerned] who have been in a position to judge of this question seem to agree that it is not advisable to spend larger sums on the education of the Indians in the Yukon, at least at present, and the Department is desirous of not in-

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., Major Z. T. Wood to Indian Affairs, 11 March 1903.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., F. T. Congdon to F. Pedley, 28 April 1903.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Congdon to Pedley, 22 July 1903.

creasing the annual apportionment beyond the amount now voted, viz. \$5,000. Whatever grant is made to Bishop Bompas for schools under his control ought to be for work actually done. I observe that you agree with the Department's position that it would be inadvisable to settle upon any scale of per capita grants or salaries.<sup>29</sup>

The apportionment remained at \$5,000 for some years but the grants provided from this sum were increased upon proof of additional outlay made by the Church and receipt of favourable inspector's reports on the schools. In 1904 the Bishop applied for and received \$2,500 for the 1903-04 fiscal year, half his total school costs for the period; in 1905 the amount was raised to \$3,000. From the balance of the allotted sum Ottawa from time to time met other related expenses, such as the costs of school inspections and the expenses of a deaf and dumb Indian orphan whom the Bishop had placed in a special school in Winnipeg in 1904.<sup>30</sup>

#### Yukon Indian Schools: Staff, Curriculum, Etc. (1903-06)

From the inspector's reports of the period a fairly clear picture emerges of the four Indian schools then receiving federal support. Of the six teachers involved, three held teaching certificates from eastern Canada, while three were clergy; all are described as having a liking for their work and a real interest in it.<sup>31</sup> Miss Mary Mellish, who taught at Fortymile until 1905 when she moved to Moosehide for some months, receives high praise for her energy, tact and good teaching methods. Miss Ellis, also an experienced and competent teacher, was responsible for training the girls at the boarding school to cook, sew and keep house. Miss Brown at Carcross seems also to have brought a professional approach to her task there. The

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., Pedley to Congdon, Dawson, 28 April 1903.

<sup>30</sup>Inspection costs in 1904 amounted to \$319.10 while the child's expenses amounted to three hundred dollars. Ibid., "Memoranda," 24 June 1904 and 19 April 1904.

<sup>31</sup>All details concerning these schools are based upon the reports submitted by the Yukon Superintendent of Schools J. T. Ross to the Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, for the years 1903, 1904 and 1906. Ibid.

reports commend Mr. Canham at Fort Selkirk for his kindness, patience and understanding under great difficulties while, by way of contrast, Mr. Totty is mentioned as being very conscientious but hampered both by deafness and lack of natural talent for teaching.

In matters of curriculum, the main emphasis in these schools appears to have shifted away from training for literacy in the native tongue to use of the English language arts: reading, writing and spelling, with use of the Indian language regarded, at least by the Territorial school superintendent, as a hindrance to the learning of English. According to his reports, a few pupils had reached the fifth reader (i.e. grade eight) and some the third, while the majority were either total beginners or at the primary level, their progress being judged according to their pronunciation, expression and understanding of material read. All schools received generally favourable comments upon the pupils' handwriting which was apparently a strong point, even in the case of the primary children copy-writing on slates. In arithmetic it seems that progress was generally slow, the majority of the children finding the concepts difficult and not obviously applicable to their immediate needs. At Carcross and Fortymile geography classes and stories of other lands appear to have caught their interest; history was, however, less appealing. As noted above, the girls at the Fortymile (later, Carcross) boarding school showed considerable aptitude for cooking and other household skills; perhaps it was fortunate that they were the majority, as the teachers admitted having difficulty in finding enough suitable indoor chores for the one Indian boy then in residence.

The school day in the mission schools consisted of one two-hour session a day, from ten o'clock until noon; at Fortymile and Carcross a second two-hour afternoon session was usual, so that pupils at those schools made generally better progress. If the Bishop was in charge, two daily sessions seem to have been the rule. The classes were held either in the church, which was fitted with counters and benches along the walls for the pupils' use, or--especially in winter--in the missionary's home. Inspector Ross indicates that the school-rooms were light, clean and well ventilated; he was more critical of their extreme dearth of equipment in comparison with the white schools of the time.

The students showed a wide range in age. In 1906 at Moosehide, the "advanced" pupils (i.e., grade three level), are reported as being between the ages of thirteen and twenty. In general, however, most were younger children; in 1904 one little four-year-old boy was said to be making excellent progress at Fortymile. Some of the children were orphans living with the missionary, notably at Fortymile and Carcross. At these two points a few white children also attended from time to time. Little is said about classes for adults, except that Miss Brown at Carcross is reported to have made some efforts to teach some of the native women in the village.

#### Unresolved Problems (1906)

The report of 1906 deals with three schools only, since the day school at Fortymile was by that time closed. While the inspector had much praise for the boarding and day pupils at Carcross, he noted that the pupils at both Selkirk and Moosehide were making very little progress. At Selkirk especially, student attendance had become so irregular that the best efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Canham brought no visible results; at Moosehide the attendance was somewhat better but progress was still extremely slow and Mr. Ross was very critical of the poor sanitary conditions in both the school and community. His report, forwarded directly to Ottawa, drew an immediate request from the Department of Indian Affairs that Bishop Bompas take steps to improve the unsatisfactory conditions at these two schools. On May 25, 1906, he came once more to the defence of his people:

I hardly see how I can proceed to amend the situation until I am made acquainted rather more definitely as to what the ground of complaint is. Is it the buildings that are at fault or the teachers or the course of instruction or the discipline or the attendance or what else?

I suggest that your complaint may chiefly refer to irregularity of school attendance, and this last I know not how to amend.



You may be aware that when the Indians were alone in this country (previous to the last 8 years) they were able to make a good living by hunting and trapping without much difficulty. They then resided around the trading posts and were able to send their children to school regularly.

Now all this is changed. From the keen competition both in hunting and fishing which the Indians suffer from the Whites they have to scatter to the more distant woods to make their living and remain but for short times round the Missions. This contracts the schooling. . . .

At Fortymile we had a good school. Now I believe there is not a child in the camp. The Indians are mostly on the American side. At Moosehide we had an average attendance of 20 to 25. Now I think it may be only 10 to 12 though with 30 children on the Books. They are away from the Mission half the time.

At Selkirk was a large band of Indians and a good school. Now they are all dispersed. . . . They are but a short time at Selkirk and the average attendance is only I think from 3 to 6 though with 26 children on the books.<sup>32</sup>

After suggesting that government-supported boarding homes might be the only way to ensure regular school attendance for children of nomadic parents, the Bishop promised to report again once he had visited the two stations in question. His plans to travel downriver were, however, cut short by his sudden death ten days later at his home in Carcross at the age of seventy-two, leaving his appointed successor Isaac O. Stringer to carry on the work.

#### Bompas' Death: Assessment of His Work

Throughout his forty years in the North, William Carpenter Bompas had remained unswervingly faithful to the CMS commitment to

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., Bompas to J. D. McLean, 25 May 1906.

the evangelization and education of the indigenous people of North West America. His philosophy and personal efforts brought into being a chain of mission schools along the upper Yukon and laid the foundation for later Indian schooling in that region. However, although he was widely revered for his dedication and self-sacrifice, his long isolation had unfitted him for daily life in a white community and he eventually came to be seen by some of his younger clergy<sup>33</sup> as irritable, impulsive and frugal to the point of stinginess. Many of the Territory's white residents may have viewed him as stern and unbending, while to others he undoubtedly seemed naive and overly trusting. Those who worked longest with him over the years speak of him as unfailingly kind, entirely unselfish<sup>34</sup> and totally committed to his calling. Certainly he loved the Indian people and was deeply concerned for their spiritual, moral and physical welfare. He had learned to speak their language and share their life, and had proved himself a constant champion of their rights. Although suspicious of the demoralizing influences of white society, he was nevertheless aware that the native people could not continue for long to live in isolation from it and in his view education was the chief tool to help them find their place in a changing world.

#### The Legacy of the Tukudh Mission

Even before Bompas' death the Tukudh Mission, with its emphasis on education as the handmaid of religion, had ceased to exist as such. Nevertheless, the tradition of native leadership that had been one of its main features remained strong; in the following decades literacy classes taught by native clergy and catechists using the materials and methods developed by Archdeacon McDonald persisted all across the North from the Mackenzie Delta to Fort Yukon and other points in central Alaska. As a result, the written form of Peel River Loucheux became familiar to all the bands in that region and consistent use of

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<sup>33</sup>GSA, Naylor Papers, Naylor to his father and mother, 15 April to 6 June, 1896.

<sup>34</sup>In his report of 1903, Inspector Ross notes that the work of the schools at Fortymile and Carcross was carried on largely by the generosity of the Bishop, who "devotes his whole salary to this cause." Ibid., J. T. Ross to F. T. Congdon, 5 June 1903.

this language in their worship services has helped to keep it alive to the present day.<sup>35</sup> Elsewhere in the Territory Indian schools were by 1906 starting to reflect the goals and standards demanded by the Department of Indian Affairs--an inevitable consequence once federal funding had become involved. A long period of compromise and experiment was to follow as government and church sought to meet what each then saw as the needs of native children facing the inroads of white society.

Bompas' death was the first among the pioneer Tukudh missionaries. Robert McDonald, whose ill-health had first brought Bompas to the North, outlived his colleague for some years, dying in retirement in Winnipeg in 1913. Mrs. Bompas, who herself had made no small contribution to the Mission, moved to Montreal where she died in 1917. The other CMS missionaries, Hawksley, Canham and Totty, remained in the Yukon to carry on the work Bompas had entrusted to them. In the ensuing years they and their Canadian colleagues struggled to maintain and expand the educational work that he had begun among the Indian people of the Territory. As he had foretold, it was to be a long, slow process.

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<sup>35</sup>The Anglican church has continued to maintain an active presence in this region. In 1979 the Anglican Episcopal Kutchin Coalition ("Thielchilnut") was formed to strengthen the life of the Kutchin or Loucheux people. At a conference in Old Crow in January, 1982, a reprinted edition of McDonald's translations of the Bible and New Testament was made available to all Tukudh communities in the Yukon and Alaska. Northern Lights (new ed.), Easter, 1982, pp. 6-7; Whitehorse Star, 10 February 1982.



14. *Mary Ellis and children at Carcross Indian School, c. 1905.*



15. *Bishop William Carpenter Bompas*



16. *Archdeacon Robert McDonald and Bishop I.O. Stringer, Winnipeg, Manitoba, c. 1912.*

## CHAPTER V

### TERRITORIAL SCHOOLS: THE FIRST DECADE (1896-1906)

The frantic stampede to the Klondike area reached its peak within three years, creating in the process a community that rivalled larger southern centres in the diversity and sophistication of many of its facilities. During this time Dawson grew from a disorganized clutter of hastily erected tents, log cabins and shacks into a city possessing, as Berton tells us, such amenities as "a telephone service, running water, steam heat and electricity," along with a wide range of commercial and professional enterprises that included "dozens of hotels . . . motion picture theatres . . . restaurants . . . three hospitals, seventy physicians and uncounted platoons of lawyers."<sup>1</sup> By 1898 it was the largest Canadian city west of Winnipeg, although its population ebbed and flowed as boatloads of miners arrived and dispersed to the surrounding creeks or, discouraged, set out on the long journey home. One of the more basic services that failed to develop was a public school; not until 1899 when the rush had passed did the more permanent families with school age children begin concerted efforts to obtain government-sponsored schooling. Once the initial steps had been taken, however, a Territorial school system evolved rapidly until by 1905 most white children in the Yukon enjoyed educational opportunities that compared favourably with those then available in other parts of western Canada.

#### Early Days: Few Children, No Schools

Prior to 1896 there were practically no white children of any age on the Upper Yukon. The first of whom mention is made are the three infant daughters of Alexander Hunter Murray, who brought his young wife to Fort Yukon in 1848;<sup>2</sup> thereafter no white women appear

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<sup>1</sup>For this and following details, see Pierre Berton, Klondike: The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1958), pp. 300 and 369.

<sup>2</sup>Wright, Prelude to Bonanza, p. 57.

to have come into the country until Mrs. Bompas and Mrs. Canham arrived at Fortymile and Fort Selkirk in 1892 and both these ladies were childless. Inspector Constantine of the North West Mounted Police in his first report on Fortymile in 1894 mentions the presence of "perhaps three or four whites" at Bompas' mission school there. "Many of the respectable miners," he continues, "would bring in their families if schools were established, or if they would be within a reasonable time. At present there are about eight white children of school age."<sup>3</sup> Although, as he reports, there was a desire for a school and the wife of the local manager of the North American Trading and Transportation Company was willing to board a female teacher free for a time, the population of that settlement was not sufficiently permanent to permit such a development.

#### A Church School: R. J. Bowen (1897)

By April, 1897, before news of the Klondike gold strike had reached the outside world, Dawson City had acquired some fifteen hundred inhabitants, most of them miners from Alaska, some accompanied by their families. That summer the first wave of outsiders began to arrive, many of them entrepreneurs who would make a fortune without ever going near the goldfields. Within a few weeks the town's population doubled as newcomers arrived in boats of every size and shape and scrambled to erect their tents and cabins along the muddy shore. In an attempt to meet at least some of the needs of this growing settlement, Bishop Bompas cancelled his plans to send the Reverend R. J. Bowen from Circle City to Rampart House, instructing him instead, as Bowen recalls, "to go to Dawson, build a church, open school and carry on."<sup>4</sup> In view of the urgency of the situation, the Bishop found him an assistant, a former schoolmaster from Winnipeg who had recently come to help the staff at Buxton Mission. As it happened, this Mr. McLeod did not stay in Dawson long enough to put his teaching skills to use; once the church was built he resigned to work in the gold

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<sup>3</sup>Charles Constantine, "Report on the Yukon District, October 10, 1894," Report of the Commissioner of the North West Mounted Police, 1894 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1895), p. 77.

<sup>4</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series IV.3, Box 52, folder 11, R. J. Bowen to the Most Reverend W. R. Adams, 25 January 1950.

fields,<sup>5</sup> leaving Bowen to provide as best he could for a day school. By mid-October he had begun holding classes every morning in his church for some fifteen children; according to a report dated December 13, 1897, this was the only school in Dawson at the time. "If a school should be established by the authorities," the writer notes, "Mr. Bowen would close his. He is carrying on the work solely as a work of charity."<sup>6</sup> This first school appears to have been discontinued shortly thereafter, probably as a result of Bowen's increasing parish workload and the epidemics that swept through the town in the trying months that followed.

The spring and summer of 1898 was an especially difficult period for the residents of Dawson. Conditions there verged on the chaotic as the authorities struggled to bring some order to the fast-growing townsite, while lack of sanitation and inadequate diet caused hundreds to fall victim to dysentery, typhoid and scurvy. Bishop Bompas, concerned for the children of the settlement, sought to direct the new Commissioner's attention to the need for government schools for both whites and Indians:

There are now two ladies here who are trying to start private schools with some difficulty but who hope that you may be able to take the matter up on the part of the Government. I think one lady would be willing to keep school for the Indians and one for the Whites if the Government could bear the expence [sic]. . . .<sup>7</sup>

His proposal was premature since the education of a comparative handful of children seemed a minor consideration in relation to the urgent need for roads, drainage and fire protection. Public schools would have to wait their turn.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., folder 10, R. J. Bowen, "The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Yukon Diocese," n.d.

<sup>6</sup>"Extracts from the Reports of Thos. Fawcett, D.T.S., Gold Commissioner for the Yukon District," Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year 1897 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1898), p. 88.

<sup>7</sup>YA, YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 67, file 1, Bompas to Commissioner Wm. Ogilvie, 5 September 1898.



### Private Ventures

To fill the gap, a number of private ventures were begun. One such attempt was that made by Miss Lulu Alice Craig, presumably one of the ladies mentioned by Bompas, who had obtained a year's leave from her school in Missouri in order to accompany her brother and his family on a junket to the Klondike. In late August, 1898, she advertised her intention to open a private school in the Church of England building where she proposed to offer "all elementary and Grammar school classes."<sup>8</sup> For some weeks that fall such a school was in fact held in the church, although whether or not she was the teacher is not certain; in her memoirs she merely states that "it was greatly to be deplored that there was no school in Dawson; at least no public school and as far as I knew no successful private one. . . . The matter was being agitated when I came away [June, 1899]."<sup>9</sup> Any such attempts to open private schools seem to have been short-lived; no school books were available except those the children might have brought with them, nor--given Dawson's inflated prices--could their parents afford to provide and equip suitable premises and pay the teacher an adequate salary.

### A Public School System Delayed (1898-99)

Agitation for a public school system had in reality begun sooner than Miss Craig implies, becoming more heated and intense as the months passed. As early as September, 1898, the editor of the Klondike Nugget had raised the issue, voicing his concern and pointing out to his readers that Dawson City presented "the peculiar anomaly of a community of nearly twenty thousand intelligent English-speaking people . . . having no public educational institution."<sup>10</sup> That December a petition requesting a school came before the Territorial Council, who responded by referring it to a committee for further investiga-

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<sup>8</sup>Klondike Nugget, 27 August and 23 November 1898.

<sup>9</sup>Lulu Alice Craig, Glimpses of Sunshine and Shade in the Far North: My Travels in the Land of the Midnight Sun (Cincinnati: Editor Publishing Co., 1900), p. 93.

<sup>10</sup>Klondike Nugget, 28 September 1898.

tion and recommendation.<sup>11</sup> Before long, other crises--including a million-dollar fire that wiped out whole blocks of the town--intervened to preoccupy the Council, delaying formation of this committee until the following May (1899) when a number of local clergymen were appointed to look into the school question. This committee made three recommendations: that schools should be established in Dawson as soon as possible; that they should be public in nature, conducted on strictly non-sectarian lines; and that the various religious denominations should have "equitable representation" on any school board ultimately appointed "so as to have a voice in the arranging of the curriculum, etc."<sup>12</sup> These resolutions did not, however, indicate committee unanimity. The day following their submission Father P. E. Gendreau, OMI, who as chairman had been unable to vote, wrote to the Commissioner setting forth his own views and requesting the establishment of separate schools, supported by taxes from Catholic ratepayers and by a government grant in proportion to the number of pupils attending such a school.<sup>13</sup> As a result of this protest and other difficulties surrounding the whole question, Council took no immediate action upon the committee's report but voted instead to leave the matter of public schools in abeyance for a time.<sup>14</sup>

#### Schools Must Wait: The Reasons

The Council's reluctance to proceed is understandable in light of the inexperience of its members and the complexity of the problems confronting them. Only a few years previously in 1895, the Yukon,

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 10 December 1898. The petition may be found in YA, Government Records, Acc. #88/41 (retro.).

<sup>12</sup>YA, YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 9, file 505, Andrew S. Grant to the Commissioner of Yukon Territory, 17 May 1899.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Government Records, Acc. #88/41 (retro.), Father Gendreau to Commissioner Ogilvie, 18 May 1899; also Journals and Sessional Papers, Yukon Council, 1912, Sessional Paper No. 10, pp. 47-48. Father Gendreau, a remarkable man, had already distinguished himself as a "theologian, diplomat, financier, and builder." In 1892 the federal government appointed him as special agent to investigate the conditions of the Indian tribes in the Northwest Territories. He is reported later to have built a branch railroad for the new colony of Temiscanigue, Quebec. PAC, RG 85, Vol. 758, file 4769, Father Rivet, "The (Roman) Catholic Church in the Yukon," 2 pp., c. 1925.

<sup>14</sup>Klondike Nugget, 31 May 1899.

still largely unexplored and unknown, had been created a provisional district of what was then the North West Territories, an immense region that included all northern Canada along with the present provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan and part of Manitoba, with Regina as its seat of government. At first the federal authorities seem to have been only dimly aware of the newly created Territory, regarding it mainly as a potential source of mining revenue; as a consequence the national presence in the Yukon continued for a time to be limited chiefly to members of the North West Mounted Police stationed there, from whom officials were appointed to collect royalties on gold and regulate the recording of mining claims. It was not until the late summer of 1897 that a federal officer known as the Commissioner of the Yukon was appointed to coordinate and supervise economic activities in the Territory; on June 13, 1898, the Yukon Act was passed, providing for a form of Territorial government by the Commissioner and a council of six appointed members, with executive and legislative powers.<sup>15</sup> These six councillors were at first selected by the authorities in Ottawa from the ranks of federal officials stationed in the Yukon, and vacancies were filled from this same source until 1900, when the residents were given the right to elect two members to Council from among themselves. The number was increased to five in 1902, with an equal number of appointed members; a fully elected ten-member council did not come into being until 1908.

In 1898-99, when organized demands for a public school system were first being voiced, this newly formed government was facing a unique and difficult situation. In addition to their individual duties as federal civil servants, Commissioner Ogilvie and his councillors found themselves responsible for many matters that elsewhere in Canada would have fallen under provincial or municipal jurisdiction and

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<sup>15</sup>L. H. Thomas, The Struggle for Responsible Government in the Northwest Territories, 1870-1897, 2nd. ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), pp. 266-69. Morrison, (Politics of the Yukon, p. 12), notes that the first Commissioner, Major J. M. Walsh, did not arrive in Dawson until May, 1898, "fully nine months after his appointment and at a time when he had already decided to submit his resignation." He was replaced in August by William Ogilvie, who had first come into the country in 1887 to survey the area drained by the Yukon River. He further comments (p. 21) that Ogilvie's job was a demanding one "because he was constantly sought out by people who thought he, as Commissioner, could work miracles."

for which they had no previous preparation or experience. As Ogilvie said, he was expected to be not only Commissioner, but also "Dawson's mayor, city engineer and fire chief."<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the Councillors themselves were far from unified: each member held strongly partisan religious and political views, and it appears that Prime Minister Laurier and his Minister of the Interior were kept busy trying to ease the tensions between their Yukon appointees.<sup>17</sup> To their inexperience and lack of unity was added the absence of specific legislation governing Yukon schools, although permission was forthcoming to follow the procedures set forth in the Northwest Territories' Ordinance. Above all, there was no money for schools: local revenues were minimal and the federal government had not as yet made any provision for funding education in this remote area and in fact appeared reluctant to do so--possibly because the Minister, Clifford Sifton, who had just been involved in working out a compromise in the Manitoba separate school dispute,<sup>18</sup> needed time to consider the implications of the Yukon situation. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the Councillors voted to shelve the local committee's report. Meanwhile they assured Dawson residents that, as a preliminary step, they would make a prompt beginning upon a Yukon school ordinance based upon that of the Northwest Territories. As further evidence of good intentions, they also announced that a supply of school books had been ordered, selected from those in use in Ontario, and that, once these had arrived, some temporary educational arrangements for the children of Dawson would be considered.<sup>19</sup>

#### Public Pressure

Since the great majority of Dawson residents were Americans, accustomed to considerable autonomy in local affairs, they rapidly lost patience with what they viewed as unnecessary bureaucratic

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<sup>16</sup>Quoted by Morrison, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>18</sup>Phillips, Development of Education, pp. 226-27.

<sup>19</sup>Klondike Nugget, 15 July 1899.

delays in meeting a community need. In the absence of a municipal council, the town's newly formed Board of Trade assumed in the fall of 1899 the role of a pressure group, setting up a Schools and Architecture Committee to conduct its own inquiries, while the Dawson newspapers kept the matter alive, using education as another issue with which to belabour the Territorial Council and the federal authorities in the colourful journalistic prose of the day. The Dawson Daily News, for example, undertook to prepare its readers for the appearance of a school ordinance which would, so the writer said, introduce denominational schools and make both the English and French languages obligatory in the Catholic schools, features which he felt would certainly seem "peculiar" to Dawson's American residents.<sup>20</sup> A few weeks later a scathing editorial in the same newspaper laid the blame for the lack of public schools directly at Ottawa's door, accusing the federal government of treating the need for schools in the Yukon as "a secondary matter to that of enforcing usurious royalty that is killing the goose that lays the golden egg" and delaying ratification of the new legislation which, "as there is no profit in it . . . has no doubt long ago been pigeon holed and will be allowed to rot there."<sup>21</sup> At this point the Board of Trade committee met with Commissioner Ogilvie only to learn that he had no power to raise funds for education (or anything else) and that the hoped-for school books would not be available until the following summer since they had not arrived at Whitehorse in time for the last freight shipment upriver before freeze-up. With this disappointing news it seemed that the matter had again reached a standstill.

#### A Catholic School: St. Mary's (1899)

Before long, the Roman Catholic members of the community, encouraged by the provision for confessional schools in the Northwest Territories' ordinance and unwilling to risk the possible absorption of their children into an eventual public school system, presented the government with a fait accompli by supporting Father Gendreau's plans

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<sup>20</sup>Dawson Daily News, 5 October 1899.

<sup>21</sup>Dawson Daily News, 29 October 1899.

to open his own Catholic school. On Saturday, November 4, 1899, the Klondike Nugget, under the caption "Dawson's First School," announced that free classes would begin the following Monday in a building at the north end of town. Ten boys and eight girls were reported to be already enrolled, not all of them Catholics since, according to the article, the school was to be open to all children. Sister Mary Joseph Calasanz of the Sisters of Saint Ann<sup>22</sup> was teacher and donations of any suitable school books were solicited. As the weeks passed, growing numbers of pupils crowded the little log building known as St. Mary's School.

#### Federal Funding for Yukon Schools (1900)

At once other parents and community groups, spurred on by the opening of St. Mary's, began to clamour for at least some temporary provision for the education of their children. The need was obvious, they felt, since a police census had found 163 school age children in Dawson, of whom only thirty were then enrolled in the Catholic school while a small additional number were being taught privately. The Board of Trade promptly circulated a petition in the town and, only ten days after the opening of St. Mary's, submitted to Council a formal request for the immediate opening of a public school, supported by several pages of signatures.<sup>23</sup> As no money was available, the councillors could only refer the matter to a committee for further study, thereby creating another wave of public discontent and provoking more demands for immediate and positive action. The year ended,

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<sup>22</sup>The Sisters of Saint Ann, a Quebec order founded in 1850, pioneered the establishment of Catholic education in the Pacific Northwest. In the summer of 1898 four Sisters arrived in Dawson from Alaska in response to an appeal for nurses from Father W. H. Judge, the pioneer Jesuit missionary who in 1897 had built the first Catholic church and hospital there. Following his death in January, 1899, his parish responsibilities were assigned to Father Gendreau, while the Sisters of Saint Ann assumed charge of Saint Mary's Hospital and provided teaching personnel for the school. Sister Mary Margaret Down, A Century of Service (Victoria, B.C.: Sisters of Saint Ann, 1966), pp. 121-122. See also a typescript by Athol Retalack entitled "Dawson School Celebrates Diamond Jubilee," and other related materials in YA, Sisters of Saint Ann Records, Acc. #81/45-1.

<sup>23</sup>YA, YRG 1, Series 1, vol. 9, file 505, Report of the Committee on Education and Architecture to the Trustees of the Dawson Board of Trade, 15 November 1899; also the petition and accompanying letter sent to Territorial Council, 16 November 1899.

however, on an unexpectedly bright note with the announcement that the federal estimates for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1900, now included ten thousand dollars to provide public schools in the Territory. With the need officially recognized, it seemed safe to assume that financial support for Yukon education would be ongoing. The news inspired the editor of the Nugget to praise this "most commendable action" which, as he said, was proof of "an inclination long dormant . . . but at length awakening, to consider seriously the needs of our growing community."<sup>24</sup>

The first application for a grant from this sum came from Father Gendreau in early January, 1900:

Last Fall I bought a lot on the corner of First Avenue and Ninth Street and built a school house upon it. We have registered the names of forty-five children attending that school and are using all the books we can get. Considering the number of children attending the school, I have secured the assistance of a young lady to help the Sister in charge of the school. The task of keeping and heating the school is beyond my means. Therefore I humbly ask your council to grant a sum of \$300.00 per month during one scholastic year. And your petitioner will pray for you.<sup>25</sup>

In the absence of a Yukon school ordinance it had been agreed that any school would be considered eligible for assistance if it was operating along the lines of those in the Northwest Territories.<sup>26</sup> The Council, having received a favourable report from a special committee appointed to inspect the Catholic school, approved Father Gendreau's request and granted him \$100 a month for Sister Mary Joseph and an additional \$50 monthly for her assistant, a young girl by the name of Mamie Connor, as well as \$100 a month for maintenance costs. By the

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<sup>24</sup>Klondike Nugget, 9 December 1899.

<sup>25</sup>Quoted by Retallack in "Dawson School Celebrates Diamond Jubilee."

<sup>26</sup>Journals and Sessional Papers, Yukon Council, 1912, Sessional Paper No. 10, p. 47.

end of the first school year, fifty-three pupils were crowded into the little building so that the teachers were hard-pressed to cope with the acute shortage of both space and supplies. A year later some alterations were made and a second full-time teacher engaged as the enrolment continued to grow in response to community needs.<sup>27</sup>

#### Dawson Public School: Temporary Arrangements (1900-01)

With funding for education assured for the time being, the Territorial Council could proceed with plans for a public school in Dawson. On March 23, 1900, the Board of Trade learned that its petition had been approved and that, if suitable accommodation could be found, public school classes would begin in September. After some debate, the Council proceeded to lease the Fraternal Hall on Mission (Church) Street for a year from its joint owners, the Odd Fellows and Masonic lodges. In two rooms in these temporary quarters Dawson Public School opened in mid-September, 1900, with Mr. George MacKenzie, said to be a descendant of the explorer Alexander Mackenzie, as principal.<sup>28</sup> That first month, fifty-seven intermediate-level pupils were enrolled; in October a primary level that included kindergarten added another fifty pupils and in January, 1901, an additional twenty-six pupils were registered in an advanced department where Standards IV and V were taught,<sup>29</sup> along with some work of first year high school. At the end of that school year Mr. MacKenzie reported an enrolment of

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<sup>27</sup>Le Petit Journal de la Providence (The Little Journal of Providence), inhouse publication of the Sisters of Providence, 1956, Vol. 55, pp. 131-32. See also YA, Sisters of St. Ann Records, "Ecole Ste-Marie, Dawson, Y.T.," typescript, n.d., 3 pp.

<sup>28</sup>P. McKenzie (or Mackenzie), the first principal of Dawson Public School, apparently left teaching because his certificate failed to meet the regulations of the 1902 School Ordinance. For a time he engaged in mining and other pursuits; in 1907 he entered the Gold Commissioner's office as a junior clerk, rising in 1912 to become Gold Commissioner, responsible for mining matters in the Yukon. When the Yukon Act was amended in 1918 he became chief executive officer for the Territory. In 1924 he was transferred to Ottawa in charge of the Northern Division supplying the Arctic, where he travelled extensively. From information supplied by the late Victoria Faulkner, in YA, Iris Warner Collection, Acc. 482/245. See also the Dawson News, 16 April and 23 July 1927 and 31 July 1928. Additional material may be found in PAC, RG 85, Vol. 598, file 1962-1.

<sup>29</sup>In the western provinces (e.g. Saskatchewan) in the early 1890s the three high school standards were VI, VII and VIII, which followed five elementary standards. Phillips, Development of Education in Canada, p. 204.



175 pupils following "as far as circumstances would permit" the grading system and course of studies prescribed for the Northwest Territories. He had, he said, found it extremely difficult to assign students who were not beginners to appropriate levels since they came from so many different provinces and American states, all with varying requirements and standards, while the lack of books had seriously retarded student progress, especially in the upper grades, and had taxed the teachers' ingenuity to the utmost.<sup>30</sup> His views were reinforced by details furnished many years later by the primary teacher, who recalled having received only "a rather small and inferior blackboard, a few crayons, one dozen primers, one dozen pencils, and that was all"--for more than thirty pupils. On the first school day she managed, by "cutting up the Dawson Daily News into sections, cutting [the] dozen pencils in two, giving a piece of the newspaper to each child in a long row and asking them to underline every familiar word on the slip," to give the children something to do while she talked to the parents who were still arriving with more children, many accompanied by their dogs.<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately, the Ontario texts which the Council had impulsively ordered in the summer of 1899 and which would have been invaluable in this emergency had ended up at the bottom of the Yukon River, lost in the sinking of the steamboat W. S. Stratton en route from Whitehorse.<sup>32</sup> As for accommodation for the unexpectedly large enrolment, it seems that as the school year progressed two additional rooms in the town were leased, one from the Salvation Army and the other from the Methodist Church.

#### Dawson Public School: A New Building (1901)

Now that public unrest had been calmed by these temporary arrangements, the authorities could proceed with plans for a permanent building. After purchasing a block of eleven lots near Fifth and Front Streets, they authorized the construction of a substantial two-

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<sup>30</sup>YA, YRG 1, file 505, G. P. McKenzie to J. H. Ross, received 3(?) July 1901.

<sup>31</sup>Dawson News, 20 June 1925.

<sup>32</sup>Klondike Nugget, 1 April 1900.

Front Streets, they authorized the construction of a substantial two-storey frame building with four classrooms on each floor. Completed by the following fall at a cost of about \$45,000, its opening on October 14, 1901, was hailed by the Dawson Daily News as "a great stride in the educational development of that city."<sup>33</sup>

Until the new school was ready for occupancy, classes resumed in the Fraternal Hall for pupils at the intermediate and advanced levels only, while the staff spent much time reorganizing the program into an eight-grade system and adapting the Northwest Territories' curriculum to meet Yukon needs. By early November, 1901, Mr. MacKenzie was able to report that the teachers were happy in their new quarters and that the pupils were generally cheerful, although somewhat lacking as yet in "method and order." His statistics indicate that there were five teachers and 188 pupils at that date, distributed as follows:

G. P. MacKenzie	advanced classes	24 pupils, grades 7,8,9
Miss McRae	intermed. classes	39 pupils, grades 5,6
Miss McKinnon	junior classes	46 pupils, grades 3,4
Miss Keyes	primary classes	51 pupils, grades 1,2
Miss Edwards	kindergarten	29 pupils

Obviously, regulations controlling pupil-teacher ratios had not yet come into being.<sup>34</sup>

#### An Education System Begins: Organization and Legislation (1902)

Since other Yukon communities had also begun to ask for public schools, Ogilvie's successor, Commissioner James Ross, had in 1901 set up a temporary Council of Education to deal with educational matters in the Territory, including the completion of a Yukon school ordinance

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<sup>33</sup>"Education in the Klondike," Dawson Daily News, Golden Cleanup Edition, 1902.

<sup>34</sup>YA, YGR 1, Series 1, vol. 9, file 505, G. P. McKenzie, Report of the Public School, Dawson, for the Quarter Ending November 1, 1901.

and the appointment of a superintendent of schools. Mr. John T. Ross, named to this office in August, 1902, lost no time in making his first inspection tour. Following his first classroom visits that September, he reported finding two main problems at Dawson Public School: the inadequate qualifications and training of some of the teachers, and the unsatisfactory progress of many students in the upper grades resulting from the diversity of educational background prevalent among Dawson children at the time. In line with the thinking of the day, he also notified the Council that Miss Edwards, a well-trained and competent kindergarten teacher, could not be retained after her marriage. "In most of the States of the Union, and provinces of Canada," he pointed out, "kindergarten teachers are not accepted if they are married, as it is found that they will [not] devote themselves with the same energy to the work."<sup>35</sup> In general, however, he conceded that these early years were difficult ones for a new school system and that it would take time to overcome the problems.

He soon had a framework of reference for his decisions in the Yukon School Ordinance, which finally came into being on September 12, 1902.<sup>36</sup> As might have been expected, it followed closely that of the Northwest Territories and equalled in scope provincial legislation of the day governing the administration of schools. Provision was made for both public and separate school districts, each supported by a school tax levied upon its ratepayers according to their preferences and directed by a school board elected by them. To regulate such overall matters as inspection of schools, licensing of teachers and approval of curriculum and text-books there was to be a Council of Public Instruction composed of the Territorial Council with two additional appointed members, one Catholic and one Protestant, with the superintendent of Schools as its secretary. The Commissioner was given certain responsibilities, among them notably the establishment and funding as required of schools outside an organized school dis-

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<sup>35</sup>YA, YR6 1, Series 4, Vol. 13, file 306, John Ross to J. T. Lithgow, 4 September 1902. According to an article from the Edmonton Journal reprinted in the Dawson News, 7 November 1917, Mr. Ross later became Deputy Minister of Education for the province of Alberta.

<sup>36</sup>Ordinance No. 27 of 1902: An Ordinance Respecting Schools (Assented to September 12, 1902), 17 pp.

trict. Education was to be free to the end of Standard V (i.e. Grade VIII) except in the case of kindergartens, for which a fee of one dollar per month per child could be charged.

This very comprehensive legislation seems to have been based on the assumption that the Yukon Territory would continue to grow and develop along provincial lines. Owing, however, to the unforeseen drastic drop in population<sup>37</sup> with the ebbing of the gold rush,<sup>38</sup> many of its provisions were never implemented. For example, no Council of Public Instruction was ever formed and eighty years later the Territory still does not have its first school board, although that legislative provision remains in the statute book.

#### Dawson Schools: Developments After 1902

For some years following 1902, both Dawson schools continued to flourish. Although the population of the community was declining, many of those leaving were single men; the families who stayed became established and the growing number of children resulted in increased enrolments and improvement of facilities, while Superintendent Ross saw to it that better qualified teachers were hired and programs expanded.

#### St. Mary's Catholic School

In 1904 St. Mary's school, which by then had some sixty pupils and two full-time teachers, moved from its original cramped quarters in Father Gendreau's building into a new two-storey frame structure more conveniently located in the centre of town. The upper floor served as a chapel for Dawson's Catholic parish while the ground floor with two classrooms, a music room and a recreation room, was rented by the Oblate Fathers to the government for school purposes. In return they received an increased annual grant for rent, fuel and maintenance costs. That same year, in response to the requirements

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<sup>37</sup>From 27,219 in 1901 to 8,512 in 1911.

<sup>38</sup>Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, Appendix A.

of the School Ordinance, two new Sisters, Mary Cassilda and Mary Mark, arrived to take charge of the classes. Since both had received approved training and certification from the province of Quebec, the annual government grant for the teachers at Saint Mary's school was raised to \$3,600, representing a monthly salary of \$175 each, equal to that of a public school teacher. With this new operational basis and new building, the school was now firmly established in the community it was to serve for many years.

#### Dawson Public School

In 1903 Dawson Public School, with an enrolment of 261 pupils, added Standard VI to accommodate five students at the first-year high school level. To enable students to proceed to matriculation, two specialist teachers were hired and in 1904 a classroom on the upper floor was converted into a laboratory so that chemistry and physics might be taught. Since the final exam at the end of three years' high school provided for entrance into the University of Toronto, the Ontario course of studies was followed at the secondary level.

The students were fortunate in having a number of outstanding teachers who combined scholarship with a natural talent for teaching and discipline problems were minimal, as evidenced by a popular student ditty in honour of T. G. Bragg,<sup>39</sup> their Latin and history teacher:

Bragg, Bragg, the punching bag,  
Went to church on Sunday,  
And prayed the Lord to give him strength  
To whip the kids on Monday.

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<sup>39</sup>Thomas George Bragg, a first-class honours graduate in Classics and Moderns of the University of Toronto, with six years' teaching experience in Ontario, was appointed principal of Dawson Public School in 1903. He became one of the pillars of the early education system in the Yukon, principal, teacher and Superintendent of Schools. YA, YRG 1, Series 2, Vol. 10, file 8719. The verse is contributed by Mrs. Vera Lintner of Vancouver, a former pupil, and verified by a number of others.

He was, however, no ogre but a rather quiet man of medium build who expected and received close attention during his classes. The disciplinary and academic features of Dawson Public School in the early 1900s are further illustrated in the following recollections of a former pupil:

The High School classes were taken by male teachers who had to be men of physical vigor to cope with the student body which came from an extremely mixed population and was inclined to be unruly. In my last term there was one pupil who was in the professional prize ring and not a light weight at that. On the staff there were teachers, both women and men, of outstanding qualifications and capacity, among whom I might mention . . . T. G. Bragg, John Henry (with a degree in science from Cambridge) and G. A. Jeckell who later became Commissioner of the Territory. It was a source of poignant regret to Mr. Bragg that there was no place for Greek on the curriculum, but he solaced himself by driving in the Latin to which he was also devoted. It was normal procedure day in and day out for the teaching staff to stay on duty long extra hours to make certain that pupils took in everything they were considered capable of--and in spite of the reluctance of the aforesaid pupils. This was popularly considered to be the teachers' idea of pleasant relaxation. It was the practice to move ahead during a term pupils who responded to this treatment and it was not at all unusual for the Toronto matriculation to be taken at the age of 13 or 14. There must have been an emphasis on English and that sort of thing as I remember that when I was 13 years old our class had been given "The Merchant of Venice" the term before and "Macbeth" in that year.<sup>40</sup>

Certainly, children in this remote northerly community could not, by the standards of the day, be considered educationally deprived. Be-

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<sup>40</sup>YA, Iris Warner Collection, PTA script, n.d., 5 pp. The passage is from a letter from Mr. Charles McLeod, a Dawson resident and former pupil of Dawson Public School.

ginning in 1905 and 1906 a number of Dawson students are reported to have achieved honour (i.e. senior) matriculation standing in their final examinations<sup>41</sup> and those who entered universities elsewhere in Canada or the United States appear to have excelled in their studies.

#### The System Expands: Whitehorse (1901)

In the other settlements that sprang up in the wake of the Klondike rush, public pressure for schools brought relatively quick results, since the legislative and administrative framework was by then in place. In Whitehorse, need for a school was expressed in May, 1900, at the first meeting of the Board of Trade which, in the absence of any civic administration, undertook to be the voice of that very new and very small community.<sup>42</sup> No classes began, however, until the following year when once again a church came forward to offer its help. On February 4, 1901, the Presbyterian minister John J. Wright, "the leading minister and citizen of Whitehorse," opened a school for some sixteen children between the ages of five and fourteen in the reading room of his church, a small frame building on the south side of Main Street near Second Avenue.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, community forces were being marshalled to demand for the children of Whitehorse the same educational privileges that were available in Dawson; within two weeks a parents' petition went forward to the Territorial Council along with a formal request to the Commissioner from the Board of Trade for the immediate establishment of a public school in Whitehorse, where a count had revealed forty-one children of

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<sup>41</sup>The Yukon Territory, its History and Resources (Ottawa: The Department of the Interior, Government Printing Bureau, 1907), p. 122.

<sup>42</sup>Whitehorse Star, First Annual Edition, 1 May 1901, p. 7.

<sup>43</sup>J. J. Wright, a native of Quebec, was ordained in 1890 following graduation from Queen's University. After a few months in Dawson, he was transferred to Whitehorse in 1901, remaining there until 1904. He died in Levis, Quebec in 1921. Thora McIlroy Mills, The Church and the Klondike Gold Rush (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1977), pp. 81-82. According to Mr. Joseph Williams, who attended this first school, classes began in a tent-frame building on First Avenue near Main Street, moving farther up the street at the end of three weeks. (Courtesy of John Scott, Whitehorse.)

school age.<sup>44</sup> Shortly thereafter Commissioner Ogilvie informed Mr. Robert Lowe, president of the Board of Trade, that a grant was available for school purposes and that an order could be placed for class supplies. By early June, 1901, Mr. Wright was able in his turn to notify the Dawson authorities that a local three-member school committee had been formed with himself as president, and that it had already equipped a school and hired a teacher on a month-to-month basis. Classes had, in fact, been in progress since early May, meeting as before in temporary quarters in the Presbyterian church.<sup>45</sup>

This interim school, supported by a monthly grant of \$225, operated for a full year in the church reading room with Mr. Patrick Campbell (who does not appear to have been a certificated teacher) in charge, at a salary of \$125 per month. Teacher and pupils worked conscientiously, holding classes through the summer months to make up for the late start of the school year; the longer vacation appears to have been postponed until winter. By then, increasing enrolment created the need for a second teacher for the primary pupils, so that a junior division was created in January, 1902, with Susan (Mellett) Bowen in charge.<sup>46</sup> Since accommodation was very limited, each division attended for half a day only. Late that summer, a contract was let for construction of a two-room frame school to be erected on Lambert Street between Third and Fourth Avenues at a cost of \$2,545.00. At the same time two new teachers were appointed for the fall term. Mr. Arthur E. Fisher, a graduate of Toronto University with a first-class non-professional certificate from the Northwest Territories,<sup>47</sup> replaced Mr. Campbell but the selection of a young unmarried

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<sup>44</sup>YA, YR6 1, Series 4, Vol. 41, file 2285A, Petition to Territorial Council, 6 and 15 February 1901; also Mr. Wright to Commissioner Ogilvie, 22 February 1901.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., J. J. Wright to Commissioner J. H. Ross, 6 June 1901.

<sup>46</sup>Writing to an unnamed correspondent, possibly Archbishop W. R. Adams, Mr. Bowen says, "The first church opened in Whitehorse was the Presbyterian. The Rev. Mr. Sinclair who built the church at Lake Bennett, erected and ministered in it. His successor the Reverend Mr. Wright opened a school and Mrs. Bowen was head of the Junior Department. This is for your personal information." YA, ACDYR, Series IV.3, Box 52, folder 11, R. J. Bowen, "August, 1900. Again in the Diocese of Selkirk," typescript, n.d.

<sup>47</sup>With regard to teacher certification at the time, teachers in all provinces were required by 1900 to have had some education beyond elementary level but were not necessarily required to have had actual professional training. A non-professional certificate from the Northwest Territories seems to have implied completion of a written examination from the Regina Normal School; the professional certificate was given following a satisfactory inspector's report. Phillips, Development of Education, pp. 560-63; 576-79.



lady as primary teacher proved a matter of some concern, since Superintendent Ross felt that attractive young ladies might be "so sought after socially that their efficiency as teachers would be impaired." The Reverend Mr. Wright had other views, however, considering that "if such an one can be secured with good sense and teaching ability, it would be better for the pupils"<sup>48</sup> and consequently Miss Kate Middlemiss, a certificated teacher from the Northwest Territories, was engaged to teach the younger children.

Whitehorse: Lambert Street School (1902)

Since work on the new school had only just commenced, classes that September were forced to continue in temporary quarters. Miss Middlemiss' primary grades met for those first weeks in a tent building belonging to the Whitehorse North Star Athletic Club where Inspector Ross, visiting in mid-October, found twenty-five pupils on the roll, some of whom had not yet attended school because of a scarlet fever epidemic in the town. The upper-level pupils in this classroom were, he said, doing well; the others were, of course, less far advanced but he expressed his confidence that the teacher would prove very satisfactory. Mr. Fisher, "a man of good appearance [who] has a good manner before his class" would, he felt, do well once the classes were better organized and in more suitable accommodation; the twenty pupils in the senior classes were still using the Presbyterian church as temporary quarters where they were separated from the reading room only by a thin cotton curtain so that noise there disturbed the pupils and was "a serious hindrance to good discipline."<sup>49</sup> It was with relief that pupils and teachers moved to their new quarters in November, 1902.

The Whitehorse school was now on the same footing as the other Territorial schools, with the result that the new teachers were bet-

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<sup>48</sup>YA, YRG 1, Series 4, Vol. 41, file 2285-A, J. J. Wright to the Commissioner, 1 July 1902.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., J. T. Ross to Acting Commissioner Z. T. Wood, 15 October 1902.

ter paid than Mr. Campbell had been, Mr. Fisher and Miss Middlemiss receiving salaries of \$200 and \$150 a month respectively. These salaries remained unchanged for the duration of their employment, Miss Middlemiss being refused an increase of \$25 per month in 1903 on the grounds that living costs were lower in Whitehorse than in Dawson and travel costs from "outside" cheaper. Mr. Matthew Watson (who later became a pioneer merchant in Carcross) was engaged as janitor for \$20 a month, increased to \$40 in January, 1903. The inspector visited the school twice a year, ongoing management being in the hands of a three-man school committee appointed by the Commissioner. Apart from some grading problems similar to those encountered in Dawson, the classes operated smoothly and the new school facilities were a welcome improvement despite some heating difficulties in the winter months.

Over the next few years total pupil enrolment in the Whitehorse school remained fairly constant, increasing from 43 to 54 in 1904 and falling slightly to 49 in 1906. Miss Middlemiss had the larger class, since most of the pupils were in the primary grades. The first secondary-level students are reported in 1904, when two pupils received assistance from the principal in first-year high school subjects, but only before and after school hours since the trustees were, according to Mr. Ross, "rather opposed" to their attending at all. Because grade eight or "entrance" was at the time the normal limit of public responsibility for education, these children were admitted only because they were still of school age; not surprisingly, Mr. Ross indicates that they were not making very good progress<sup>50</sup>. In 1905 a Bookkeeping class was introduced and in the fall of 1906 Mr. Bragg, who had replaced Mr. Ross as Superintendent of Schools, reported that a Standard VI class had officially begun in Whitehorse, offering instruction at the first year high school level in "Latin, Algebra, Euclid and the usual subjects."<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., J. T. Ross to Commissioner F. Congdon, 17 October 1904.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., file 2285-B, T. G. Bragg to Commissioner F. Congdon, 25 November 1906.

### Whitehorse: A Separate School (1903)

During this period, the Catholic residents of Whitehorse succeeded in establishing a school of their own. Construction began in 1901, when Father Lefebvre, OMI, erected a church and a nearby school-house to serve his parishioners. The school, situated at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Wood Street, was not completed at once, and by the time that two Sisters of St. Ann arrived to take charge (September, 1903), many Catholic families had already left the area. As the goldrush "boom" drew to a close, the population of Whitehorse continued to fall rapidly and within less than a year the Sisters closed the school owing to lack of a sufficient number of pupils.<sup>52</sup>

### Further Expansion: Klondike "Creek" Schools

During this period other communities outside Dawson were also requesting schools for their children. Parents in various settlements along the Klondike creeks made their demands known and by 1902-03 six government-supported schools were reported in that area: at Grand Forks (Bonanza Creek), at Bear Creek, at Gold Bottom on Hunker Creek, at Gold Run and Dominion and at 30 Below Bonanza.<sup>53</sup> All one-room schools, they were in general held in whatever quarters were available, although when numbers seemed sufficient to justify the expense a Territorial school might be built. The government assumed all costs, including the teacher's salary, the rent of the premises, the cost of fuel, water and janitor services, and also provided a rather meagre stock of instructional materials which were, as already noted, in short supply in Dawson. Few of these schools were maintained for long, for once the gold that was recoverable by hand techniques was exhausted the miners moved on to new locations taking the hotels, stores and other community services with them. The life-cycle of Bonanza school at Grand Forks seems to be characteristic of them all.

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<sup>52</sup>From information supplied by the Rev. E. Morisset, OMI, of Whitehorse (July 9, 1986).

<sup>53</sup>Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for 1902-03 (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1904), Part IV, pp. 27-28.

### Grand Forks School, Bonanza

The community of Grand Forks at the junction of Bonanza and Eldorado Creeks was for a brief period second only to Dawson City in size, with a population of some 15,000. As early as October, 1900, we find residents and property owners there petitioning the Commissioner for a public school in their townsite; they had identified twenty-five children between the ages of six and sixteen, had located a room "ready furnished, heated, and kept clean" and were, accordingly, requesting a grant of \$250 per month for rent and the teacher's salary.<sup>54</sup> With Commissioner Ogilvie's approval, a school was opened on November 12 in the Presbyterian church at Grand Forks with twenty-two pupils in grades one to four in charge of Miss Adah Lind, a certificated teacher from Ontario with two years' experience in that province. In that first year a number of problems peculiar to these "creek" schools manifested themselves. First, it was necessary to build a shelter for dogs at a cost of \$375, as some of the children living along the creeks travelled a considerable distance to and from school in winter by dog sled; then the school calendar had to be adjusted to meet the exigencies of the Yukon climate, the school being closed for two weeks in winter because of the severe cold and again in spring when break-up rendered the trails totally unfit for travel of any sort. As a result, classes continued all summer except during a short spell of very warm weather in July. The shortage of supplies was acute: Miss Lind several times requested "maps, a register, a blackboard eraser, etc.," as well as drawing and writing books for her pupils. "Can there be any reason," asked the school committee secretary, apparently unaware of the shortages of such materials even in Dawson, "why she should not have them?"

In September, 1901, she was replaced by a local man, Mr. J. L. McKay, who held certificates from both Ontario and British Columbia (1884 and 1888), but who had no professional training, although he had taught for a time on Vancouver Island. A year later Inspector Ross,

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<sup>54</sup>These and following details concerning the school at Grand Forks are from correspondence found in YA, YRG 1, Series 4, Vol. 20, file 364.

on his first visit to the school, found the classes "not well up in their work" and his report the following spring underlined two other problems typical of these schools: an extremely high rate of pupil turnover--less than one-quarter of them remaining a full year--and the general unsuitability of the rented premises which, in this case, had pews rather than student desks while a high platform in front separated the teacher from his pupils. The playground also was inadequate, being "low and poor." That June Mr. McKay was dismissed on the grounds that the School Ordinance (which had come into effect since McKay's appointment) provided "that all teachers in the schools of Yukon Territory must have taken a course of study at some approved Normal School before they are eligible to retain their positions after June 20, 1903." Late that summer the government built a new schoolhouse at a cost of \$2,820, to be known as Grand Forks School, Bonanza District.

The next two years represent the high point in its existence. Miss Evelyn Keyes arrived from Dawson as teacher for some thirty children at a salary of \$200 a month. Her task was far from easy since the constantly changing population brought endless grading problems but by May, 1905, Mr. Ross expressed general satisfaction at the progress her pupils were making. From then on, however, a rapid decline set in. The winter of 1906-07 saw her twenty-six children forced to take their long holidays in December and January as the green lumber of which the school had been built continued to dry out, shrinking and letting in drafts that made the classroom unbearably cold. To make up the time, they attended classes all July and August but by September, 1907, all but a few families had left the area. With only five children in regular attendance, Grand Forks school lost its status as a fully supported government school; the building fell into complete disrepair and in 1910 it was sold to the Yukon Gold Company for \$320 to be used as a mess-house. Subsequent attempts to hold classes on an assisted basis in other quarters met with only limited success. The community failed to revive and Grand Forks School finally disappears from the records in the closing years of World War I.

### Other Klondike Schools

As for the smaller and even less permanent settlements along the creeks, the sketchy records now available yield only fleeting glimpses of their long-abandoned schools. Some may be remembered for the colourful personalities associated with them, as for example, the heavyweight champion Frank Slavin, whose wife headed the first request for a school at Bear Creek in the summer of 1902. Slavin's sparring partner, Joe Boyle, later famous as "the uncrowned king of Roumania,"<sup>55</sup> undertook to build a small log schoolhouse there which he rented to the government, enabling classes to begin for nine pupils by mid-November that year. This school seems to have closed a year or two later, possibly in 1904, and the hastily constructed building was reported a few years later to be abandoned and in poor condition.<sup>56</sup>

Statistical reports are useful, although lacking in human interest. Inspector Ross' semi-annual report for 1903 indicates that schools at Gold Bottom and Gold Run operated in 1902-03 in rented quarters, the former with a Miss Annie McRae as teacher while the latter, taught by a Miss Edith Robinson, had eleven children on the roll.<sup>57</sup> Surviving correspondence reveals somewhat more concerning Sulphur Creek school, where apparently a few children were taught privately in 1902, although by an unqualified teacher. In November, 1903, a resident rented a room adjoining his cabin for use as a school and Miss McNeil, a certificated teacher, was sent to teach there. The life of this school seems to have been exceptionally brief; the twenty-one pupils enrolled in May, 1904, dwindled to nine the following November and all government records for Sulphur Creek school end in January, 1905.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Berton, Klondike, pp. 379-80

<sup>56</sup>Correspondence concerning Bear Creek school may be found in YA, YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 16, File 3778.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., Series 4, Vol. 13, file 306, J. T. Ross to Acting Commissioner Z. Wood, 24 January 1903.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., Series 1, Vol. 10, File 1736.

Winnifred McLellan and Caribou School (1905-06)

A more personal view of the Caribou Creek school, later known as Dominion School, is given in the letters written by Winnifred McLellan to her family during her year as teacher there in 1905-06.<sup>59</sup> We learn from her that Caribou was "quite a little village, with two hotels, post office, several stores, police station, etc." The school there had opened in September, 1902, with a Miss Wilson in charge but it appears that by March, 1905, some of the parents had taken a dislike to her and forced the closure of the school by removing their children. Miss McLellan, her successor, handled the situation in a truly diplomatic fashion, carefully visiting the aggrieved parents before school reopened the following September. The pupils returned, eighteen or nineteen in all, including one older girl who was taking grade nine work and consequently required extra attention. They were, she says, bright and interested, although classes were "crippled . . . for want of books, chalk, etc.," with "only two blackboards, not much bigger than a good-sized slate, and no bell,--excepting Dr. Bell whose office is close to us and who is doing the janitor work, but he has not the right ring about him." Since the schoolroom was the former mining recorder's office, opening directly onto the main sidewalk of the town and surrounded entirely by cabins, with no space for a playground, one wonders how she managed to collect her pupils together after recess without a handbell, that standard item of issue in all Canadian rural schools. Miss McLellan also mentions having previously taught for a time at a similar school at 30 Below Bonanza from 1902 to 1903 or '04. It seems obvious that she found her work in these schools interesting and enjoyable; her time there must have been a rewarding experience for the children in her charge.

Other small settlements in the area requested schools. Some, like Last Chance, do not appear to have been successful while those at Quartz Creek and Granville, during their brief existence, were granted "assisted" status, a category that eventually claimed all the schools on the "creeks" and which will be discussed more fully in a

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., McLellan Papers, Acc. 082/32.

later chapter. Inevitably, these small communities disappeared when the dredges moved in to extract from the gravel the gold that the hand-miners had missed and visitors to the Klondike today find very few traces of the thousands who once lived and toiled along its placer-bearing streams.

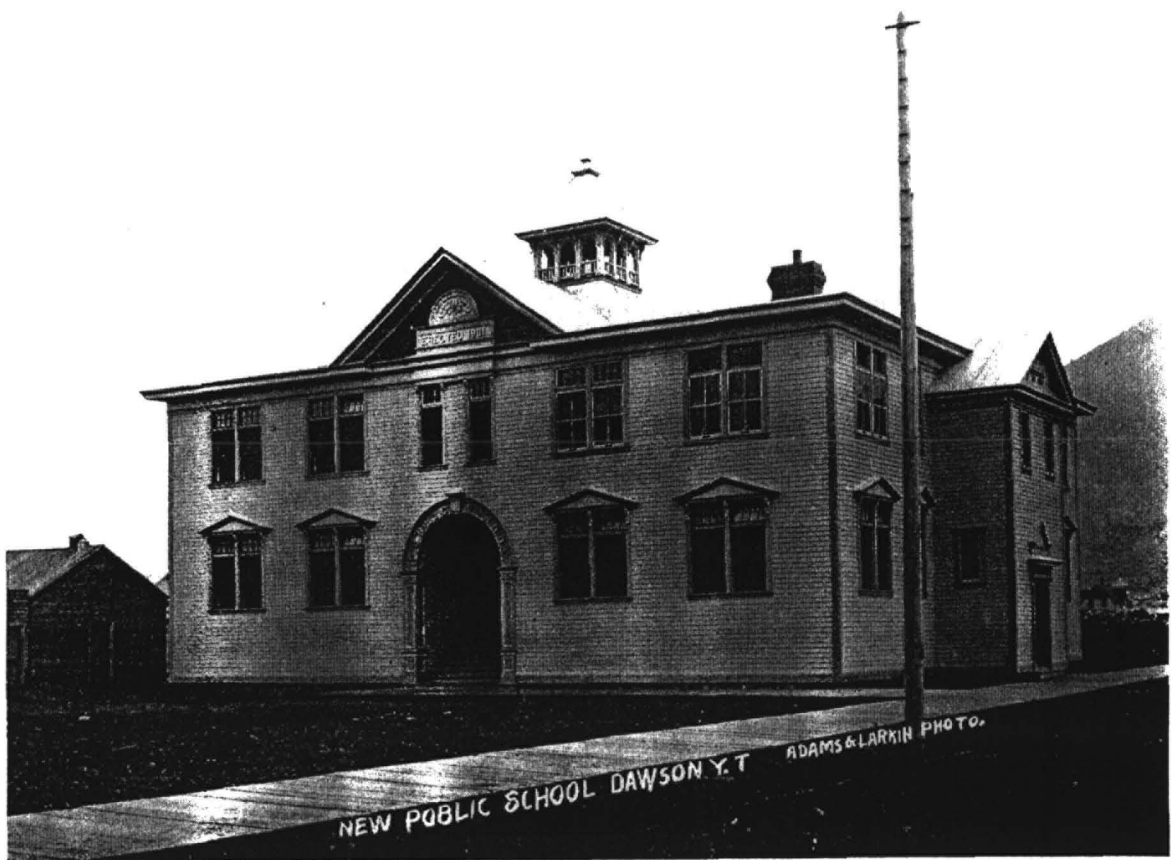
#### A Pioneer School System: Summary

The school system that emerged from the gold rush years proved to be far more enduring than many of the communities that created the need for it and would have done credit to a much older, established jurisdiction. Within a very few years the Territory had acquired its own school legislation, an above-average corps of teachers and a highly competent superintendent. Dawson City, with its larger and more stable population, had a wider range of facilities than the other settlements; its children had access to schooling from kindergarten to university entrance as well as to private music teachers and the resources of the town's Carnegie-endowed library. Pupils in many of the smaller Yukon communities could receive schooling comparable to that available in similar situations "outside." There were, of course, many problems; some were capable of an eventual solution, while others have remained constant over the years. The Yukon climate is, after all, a factor that must always be reckoned with in the construction and management of the Territory's schools, while the ephemeral nature of Yukon mining communities continues to plague educational planners to this day. In retrospect, however, the education system that was established under the pressures of the Klondike stampede must certainly be viewed as one of the few truly lasting benefits of that amazing era.





17. St. Paul's Anglican Church, Dawson City, 1897. The sign indicates "Daily School: 10 a.m."



18. *Public School, Dawson City, 1901.*



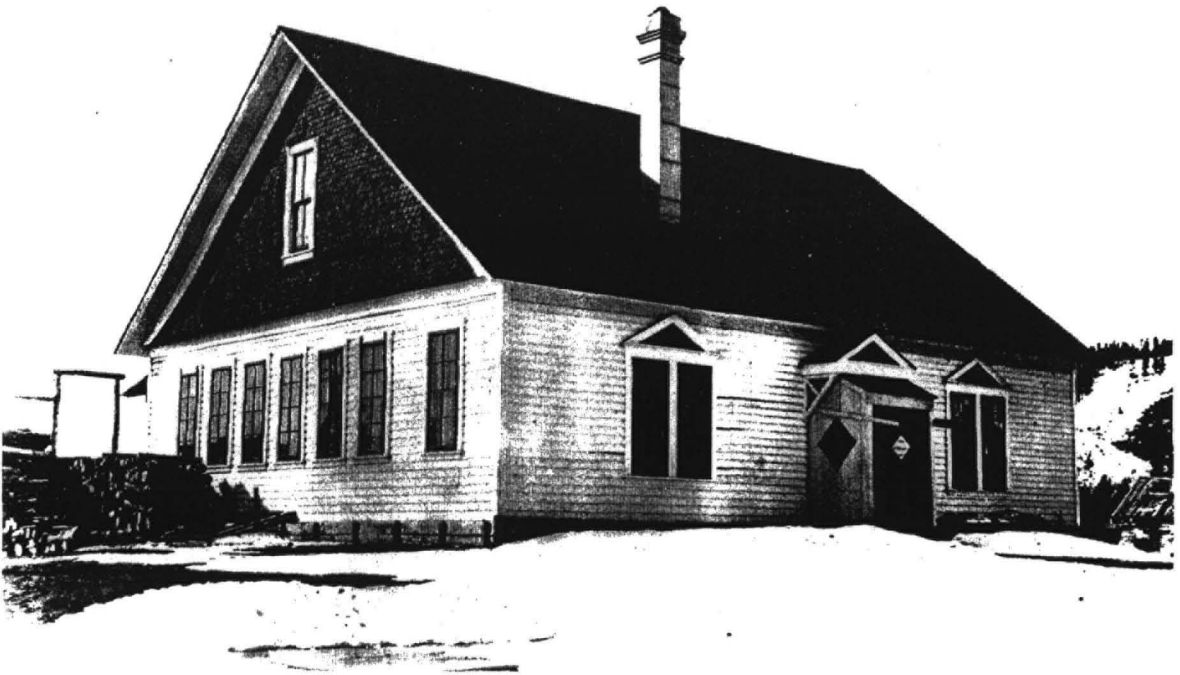
19. *St. Mary's Catholic Church and School, Dawson City.*  
*This building was erected in 1904. School rooms were on the ground floor.*



20. Kindergarten class and teacher, Dawson Public School, 1901.



21. *Presbyterian Church, Whitehorse,  
home to the town's first public school classes, 1901-02.*



22. *Whitehorse Public School, Lambert Street, erected in 1902.  
The roof of the 1916 additon may be glimpsed at the rear.*



23. Gold Bottom School, n.d.



24. *The school at Gold Run; Miss Pringle, teacher, at right, n.d.*



25. *Bear Creek School, 1903.*

## CHAPTER VI

### TERRITORIAL SCHOOLS: THE LEAN YEARS (1906-1940)

#### The Yukon in Decline

The outburst of activity generated by the gold rush was followed by a long period of economic decline and political retrenchment. Owing to the continuing instability of world conditions, investors became less willing to risk large capital sums in such a remote and costly area as the Yukon, nor did any substantial secondary industries arise there to stimulate its shrinking economy. The population of the Territory continued to dwindle, falling from about 8,500 in 1911 to half that number by 1921 and remaining fairly constant thereafter until the Second World War sparked a renewed interest in the area.<sup>1</sup> The curtailment of federal services, which had begun as early as 1904 with the closing of the mining recorders' offices along the Klondike creeks and a reduction in the number of surveyors and timber inspectors,<sup>2</sup> was accelerated in 1918 by a drastic reorganization of the structure of the Territorial government.<sup>3</sup> By that date the strain of World War I upon the national economy had given rise to complaints in the House of Commons that administration of this comparative handful of Yukoners had become burdensome, allegedly costing as much as a million dollars a year. Although the actual figure was only about a third of that sum, the resulting scrutiny of the Territory's affairs brought about an immediate fifty-percent cut in the federal grant as well as an amendment to the Yukon Act that abolished the position of Commissioner and combined his duties with those of the Gold Commissioner, an office then held by George P.

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<sup>1</sup>The Dawson News, 14 May 1927, notes that the Yukon's population was then estimated to be as low as 3,450. The 1931 official census, however, found 4,250 residents and by 1941 the number had risen to 4,914.

<sup>2</sup>See the correspondence in YA, YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 30, file 13158.

<sup>3</sup>K. J. Rea, The Political Economy of the Canadian North (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), pp. 24ff.



MacKenzie,<sup>4</sup> who had been the first principal of Dawson Public School. The following year (1919), a further amendment of the Yukon Act reduced the number of Territorial councillors from ten elected members to three, with a cut in their sessional indemnity from six hundred to four hundred dollars each.<sup>5</sup> From that date on, every effort was made to keep federal and territorial staff and expenditures in the Yukon to the absolute minimum required to maintain essential services there.

The mining industry, though less vigorous than formerly, was still the basis of the Territory's economy. In the Dawson area, a number of dredging companies continued to consolidate the gold mining operations along the Klondike tributaries; elsewhere, individual hand miners maintained their solitary search for another Bonanza. At times, increasing demand raised prices sufficiently to make the production of other metals profitable, even in the Yukon. In 1906, for example, a rise in the world price of copper stimulated developments in the copper belt of the Whitehorse area that lasted until the price slumped again in 1920; towards the end of World War I a similar cycle began with the silver-lead strike at Keno Hill in the Mayo district. This diversification of mining activity, while doing little to increase the total population of the Territory, served to remind the federal government of the region's possibilities and also fostered the growth of a number of small communities, some of which became permanent.

While thousands left, those who stayed on through these difficult years formed a small self-contained society in which life continued much as it had previously, although on a greatly diminished scale--a microcosm, as it were, of a larger community "outside." Although an increasing number of aging single men, no longer able to sustain themselves by hunting or prospecting, were forced to turn to

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<sup>4</sup>Correspondence in his personnel file indicates that his promotion to this dual function was based upon his long residence in the Yukon and his administrative experience as Gold Commissioner, combined with his possession "in no small degree" of "ability, caution, tact, and common sense." PAC, R6 85, Vol. 598, file 1962-1.

<sup>5</sup>Rea, Political Economy, p. 25.

the government for assistance, most Yukoners continued their independent way, earning a modest livelihood not only in mining but also in a wide range of other activities and support services. Underlying and upholding this shrunken social fabric was the administrative framework that had been set up at the turn of the century to direct the affairs of a much larger population.

This framework, already scaled down in 1909, 1912-13 and 1918, was further reduced during the 1930s when the world-wide depression that affected all Canada brought an additional curtailment of the Yukon's administrative staff and even stricter enforcement of economy measures. For a time the Territory was, in fact, under-funded and the writer has, for example, come upon instances of government letters written upon the backs of others, presumably to save paper. In 1932 the office of Gold Commissioner was in its turn abolished and merged with that of the Territorial treasurer or "comptroller" (later, "controller"),<sup>6</sup> a step which brought another long-time resident and former teacher, G. A. Jeckell,<sup>7</sup> to the fore as the Yukon's chief administrator in a complex and onerous role that he filled with great competence for the next fifteen years. By the late 1930s the school system, severely hampered by the prevailing financial constrictions, was operating (like other government services) with a minimal staff and budget. During the intervening years, however, it had not remained static; indeed, in spite of difficult times, there had been considerable activity and a number of new developments.

#### Funding for Education: The Separate School Question

In reviewing the trends of this period, it should be noted that changes in educational services did not imply any alteration in the

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>7</sup>George A. Jeckell (1880-1950), an Ontario farm boy, came to the Yukon in 1902 from Cardston, Alberta, to take charge of the upper elementary classes in Dawson Public School. He left teaching in 1913 to become Comptroller in the Territorial administration, a post he held until his retirement in 1946. Described as "a stern-eyed man with a square, determined jaw," he, perhaps erroneously, is said never to have taken an annual holiday during his thirty-three years in government service. In 1946 he was awarded the OBE. Dawson Daily News, 13 November 1902; Dawson Weekly News, 25 July 1946.

method of their funding. Although the School Ordinance of 1902 had provided for the setting up of public and separate school districts and the levying of a rate upon their respective taxpayers for school purposes, the Territory continued to follow the precedent set in 1900 of financing all schools out of grants from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, as the federal authorities now called the Yukon government account. In 1912 this procedure was called into question with regard to the Catholic school in Dawson, where the expense of maintaining two schools had aroused strong partisan feelings and sparked a move to eliminate support for St. Mary's. Heated debate ensued concerning the whole question of government support for separate schools. After reviewing the situation,<sup>8</sup> the Council decided to hold a plebiscite to ascertain the extent of local desire for the establishment of two school districts and the levying of school taxes. This plebiscite was held the following June (1913) and aroused little interest, with only 148 out of 704 voters going to the polls,<sup>9</sup> possibly because it was summer, a time when outdoor pursuits took priority in Dawson even over politics. Since only thirty-seven of those voting favoured taxing themselves for the support of their schools, no change was made in the system. The debate in Council, reported at length in the Dawson Daily News of April 21, 1913, indicated that body's acceptance of the principle of separate denominational schools that the Yukon had inherited from the earlier Northwest Territories' legislation and which was, in any case, entrenched in the Yukon Act. The grant was, accordingly, restored to St. Mary's school and matters continued as before.<sup>10</sup>

A quarter of a century later, the dual nature of the Territory's school system again came to the fore, but in a totally different context. In 1937 Premier T. D. Pattullo advanced a plan to annex the Yukon to his province of British Columbia, thereby sparking a controversy that threatened to awake underlying tensions in other parts

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<sup>8</sup>Chas. MacDonald, "Re Yukon Schools," Sessional Paper 10, Journals of the Yukon Council, 1912.

<sup>9</sup>Dawson Daily News, 11 June 1913.

<sup>10</sup>In 1914, the Yukon Council amended the School Ordinance to clarify procedures for the election of trustees should school districts be established in the future.

of Canada. Since British Columbia made no provision for separate schools and many of its residents were strongly opposed to their introduction, the federal and provincial authorities agreed to drop the annexation issue, and it is therefore possible that the mere existence of St. Mary's School contributed to the Yukon's survival as a separate political entity.<sup>11</sup>

#### The Superintendent of Schools: Duties and Difficulties

Administration of all aspects of the school system remained in the hands of the Superintendent of Schools, subject always to the will of the Commissioner. He was, for example, required by the Ordinance to visit all schools and report upon pupil attendance and progress; to establish rules and regulations for the conduct of schools; to make a detailed annual report to the Yukon Council and "to perform the duties of a board of trustees in respect to all schools . . . not within the limits of an established school district."<sup>12</sup> Since, as already noted, no such districts or boards were ever established, a host of other duties, too numerous to list here, devolved upon the Superintendent. These included the hiring and firing of teachers, the suspension and expulsion of pupils, the settlement of disputes and the provision of suitable school premises, privies, stabling and drinking water. In addition, he had to place orders for appropriate instructional materials and "when deemed expedient" provide a suitable library for each school.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, by the terms of the Public Service Ordinance of 1902, he was responsible as head of the Department of Education (of which he was the sole employee) for submitting to the Commissioner all facts concerning expenditures for

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<sup>11</sup>Richard Stuart, "Duff Pattullo and the Yukon Schools Question of 1937," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. LXIV, No. 1, March 1983; Dawson Daily News, 26 April 1938.

<sup>12</sup>An Ordinance Respecting Schools, 1902, Section 10(3).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Sections 54(1) to 54(26). School libraries were by today's standards minimal. Some settlements had free public reading rooms to which the government gave a small annual grant. These were in most cases managed by the local chapter of the IODE and school pupils and teachers had access to them, though not necessarily during school hours.

schools, for making recommendations in respect to these, and for certifying all payments for schools and teachers' salaries.<sup>14</sup>

As if all this were not enough, it also appears that the first superintendent, John T. Ross, had at some point begun to teach a number of classes in the Dawson Public School, probably following the introduction of high school classes there in 1902-03. Certainly his successor T. G. Bragg, in assuming the duties of Superintendent of Schools in the spring of 1906, did so in addition to his regular full-time employment as principal-teacher of that school. The task, as he later reports, was no easy one:

I might add that ever since my appointment . . . in 1906, I have been a "working" head of the department, not only being responsible for the appointment or dismissal of all teachers . . . and the general management and course of studies . . . but also making myself responsible for the language and history branches in the various grades of the Dawson senior high school department and teaching throughout each school day besides discharging the duties of principal of the Dawson school, being responsible for the grading of the pupils, the allotment of classes among the various departments and the general maintenance of discipline throughout the school.<sup>15</sup>

For many years following his resignation in 1919 to take a less complex teaching position "outside," Mr. Bragg's successors continued to fill this triple function of principal, teacher and superintendent, receiving for their services a salary of some four thousand dollars a year, an amount that varied little between 1910 and 1940 and which represented about a thousand dollars a year more than that paid to a high school teacher in the Yukon schools.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>An Ordinance Respecting the Public Service of the Yukon Territory (1902), Sections 5, 31, 32(a) and 32(b).

<sup>15</sup>T. G. Bragg, Supplementary Report, Sessional Paper No. 1, Journals of the Yukon Council, 1918, p. 17.

<sup>16</sup>Public Accounts, Government of Yukon, 1905-50.

Although the small number of schools and teachers made the Superintendent's task less onerous than the above description implies, the provision of adequate supervision for teachers in the outlying schools became a matter of increasing concern as the years passed. From the beginning, inspection visits tended to be infrequent, limited by the time and money available and by the weather. Since the overland stage journey from Dawson to Whitehorse could require at the very least a week of travel each way, Mr. Bragg had adopted the custom of making no winter visits to the southern part of the Territory, choosing instead to go by boat either before freezeup in early fall or in June when river traffic had resumed, thereby ensuring a shorter and more pleasant trip at times when he could most easily be spared from his own teaching duties. His successors, with more schools to supervise and a heavier teaching load, were to find this routine far from satisfactory, as Superintendent Tompkins reports:

Owing to the meeting of the Yukon Council in June 1928 the annual visits of inspection had to be postponed to the fall. I visited Keno and Mayo in August, taking part of the time from my holidays. The Keno school did not open until after my visit. I was in Mayo school for the first two days of school and then, on the urgent request of the Commissioner, proceeded to Whitehorse. My visit to Whitehorse coincided with the weekend of Labour Day so I had one half day only in the school there and had no time for Carcross.<sup>17</sup>

While Mr. Tompkins considered supervision of all schools to be a vital necessity, especially for young and inexperienced teachers, he also found that his absence from Dawson at the beginning or end of the school year created an undue hardship for his own students. His successor, P. L. F. Riches, found the situation even more difficult: he left the Yukon in the summer of 1929 after only one year in office

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<sup>17</sup>YA, YRG 1, Series 1-A, Vol. 2, file 135-A, S. R. Tompkins, Annual Report of the Department of Education for 1926-27, 16 April 1928. Following Mr. Bragg's suggestion in his 1915-16 report that the summer vacation be changed to conform to the Yukon climate, it became customary to begin classes on the first Monday after Discovery Day (August 17) and to end them on the Friday before the beginning of the matriculation exams, usually about June 18.

during which, despite the need, he had been unable to find the time to visit any rural classrooms. His parting recommendation that future superintendents be allowed to travel by the newly begun passenger air service "during that part of the term when inspections are most valuable"<sup>18</sup> was not implemented; inspection visits to the outlying schools remained infrequent and after 1934 ceased for a time altogether, victims of the fiscal restraints of the depression years. Teachers in these schools were, consequently, left very much on their own; in the absence of an overland telephone system they could communicate with their Superintendent only by mail or by messages relayed by anyone travelling to and from Dawson. A telegraph service was available, but teachers were expected not to use it except in emergencies.

Few superintendents remained in office as long as Mr. Bragg: the twenty years that followed his departure from the Territory brought seven incumbents to the position.<sup>19</sup> Suitable candidates were not easy to find, as we learn from a memorandum to the federal Minister of the Interior dated May 22, 1922.<sup>20</sup> To maintain the academic standards of Dawson High School, the Yukon authorities continued their long-established policy of requiring that the Superintendent be an honours graduate of a recognized university, a specialist in one or more academic fields, as well as an experienced teacher capable of directing all aspects of the school system. Underlying these criteria was an equally important unwritten expectation: that the Superintendent be able to understand and get along well with all levels of the Yukon's isolated and ingrown society. For assistance in locating suitable candidates they consulted officials of the Ontario Department of Education or Mr. John T. Ross in Alberta, whose personal knowledge of the Territory was invaluable. Although the records are far from complete, it seems that their selection was generally sound; in any case during the period under review the various superintendents suc-

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., file 135-B-1, P. L. F. Riches, Annual Report, 22 May 1929.

<sup>19</sup>See the Appendix for a list of the Yukon's superintendents of schools.

<sup>20</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 210, file 600-1-3, part 1.

ceeded, despite financial constraints and generally diminishing enrolments, in encouraging some modest growth in the total number of schools and in instituting as far as circumstances permitted policies and programs that were being adopted elsewhere in Canada.

### New Programs

#### Introduction of Standardized Tests (1926)

Perceptive teachers had long been aware of the need to provide for individual differences in pupil ability. By the mid-1920s, the development of standardized intelligence and achievement tests gave education an apparently scientific means of assessing student potential and performance. In the spring of 1926, Mr. Tompkins introduced these comparatively new tests to the Yukon, administering them to the public school pupils in Dawson. In a long article interpreting the results of this new educational procedure, the Dawson News proudly announced that the local children were "more than holding their own in comparison with outside schools"--an apparent reference to those in Alaska, where the same tests had also been given.<sup>21</sup> Superintendent Tompkins, a strong advocate of this testing program, reported finding it particularly helpful in placing metis pupils entering his school from other settlements, some of whom had had little previous experience with regular schooling.<sup>22</sup>

#### Adoption of the British Columbia Program of Studies (1934)

An even more important step was taken in September, 1934, with the formal introduction of the British Columbia program of studies into all classrooms of the Territory. As a result, the elementary grades no longer followed the Alberta program, and high school students changed from the Ontario to the British Columbia curriculum,

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<sup>21</sup>Dawson News, 13 April 1926. These tests were used for the first time in B.C. schools in 1924. (Johnson, Brief History of Education, p. 137.)

<sup>22</sup>YA, YRG 91, Series 1-A, Vol. 2, file 135-a, S. R. Tompkins, Annual Report, 16 April 1928. To what extent his successors used this program is not at present clear.



writing the B.C. matriculation examinations at the end of their secondary studies if they were seeking university entrance. Although reasons for the change are not stated, it is probable that by this date developments in the West had made it cheaper and more convenient for Yukon students to continue their studies in British Columbia rather than in eastern Canada or the United States. The transition, according to the Superintendent, F. J. Patterson--who had himself taught for ten years in West Vancouver--was facilitated by the fact that many of the teachers had B.C. training and experience.<sup>23</sup> It also appears that this change of curriculum led to an adjustment of the Yukon school year to bring it into conformity with that of British Columbia, so that starting in September, 1935, classes began the day after Labour Day, with the second term ending June 26, 1936.

Since the province of British Columbia had, as a result of the Putnam and Weir Survey of 1925,<sup>24</sup> been reorganizing its curriculum along more "progressivist" lines, the Yukon by adopting the B.C. system found itself caught up in these revisions which, according to Mr. Patterson, were "more in the nature of method and emphasis than subject matter." The high school program was extended from three years to four, with matriculation now being at the end of grade twelve--a development which seemed to many at the time to be a way of coping with unemployment by delaying the entry into the labour market of at least some young people. In addition, the grading system was reorganized on the 6-3-3 basis, implying the introduction of a junior high school stage with a number of optional subjects; greater emphasis was placed upon learning by "projects" and "activities" rather than by more formal methods, while the underlying philosophy tended to take into greater account the child's more immediate needs and interests. All this was not always easy to implement. Even in British Columbia

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 59, file 34362, Fred J. Patterson, Report of the Public Schools of the Yukon Territory, 1933-34, part C, 31 March 1935. A further benefit lay in the generosity of the B.C. Department of Education's Text Book Branch, which supplied books at list price and prepaid the freight.

<sup>24</sup>The educational survey conducted in British Columbia by J. H. Putnam and G. M. Weir was the most thorough investigation of its kind conducted anywhere in Canada up to that time. Their report led to the introduction in that province of a three-year junior high school and a more flexible secondary program. (Phillips, Development of Education, pp. 262-64.)

in the 1930s the small size of rural high schools limited them to a mainly academic program; little else could be expected in the sparsely populated Yukon. Mr. Patterson was careful to point out to Council that "the small enrolment in the Yukon schools makes it impossible to offer all the new features of the revised programme, especially the great variety of options in the Junior High grades but some of these are being adapted to our needs, and the spirit of the programme is being adapted to the regular subjects."<sup>25</sup> The limited extent to which any broadening of the curriculum was then possible is revealed by a closer study of the individual schools of the Territory.

### Yukon Schools: Difficult Times

#### Dawson Public School

In 1910 the largest and most comprehensive school in the Yukon was Dawson Public School with an enrolment of 196 pupils from kindergarten to grade eleven (i.e. matriculation) and six full-time teachers in addition to the Superintendent. At this date its major problem was apparently one of pupil attendance. While periods of severe cold weather and recurring epidemics of influenza and whooping cough often kept the younger children at home for days at a time during the winter months, Mr. Bragg was especially disturbed by the tendency of students in the upper grades to drop out of school "to avail themselves of the many good opportunities . . . for profitable employment" then open to them, a tendency which he feared might lead to the discontinuance of matriculation classes in Dawson High School if the trend persisted.<sup>26</sup> His fears were, however, quite unfounded; both press reports and accounts of former pupils indicate that many families chose to remain in Dawson so that their children might benefit from the schooling there and that students who later attended such universities as Toronto, Harvard or Stanford were in no way hampered by having received their earlier education in this small

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<sup>25</sup>YA, YR6 1, Series 1-A, file 135-j-i, Fred J. Patterson, Annual Report of the Public Schools of the Yukon Territory for the School Year ending June 30, 1936, 31 March 1937, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., Series 4, Vol. 13, file 306, T. G. Bragg, Report of the Superintendent of Schools, 29 May 1910.

northern community.<sup>27</sup> Much credit must go to their teachers, recruited from the best applicants available and usually specialists in their grade or subject area, as well as to the continuity in classroom management and teaching methods ensured by the relatively low teacher turnover that prevailed in the upper grades until the 1920s.

A special feature of the Dawson Public School was for a time its kindergarten, the only one in the Territory, conducted by a trained "directress" for children between the ages of four and six. In her book I Married the Klondike<sup>28</sup> Mrs. Laura Berton speaks of her delight and astonishment at finding on her arrival from Toronto so bright and attractive a classroom. Her classes and those of her successors were, however, very large by today's standards, although such enrolments were not unusual elsewhere in Canada at that time. In 1910, for example, she had forty-three children in her charge and kindergarten enrolments remained similarly high for some years more. Finally, in 1919, when attendance had for the first time fallen below thirty, this class was eliminated as a concession to economy.<sup>29</sup>

For a time overcrowding created problems at other grade levels too. Although, as Mr. Bragg reported,<sup>30</sup> the school's eight classrooms could easily accommodate from 250 to 275 pupils, a marked increase in enrolments after 1911 created difficulties in certain elementary divisions where by 1914 teachers were faced with multi-grade classes ranging in size from 46 to 51 pupils. In 1916, when the student population reached 252, exceeding the 1905 figure, the situation was somewhat eased by the hiring of an additional teacher, bringing the total staff to seven in addition to the Superintendent. After 1919, how-

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<sup>27</sup>From information supplied by former pupils Mrs. Florence White and Mrs. Lillian Cheatham (July, 1984). For a detailed account by T. G. Bragg concerning Dawson High School graduates, see the Dawson Daily News, 17 August 1915; for parents' views see the Daily News, 6 May 1913.

<sup>28</sup>Laura Beatrice Berton, I Married the Klondike (Boston: 1954; rpt. Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1967), pp. 33-34.

<sup>29</sup>Journals of the Yukon Council, 1918, pp. 14-15. More than forty years were to pass before a kindergarten again became an integral part of a Yukon school.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

ever, a steady decline set in, resulting in successive staff cuts that eventually had an adverse effect upon the matriculation classes<sup>31</sup> since fewer teachers were left to bear responsibility for the same number of grades or subjects as before and the senior students received in consequence a smaller share of the time at their disposal. By 1927 the Superintendent reported<sup>32</sup> that the school had 103 pupils, with four teachers and occasional part-time assistance from a local clergyman in the upper grades; by 1936 the enrolment<sup>33</sup> had fallen to eighty-eight, suggesting that by then the Superintendent had become a full-time teacher since he and three others were responsible for the entire program from grades one to twelve. By 1940 he was the only teacher for all high school subjects.

The school building continued to serve the community well, although maintenance costs at times strained the Territory's slender budget. Always more than adequate in size, its one major defect was a lack of provision for indoor recreation. With no gymnasium, the teachers found it difficult to offer a systematic year-round physical education program although they encouraged outdoor games and athletic activities whenever possible. Before stringent economy measures became necessary, a number of much-needed costly improvements were made, including the installation in 1912 of an efficient steam-heating plant and in 1914 of indoor flush toilets. As for classroom lighting, always a concern in a region of long dark winters, a survey conducted at Superintendent Patterson's request in 1935-36 found it then still far below the accepted standard of the time<sup>34</sup> in spite of a number of previous attempts to upgrade it. The most constant expense throughout this entire period appears, however, to have

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<sup>31</sup>Dawson Daily News, 11 June 1923. See also Riches, Annual Report, 22 May 1929.

<sup>32</sup>Toepkins, Annual Report, 16 April 1928, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup>Complete, accurate enrolment figures for Yukon schools 1910-1940 cannot be given as the superintendent's reports appear to be missing for the years 1918-1920, 1923-25, 1928-29, 1932-33 and 1938-40. Allowance must also be made for the fact that some of the available statistics are based on an entire school year while others are from interim reports covering in some cases only the first term. The general trends are, however, obvious.

<sup>34</sup>Patterson, Annual Report, 31 March 1937, p. 5.

been that of renewing the foundations as the pilings upon which the school rested rose and fell and decayed with the heaving and thawing of the ground, a perpetual problem with all buildings in Dawson City.

In many respects Dawson Public School seems to have reached its zenith during the years of World War I. Reports indicate that its enrolments and teaching staff had by then attained their greatest numbers in more than a decade, while the building itself was in better condition than ever before. Patriotism, encouraged by the local chapter of the IODE, had always been stressed; when the war broke out teachers and pupils plunged into massive fund-raising activities in aid of the war effort. Beginning in May, 1915, the school presented the first of a series of public entertainments that over the next two years realized some sixteen hundred dollars for the Canadian Yukon Patriotic Fund to help equip the University of Toronto Military Hospital.<sup>35</sup> A grade three pupil of that era still vividly recalls his class' contribution to one of these concerts, a spirited song with a challenging theme:

Why don't you wear a uniform? Why don't you all fall in?  
Why don't you help your country in her hour of need to win?  
Your King and Country call on you  
To fight through thick and thin.  
In a good old British uniform, FALL IN! FALL IN! FALL IN!<sup>36</sup>

Needless to say, such exhortations did not fall upon deaf ears. Inevitably, however, the names of former students began to find their way into the casualty lists; on March 31, 1917, Mr. Bragg reported that seven of the fifty former Yukon pupils who had enlisted for service had either been killed in action or had died of wounds. Nor did the future seem very bright: as 1917 drew to a close, hints of impending budget and staff cuts were beginning to cast a shadow and by 1919, although peace had come, serious retrenchments were under way in response to the massive cut in the federal grants to the Territory.

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<sup>35</sup>See the Superintendent's reports for 1914-15 and 1915-16, Yukon Council Journals and Sessional Papers.

<sup>36</sup>From an interview with Gordon McIntyre, Whitehorse, Y.T., 10 July 1985.

Under these depressing circumstances, it became necessary to find a replacement for Mr. Bragg. In line with the policy of hiring war veterans, Gold Commissioner MacKenzie secured the services of Major W. F. Dyde, a man of outstanding qualifications with a distinguished war record, whose three years in the Yukon as Superintendent of Schools and teacher of history, literature and languages are still remembered.<sup>37</sup> He left Dawson in June, 1922, to accept a scholarship for doctoral studies at Columbia University; an obituary article in the Yukon News dated October 11, 1973, indicates that at the time of his death he was Vice-President Emeritus of the University of Colorado. Another well remembered superintendent is Stuart R. Tompkins, whose four years at Dawson City (1924-28) led him to a Ph.D. program at Chicago University, a faculty position at the University of Oklahoma, and the authorship of a number of works on Alaskan history. Few details have as yet come to light concerning the other individuals who filled the position during this period.

As the years passed, Dawson Public School reflected more and more the society that it served: dwindling in population, yet maintaining all its original essential functions. Some benefits even accrued as unused classrooms provided space for other activities. One room on the ground floor housed the community library;<sup>38</sup> in 1934 another became available for some modified physical education classes, while the upstairs hallway was converted into a study area. It also became possible in 1935 to offer typing instruction to seven students who paid a small fee to cover the cost of the equipment. From the pupils' point of view, school routines went on much as usual: the Dawson News continued to publish its detailed reports of their monthly exam results as well as accounts of their athletic events, class outings and special programs honouring their mothers or the pioneers of the

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<sup>37</sup>W. F. Dyde, M.A. (Queen's), B.A. (Oxon.), Ph.D. (Columbia), M.C. An article in the Dawson Daily News, 29 July 1919, indicates that in addition to his studies at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar he had also attended the University of Berlin for a year prior to the war. He received the Military Cross for wounds received in combat in World War I.

<sup>38</sup>F. M. Envoldsen, "The Dawson Free Public Library," Dawson News, 24 April 1934.

district. The teachers coped valiantly with their many classes and duties as well as with the ten-percent pay cut imposed for some years after 1933-34 on all government employees in Canada. In the spring of 1938, however, parental dissatisfaction over student dropouts in the senior grades seems to have surfaced, resulting in Mr. Patterson's dismissal.<sup>39</sup> In his place, Mr. Jeckell, an eminently practical man, appointed a Yukon teacher whose knowledge of the Territory and personal qualities took precedence over "outside" experience. In September of that year R. J. "Jack" Hulland was, accordingly, transferred from Whitehorse to Dawson to begin his long tenure as Superintendent of Yukon schools.

#### St. Mary's Catholic School

St. Mary's Catholic School, though much smaller than Dawson Public School, was similarly affected by the general trends of the era. At first, enrolments increased markedly, exceeding those of 1902-05; by 1910 eighty-three pupils were crowded into its two classrooms, sixty-eight of them in the lower grades. To alleviate this difficult situation and to maintain educational standards, the Oblate Fathers added an annex to their building to serve the primary classes, while the Sisters of St. Ann provided a third teacher, Sister Mary Raoul, at no expense to the government.<sup>40</sup> In the senior class, instruction now extended beyond grade eight; records indicate that in 1910 four of Sister Mary Casilda's pupils were completing the work of second year high school.<sup>41</sup> By 1914, when pressures at the primary level had diminished, a recombination of classes occurred that permitted the annex to be used for a special high school commercial class arranged by extension with St. Ann's Academy in Victoria, B.C., and for which tuition fees were required. This class, taught by Sister Mary Esther, provided excellent stenographic training for a number of Yukon stu-

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<sup>39</sup>See a letter from G. A. Jeckell to the Hon. T. A. Crerar, Minister of Mines and Resources, Ottawa, and the latter's reply to Mr. Patterson dated 15 June 1938. PAC, RG 85, Vol. 210, file 600-1-3, part 1.

<sup>40</sup>"Ecole Ste-Marie, Dawson, Y.T.", p. 2.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

dents<sup>42</sup> until it was discontinued in 1920 owing to insufficient enrolments. The two remaining Sisters carried on the elementary program until 1922 when only nineteen pupils remained and the authorities withdrew the government grant for one teacher. St. Mary's then became in effect a one-room elementary school, although the few reports available indicate that some secondary level work was carried on from time to time, usually in the form of assistance to students enrolled in B. C. Department of Education correspondence courses.<sup>43</sup> Also, in spite of its small enrolments, St. Mary's was always able to offer some additional instruction beyond the basic curriculum. In 1937, for example, the Sisters offered oral French lessons, while Sister Mary Rose Eva is especially well remembered for her quarter of a century as music teacher there, from 1913 to 1938. Certainly, the reports of the school's activities in the Dawson News reveal the extent of the encouragement and support that these dedicated teachers provided for many years to the pupils of St. Mary's School.

Whitehorse Public School (Lambert Street)

In Whitehorse, the reduction of staff and enrolments that characterized the Dawson schools during this period was far less severe and may be seen as an indication of the somewhat greater economic stability of this small community whose transportation services

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Enrolments 1910-35  
(See footnote 32)

	Whitehorse Public School	St. Mary's	Dawson Public School
1910-11	59	83	196
1920	39(?)	49	142(?)
1930	64	8	104
1935	53	13	88

provided employment even in the Territory's lean years. In 1910 its two-room school was offering mainly elementary level education to

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<sup>42</sup>Miss Victoria Faulkner, secretary to the Commissioner of Yukon for many years, was a graduate of the 1916



some sixty children, although a few were in Standard VI, or first year high school. Since its inception in 1902 there had been some change of staff: the principal, A. E. Fisher, had left in 1909 to join a life insurance company in Regina,<sup>44</sup> while a number of young ladies had carried on the junior classroom after Kate Middlemiss' departure in March, 1907, for parts unknown. In line with its hiring policy, the government secured in January, 1910, the services of two highly qualified teachers from the Calgary Normal Public School, Mr. T. M. Edwards and Miss E. Murphy, of whom Mr. Bragg is reported to have spoken "in glowing terms" following his inspection visit that September.

The local newspaper is particularly valuable for additional details that supplement the Superintendent's rather terse reports concerning the Whitehorse school. For example, the Star of June 28, 1912, sheds some light on the curriculum, publishing the marks obtained by the grade three and four pupils in their final examinations in ten subjects: reading, writing, arithmetic, drawing, history, geography, literature, composition, grammar and spelling, with a passing mark of thirty-three percent in each subject and a total of 500 marks, i.e., a fifty-percent average. From the same source we also learn (December 20, 1912) that the school's fifty-eight pupils had presented an ambitious and highly successful Christmas cantata and that there were then five students in Standard V or grade eight, and eight in Standard VI. From a later item dated May 15, 1916, we find that in January, 1912, the newly arrived principal, Mr. Duncan Grant, had obtained Mr. Bragg's permission to affiliate Whitehorse Public School with the British Columbia Department of Education so that its Standard VI (grade nine) classes might, with a slight change in their course of studies, write the B.C. provincial examinations for that grade level.

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(continued)

class. Retallack, "Dawson School Celebrates Diamond Jubilee."

<sup>43</sup>See for example Patterson, "Report of the Public Schools, 1933-34" and also H. G. Menzies' report dated 22 May 1930. YA, YRG 1, Series 1-A, Vol. 3, file 135-c.

<sup>44</sup>Whitehorse Weekly Star, 30 September 1910.

typewriters were available, the pupils practised their keyboard techniques for weeks, using cardboard charts. Only when they had mastered the fingering did their teacher, Miss Connie Morgan, allow them to use the actual machines--but they all became highly proficient touch typists.<sup>54</sup>

Such, then, was the schooling available to the children of Dawson and Whitehorse during the years of the Yukon's "big sleep," as the interval between the Territory's two "boom" periods is sometimes known. Hampered by the severe financial constraints of the time, it remained generally academic in nature and decidedly textbook-oriented, curriculum enrichment often being provided through the generosity of concerned parents. Such education differed little from that offered in small communities elsewhere in Canada during these difficult years.

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<sup>54</sup>Details regarding Whitehorse Public School in the 1930s are based on information supplied by Mrs. Gudrun (Erikson) Sparling and Mrs. Estelle (Cameron) Wilson.



26. *Reunion of women teachers and former teachers of Dawson Public School, c. 1917.*

## CHAPTER VII

### TERRITORIAL SCHOOLS: THE LEAN YEARS (continued) (1906-1940)

#### Assisted Schools: A Response to Rural Needs

Families who sought a livelihood outside the larger centres of Dawson or Whitehorse were faced with a difficult and often costly decision once their children reached school age. In general, they had three choices: to move to a more populated area, to send their children away from home to board with friends or relatives or to send them "outside" to private school. In an effort to meet the needs of parents in areas lacking the minimum number of twelve pupils required for a fully supported school, the territorial government began shortly after the turn of the century to provide the "assisted" schools which were to become a feature of the Yukon's early education system. Established through the authority granted the Commissioner in the School Ordinance of 1902 and first mentioned in the Public Accounts for 1906-07, they represent the dying stages of once larger schools such as Bonanza or the birth of new ones, some of which had a very short life indeed. According to Mr. Bragg, these schools were a cooperative venture, with parents and government sharing the costs and responsibilities involved in their operation. As he explains in a letter to a new teacher:

At first only a monthly grant was given the teacher, the parents concerned providing the building, the equipment and the fuel. Later, the government agreed to the practice of making a grant up to \$100 per annum for fuel in most of such schools. It was expected that those who reaped the benefit of the school would be ready to help the teacher out by paying the rent for any required building, providing stoves, and otherwise assisting the teacher.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>YA, YRG 1, Series 4, Vol. 13, file 311-A, T. G. Bragg to Miss Edith Murphy, 5 February 1918.

The salary grants to which he refers varied from \$100 to \$125 according to the number of pupils enrolled<sup>2</sup> and were paid to the teacher on a month-to-month basis only as long as an attendance of six (later, seven) pupils was maintained. It would appear that the amount of classroom furniture, equipment and instructional material that the government supplied was minimal, if we may judge by the following inventory submitted in August, 1911, by Arthur Livingstone, the teacher at Carcross Assisted School:<sup>3</sup>

- 13 desks
- 3 blackboards, 1 very small and 1 needing a new cover
- 1 dictionary
- 5 erasers
- 1 Aldine second reader
- 1 geography of the British Colonies
- 1 school register, partly used
- 1/2 box colored crayons; 1/2 box white crayons
- 1 British Empire map of the world
- 1 map of the world in hemispheres
- 1 map of Asia
- 1 map of Africa
- 1 map of Europe
- 1 map of Canada
- 2 home made tables, 3 home made benches, 2 home made desks (long like tables)

With the possible exception of a few packages of foolscap, whatever else was required in the classroom must have been left to the ingenuity of the teacher and the generosity of the parents.

#### Early Assisted Schools

The earliest of these assisted schools emerged in 1906, the first year of Mr. Bragg's superintendency: one was at Conrad City, a

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<sup>2</sup>Dawson Daily News, 24 March 1911.

<sup>3</sup>YA, YRG 1, Series 4, Vol. 13, file 308.

long-vanished mining camp located twelve miles from Carcross on Windy Arm of Tagish Lake and once described as "the liveliest little town in the North,"<sup>4</sup> while two others were in the Klondike area at Quartz Creek and 9 Below Dominion. Their brief existence may be traced in the Public Accounts which indicate that classes at Conrad were discontinued at the end of June, 1907, after only seven months of operation, with those at 9 Below Dominion following suit a year later; Quartz Creek school was apparently somewhat more durable since it managed to stay alive until about 1910 or 1911. By that date, however, other assisted schools had come into being in a number of tiny communities, while for a few years the Church of England was given a block grant for including a few white children in its mission schools at Selkirk, Carcross and Fortymile.

#### Difficulties and Disappointments

At first, Mr. Bragg seems to have been well pleased with these attempts to provide schooling in the smaller settlements. In 1910 he informed the Territorial Council that there were five assisted schools then in operation at Gold Bottom, Granville, Quartz Creek, Selkirk and Carcross, all in charge of well-qualified teachers.<sup>5</sup> His satisfaction was, however, short-lived since the difficulties inherent in maintaining the efficient operation of such small and isolated schools became increasingly apparent as the years passed. The transitory nature of the settlements and the unsettled employment conditions of the time combined with the difficulties of travel and communication to create endless problems for the Superintendent.

Mr. Bragg's experience in 1913-14 with a proposed new assisted school at Pueblo, a copper property near Whitehorse, seems to have

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<sup>4</sup>Whitehorse Weekly Star, 10 July 1914.

<sup>5</sup>His report for the school year 1910-11 indicates that Miss Irving, the teacher at Gold Bottom, held certificates from both Nova Scotia and Massachussets, Mr. Livingstone at Carcross from Alberta and Mr. Frank Berton at Granville from New Brunswick. Mr. Galpin, who taught at Quartz Creek, held a headmaster's certificate from England, while Mr. Canham at Selkirk was also well-experienced, although not a trained teacher.

been particularly disappointing. Here, he tells us, an assisted school had been started "on the distinct understanding and guarantee that families with children of school age would immediately settle in this locality in more than sufficient numbers to justify the maintenance of an assisted school."<sup>6</sup> The government in this case certainly did its share: the teacher was paid and the school kept open for 137 days at a cost of \$630 for only three pupils, including the son and daughter of the mine manager, who set aside a spacious room in his house for a classroom. The mining company seems also to have acted in good faith, but due to the onset of World War I followed by a serious mine accident that took a number of lives, the townsite failed to develop and Pueblo, like Conrad City, joined the ranks of Yukon's vanished hopes.<sup>7</sup> Thereafter, the Territorial authorities displayed much more caution, tending to delay the establishment of any new assisted school until the required number of pupils was actually present in the locality.

#### Solutions: Letters of Permit and a "Stage" Service

By 1914-15, Mr. Bragg announced that he had given up trying to find qualified teachers for these small schools. As he explains in his report for that year:

The uncertainty in respect to all such schools does not warrant the securing of experienced and qualified teachers . . . because experience proves that the maintenance of an assisted School for one entire year is never certain. The only possible course to follow . . . is to appoint the best qualified person available at the time in the Territory, who may or may not have had previous experience, but who gives evidence of performing the required duties with a fair degree

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<sup>6</sup>T. G. Bragg, "Report of the Superintendent of Schools," Sessional Paper No. 1, Journal of the Yukon Council, 1913-14.

<sup>7</sup>PAC, RG 18, Series 1-A, Vol. 387, file 181-10, Captain P. Martin to Commissioner G. Black, 18 September 1913. Additional details regarding Pueblo were obtained from the Public Accounts, from Mr. Bragg's reports, and from information supplied by Mr. John Scott of Whitehorse.

of efficiency and is willing to put up with the uncertainties and other difficulties of the situation and to accept the grant which the Government is justified in giving, supplemented as it may be by such assistance as those benefited by the school are disposed to give. With great regret I am compelled to say that in most instances such assistance amounts to little or nothing.

He had, in fact, already begun the practice of selecting promising young ladies from his matriculation class who, following a short period of training in the elementary classrooms of Dawson Public School, could be sent to teach in one of the Territory's assisted schools with a "letter of permit"--a procedure which provided a satisfactory supply of teachers for the smaller communities for many years thereafter.

To limit the proliferation of assisted schools along the Klondike creeks,<sup>8</sup> at least in the immediate vicinity of Dawson, Mr. Bragg introduced in September, 1914, a daily automobile service to bring children from adjacent settlements such as Ogilvie Bridge and Bear Creek to Dawson Public School. This undertaking, costing from two to three thousand dollars a year, was no more expensive, as he pointed out, than the maintenance of "two or three inferior schools" and had the added advantage of offering the children from those communities better facilities and instruction. It was, moreover, in line with a trend to consolidation then making its appearance in some rural areas of southern Canada and the United States.<sup>9</sup> Once begun, this "stage" service, its cost recorded under the heading of "assisted schools" and at times shared by the parents, continued until activity at Bear Creek ended forty years later. Of a similar nature was the provision for a few weeks in 1916 and 1917 of a launch to bring children to school from Sunnydale, a farming area eight miles upriver from Dawson,

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<sup>8</sup>See the Appendix for a complete list of assisted schools based on information in the Public Accounts, the most reliable source for tracing all Territorial schools and educational costs between 1905 and 1950.

<sup>9</sup>From information contained in Mr. Bragg's report for 1915-16, as well as his supplementary report of 10 April 1918. This must have been one of the earliest school bus services in Canada.



enabling them to live at home between school opening in August and freeze-up in October, when their families moved to town.

A Typical Assisted School: Tagish (1929-31)

While the uncertainties that plagued the assisted schools were undoubtedly a trial to the Superintendent, they were no less a source of anxiety to conscientious parents concerned for their children's education but tied by circumstances to life in isolated areas. In this respect, the experiences of the residents of Tagish, some fifteen miles south of Carcross, provide valuable insight into the problems encountered by both parents and teachers in such situations. Records<sup>10</sup> indicate that in 1929 Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Dickson, owners of a trading post and fur farm, were granted permission to erect a small log building to serve as a school house for the eight pupils expected to attend classes there. By October the teacher, Miss Katie Martin, appears to have settled in quite happily despite some misgivings about certain latent tensions that she sensed between the three or four families in the settlement. Perhaps to avoid any appearance of favoritism, she seems to have kept very much to herself, but even her previous experience in Carcross from 1923 to 1928 had not prepared her for the almost total isolation of life at Tagish, especially in winter. Solitary and depressed, she finally unburdened herself to the Superintendent:

This has been a very hard year to me. The loneliness is almost unbearable and it has taken no end of will-power to keep me from resigning at least a dozen times. . . . My chief occupation is to arrange my day so that night will come quicker. I even keep the kids in till four very often with that end in view. . . . This is hardly a letter for a subordinate to write but it has passed a few moments and made a break in an otherwise monotonous evening. . . .<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>YA, YRG 1, Series 4, Vol. 29, file 464.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., Katie Martin to Superintendent G. Menzies, 22 March 1930.

It was not a good situation for a young and active girl, as she herself admitted; at the end of June she resigned her post to return home to Whitehorse. With respect to her classes, however, she had been quite successful: the children had enjoyed school and had made good progress, while the Dicksons noted that the general spirit of the community had improved through having the school there to serve as a common interest. Her successor was apparently less effective. That year two children moved with their mother to Carcross and four others dropped out of school so that by June, 1931, only five pupils remained and the Superintendent was forced to withdraw support. In spite of repeated pleas from the two remaining families, who pointed out that the Tagish fur farms were then providing more tax revenue per capita than any other locality in the Yukon, the authorities remained firm. Since no additional children arrived to enable the school to reopen, Mrs. Dickson for some years resorted to carrying on full-time classes for her own two boys and another young lad so that they could at least complete their elementary schooling. Under the circumstances, it was fortunate that she herself was a former teacher.

#### Other Short-Lived Schools

##### Carmacks (1925)

Tagish was, of course, by no means unique. Somewhat similar problems had arisen a few years earlier in Carmacks,<sup>12</sup> where the efforts of some parents to establish an assisted school had apparently been hampered by the unwillingness or the inability of others to participate. A teacher had, in fact, come for a few weeks in the fall of 1925 to begin regular classes there but as numbers remained insufficient the Superintendent closed the school in October. The teacher, Miss Sybil Martin, returned home to Whitehorse and the parents reverted to hiring tutors for their children.

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<sup>12</sup>Information concerning Carmacks is derived from an interview (July 1984) with Mrs. Ida Goulter, a pioneer resident of that community, as well as from correspondence in YA, YRG 1, Series 4, Vol. 19, file 357.

### Stewart City (1924-25)

Nor were the families at Stewart City<sup>13</sup> much more successful in obtaining schooling for their children. Their first request in September, 1924, met with approval but once again the required attendance was not maintained and the teacher, Miss Hattie Stone from Dawson, was withdrawn in June, 1925, after holding classes for only seven months. A decade later, in 1935 and again in 1936, appeals for an assisted school at Stewart were refused, this time not because there were too few children but because no apportionment had been made for a school there and the limited Territorial budget could not provide funds for such a contingency. As with Tagish, the only recourse was for one of the mothers to carry on classes as best she could for a few of the children; once again it was fortunate that she had been a teacher.

### Selkirk (1925-27)

Developments at Selkirk<sup>14</sup> followed much the same pattern. Although the mission school did occasionally provide some instruction for a few white children there, the irregular attendance of the Indian pupils prevented development of a systematic year-round school routine, so that Selkirk parents in general sought other alternatives. In the early 1920s an application for an assisted school was refused on the grounds that no money had been set aside in the budget for that purpose. A second request was, however, more successful: in October, 1925, the Gold Commissioner--apparently with a little pressure from George Black, the Yukon's federal MP--approved the appointment of a teacher for Selkirk. After the customary short period of training, a Dawson girl, Miss Pauline White, proceeded to Selkirk where she held school in a log cabin, studied for her own matriculation examinations and returned from writing them to teach a second year at Selkirk at the parents' request. Her time there ended in June, 1927;

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<sup>13</sup>See the correspondence in *Ibid.*, file 355, and also an item in the Dawson News, 25 November 1925.

<sup>14</sup>Information concerning the assisted school at Selkirk is from Mrs. Pauline (White) Russell, who taught there from 1925 to 1927, and from documents in YA, YRG 1, Series 4, Vol. 21, file 371.

thereafter the records make no further mention of a public school at Selkirk.

### Permanent Schools Emerge

Carcross (1910-14; 1923)

Not all assisted schools were fated to disappear. A few, more fortunately located in settlements with a greater potential for permanence, outgrew their early difficulties and developed into fully supported schools from which their present-day successors have evolved. Of these, the school at Carcross has the longest history.<sup>15</sup> Since by 1909 the Anglican mission was no longer accepting white children, the residents that summer circulated a petition requesting the establishment of a government school. As a result, the following January saw the opening of the first of a series of short-lived assisted schools,<sup>16</sup> the last of which closed in 1914 when anticipated mining developments failed to materialize and bring more families to the district. A decade elapsed before the presence in 1923 of eight school-age children once more justified the opening of an assisted school taught by Miss Katie Martin, a Whitehorse girl who had taken senior matriculation and Normal School training in British Columbia and who, as previously mentioned, later taught for a year at Tagish.

By 1927 enrolments had increased sufficiently to ensure full government support,<sup>17</sup> thereby providing Miss Martin with a salary increase of \$25 a month and freeing the parents from their obligation to provide wood to heat the school building. Katie Martin was fol-

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<sup>15</sup>Information regarding Carcross may be found in correspondence in *Ibid.*, Vol. 13, file 308. Additional details were provided in interviews with former teachers or students: Mrs. Gertrude (Rose) Squirechuk, Mrs. Gudrun (Erikson) Sparling of Whitehorse and the late Mrs. Matthew Watson, formerly of Carcross.

<sup>16</sup>The first teacher, Louise McCormac[k], left in June, 1910. She was followed that September by Arthur Livingstone, a young teacher from Alberta, but by August, 1911, too few pupils remained to permit the school to reopen. A second attempt, in 1913-14, lasted only one year but brought a well-known pioneer resident to Carcross. Hazel McLaren, one of Mr. Bragg's pupils, taught that year with a letter of permit and stayed on in the community as Mrs. Matthew Watson until 1956.

<sup>17</sup>Carcross School reverted briefly to assisted status during the 1929-30 school year.

lowed in 1928 by Adele Sansom, also born and educated in Whitehorse, with a teacher's certificate from B.C.<sup>18</sup> Two years later she in turn was succeeded by William Tinney, a clergyman and former principal of the nearby Indian residential school, who held a teaching certificate from Manitoba and is reported to have maintained "a good school, with sound scholarship and a pleasant, aggressive atmosphere of work."<sup>19</sup> Carrying on classes in cramped and inadequate quarters, improvising materials and at times even making his own desks, his initiative and ingenuity were rewarded, at least in 1935-36, by almost perfect attendance, surely an indication of parental and pupil support. When the school (scarcely larger than a one-car garage, as his son recollects) was destroyed by fire in July, 1936, he supervised its relocation to a somewhat larger building once used by the Anglican Church as a school and community reading room. Since his own children were approaching high school age, he moved that December with his family to Whitehorse to accept an appointment to the Canadian Customs Service there. He was replaced by a young teacher from Vancouver, Renard R. Brunt, a university graduate whose vigour and enthusiasm, while appreciated by his pupils, seems to have caused some concern to parents accustomed to Mr. Tinney's more traditional methods. At the end of two years, his appointment was not renewed and the school passed into the hands of other teachers, few of whom remained longer than a year or two.

#### Mayo (1913-)

The assisted school that opened in 1913 at Mayo Landing began a few years later than its counterpart at Carcross but differed from it by achieving full government support in a shorter time without any breaks in the continuity of its operation. On the first of October

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<sup>18</sup>Adele Sansom McMurphy, like Hazel McLaren, married and spent the greater part of her life in Carcross. Both have descendants still living in the area.

<sup>19</sup>Patterson, Report of the Public Schools, Part C, 31 March 1935. According to his son Arthur, Mr. Tinney later took a civil service post as a way "outside" so that his children might have access to a university education. His four sons did all graduate, two with Ph.D.'s. Three of them became teachers.

that year, Alex Profeit,<sup>20</sup> a young teacher from eastern Canada, began holding school for eight pupils in a classroom provided by the parents and referred to as "Binet's house." During each of his two years there records indicate that for some reason classes were discontinued in early spring: perhaps by that time both teacher and parents were eager to set out prospecting. In any case, when the school closed in mid-February of 1915 the likelihood of its reopening that fall seemed very remote. During the summer, however, a number of new families arrived in the settlement, increasing the total number of school-age children to eleven and providing Mr. Bragg with a staffing problem. With no qualified person readily available to replace Mr. Profeit, he decided to follow the procedure already begun in Carcross and to place one of his Dawson pupils, Emma Allen, in charge of the school in Mayo, the first of a series of such appointments to that school over the next few years. Throughout this period the enrolment remained very small; in 1920 when Miss Dorothy Hoggan took charge<sup>21</sup> there were still only ten pupils on the register. That fall encouraging mining developments attracted more newcomers to the area; as a result a committee of parents wrote to the Commissioner pointing out that Mayo, with an estimated population of one hundred and an additional two hundred and fifty in the surrounding district, would in the near future require a fully supported school.<sup>22</sup> Despite some understandable hesitation on the part of the Territorial authorities, an enrolment of thirteen pupils in September, 1921, justified this change of status and additional expense; as a result the school was moved to somewhat larger quarters in the log cabin rented from Mr. F. Cantin which was to be its home for more than twenty years, while the teacher's salary was increased from \$125 to \$150 a month and the ed-

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<sup>20</sup>His letter of application indicates that he was a qualified teacher with a total of five years experience in Ontario and Saskatchewan. In 1911 he had applied to teach at Grand Forks (Bonanza), where he was employed for a time as night foreman on construction of a gold dredge. YA, R61, Series 4, Vol. 20, file 364, Alex Profeit to T. G. Bragg, 31 August 1911.

<sup>21</sup>Dorothy Hoggan, daughter of a river-boat captain, was the first white girl born in Whitehorse. She grew up in Dawson, gained a teaching certificate from B.C., and after teaching four years in Mayo moved to Tacoma, Washington. Dawson Daily News, 26 July 1925. She was succeeded by another Dawson girl, Miss Laura Gillespie, who taught at Mayo until 1928.

<sup>22</sup>YA, YRG 1, Series 4, Vol. 13, file 311-A, J. E. Farrell to Gold Commissioner G. McKenzie, 13 December 1920.

educational equipment of the school was improved.<sup>23</sup>

Before long, the need to offer high school classes arose; to add ten grade nine subjects to the teacher's already heavy workload was felt to be out of the question, yet the number of children involved was insufficient to warrant the hiring of another full-time staff member. In 1923-24 the Church of England rector, the Reverend F. H. Buck,<sup>24</sup> provided a temporary solution by offering to teach the four students then entering high school for a fee of fifty dollars a month, to be shared equally by the parents and the Territorial government. He appears to have held classes for five hours a day, sometimes more, in the one-room annex to the school building which was later to become the IODE library. The following year he again taught the same four pupils, using the church vestry as a classroom and obtaining some aid from the government in the form of a few locally built desks and a supply of gas for his lamp. Since the records indicate that a number of matriculation exams were written in Mayo that June when his students were still enrolled in grade ten, he must have brought them along very well in some subjects. His departure that summer created considerable panic until a replacement was found in the person of Lieutenant H. E. Tabor of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals stationed in Mayo who saw these students through their final year of high school, his fee being fully supported by a government grant of \$500 a year. In September, 1926, the position reverted to the local clergyman, the Reverend G. F. Leigh, who seems to have taught two or three grade nine students that year and perhaps some again the following year, although apparently with less success than his predecessors to judge from Superintendent Tompkins' comment in his 1927-28 report that there was "very little to show for the money spent other than that of satisfying the feeling of the parents." After June, 1928,

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<sup>23</sup>See W. F. Dyde's annual report for the schools of the Yukon Territory dated 31 March 1932. PAC, RG 85, Vol. 210, file 600-1-3-i.

<sup>24</sup>The Rev. Frank Buck, BA, had come to the Yukon in 1915 to work among the miners of the Mayo and Klondike areas. In 1917 he went overseas with the Yukon Infantry Company under Captain G. Black. In 1922 he became the first rector of St. Mary's Church, Mayo, leaving three years later to continue his studies in education at UBC. ("A Highway for our God," a manuscript in the writer's possession, Chapter 4; also North-ern Lights, Vol. 13, No. 4, November, 1925, pp. 3-4.)

this policy of hiring a part-time high school instructor for Mayo was abandoned and for some years the few pupils requiring grade nine were entrusted to the elementary teachers, Miss Vera Gillespie (1928-30) and Mr. N. Manual (1930-32).

A very different and more practical approach to post-elementary instruction in Mayo was that introduced by Gordon McIntyre who arrived there in the fall of 1932 to teach grades one to eight, intending to offer some commercial instruction privately.<sup>25</sup> At Mr. Jeckell's suggestion and with some adjustment in salary, he began that October to hold shorthand, bookkeeping and typing classes for two hours every day in the late afternoon for three older girls. The following year the program continued with three new pupils but had to be discontinued thereafter owing to lack of students. This undertaking, however, earned for Mr. McIntyre the lasting appreciation of the community for his efforts to provide specific job training for young people whose parents could not have afforded in that time of depression to send them away from home for further education.<sup>26</sup>

#### Mining Camp Schools

Keno Hill (1925-31) and Wernecke Camp (1931-33)

As mining exploration and development continued in the Mayo region, a succession of small schools came into being, only one of which was destined for eventual permanence. The first of these was opened in August, 1925, at Keno Hill, where strenuous lobbying on the part of the company and its employees had succeeded in winning Gold Commissioner Reid's approval for a government public school in spite

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<sup>25</sup>Gordon McIntyre, born and educated in Dawson City, attended Normal School in B.C. and also took some commercial training in that province. He taught in Mayo from 1932-41 and, after service in the Canadian forces during the Second World War, returned there as mining recorder, later serving as Territorial councillor for that area. Now retired, he lives in Whitehorse. Kevin Shackell, "Little Red Schoolhouse. . .," Yukon News, 29 November 1982.

<sup>26</sup>Mr. McIntyre's reports concerning these classes are appended to the Superintendent's reports for 1932-33, 1933-34 and 1935-36 found in YA, YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 3, file 135-F-i; Vol. 59, file 34362 and Vol. 3, file 135-J-i, respectively.



of the objections of Superintendent Tompkins, who thought it would be more prudent to proceed cautiously and either delay the opening of a school there or, at most, establish an assisted one.<sup>27</sup> His views concerning the high cost of schools in mining communities were in this case justified: in its brief six years of existence enrolments at the Keno Hill school failed to grow beyond the minimum required for full support while fuel and maintenance costs were heavy and rent was high, at least until a new and smaller classroom became available. The families there were, however, well served since the school provided all elementary classes as well as grade nine, if required. Its first teacher, Miss Alice Fisher, a Mayo girl, was followed in 1929 by Ted R. Bleiler, a young Albertan who had been attracted to the Yukon by the higher salaries offered to teachers there.<sup>28</sup> When the mine at Keno Hill closed in June, 1931, he moved with five pupils to nearby Wernecke Camp<sup>29</sup> where a second school was opened early that October for thirteen children aged six to seventeen in grades one, three, five, nine and ten. As Territorial Council had made no apportionment for this school, the company and parents provided and maintained the classroom. This assisted status brought a corresponding reduction in salary so that Mr. Bleiler had, in effect, a heavier teaching load with less pay than at Keno and, in fact, received no salary at all until Council could meet the following spring to vote the necessary funds.

When he left teaching in 1932 to go placer mining, the company officials faced a new problem. They discovered to their consternation that his replacement was to be a young single girl, a recent graduate of Dawson school, for whom accommodation other than the miners' bunkhouse would have to be provided. It seems, however, that their fears were groundless: suitable housing was found for Emma Skistad who proved, moreover, to be "a wonderful little teacher" well liked by all.<sup>30</sup> Her time there was short; in March, 1933, the mine moved its

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., Vol. 13, file 311-A, S. R. Tompkins to Mr. Percy Reid, 2 July 1925.

<sup>28</sup>"The Year the Market Crashed Forced Pioneers Northwards," Yukon News, 19 October 1933.

<sup>29</sup>YA, YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 3, file 135-E-ii, T. R. Bleiler to H. G. Menzies, 27 May 1932. See also Ibid., Series 4, Vol. 19, file 360, T. Bleiler's report for October, 1931.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., L. Wernecke to G. A. Jeckell, 14 March 1932.

headquarters to Mayo and too few children were left to justify continuation of the school at Wernecke Camp beyond Easter.

#### Elsa (1937-)

Discovery of the rich Galena Hill ore deposits and the subsequent opening of the Treadwell-Yukon Company's camp at Elsa soon brought a third school to the district. In 1936 the government turned down the parents' first request for a teacher for ten children there on the grounds that no money had been allocated for the purpose. However, the following year the number rose to thirteen, justifying the opening of a public school in premises provided and maintained by the Company with Mr. A. Lanyon as teacher.<sup>31</sup> Like its predecessors in the area, it seemed at first to be destined for a brief existence, especially when the United States in the early 1940s ceased buying foreign silver, forcing the Elsa mine to close for a time. Following its reopening some years later this mine proved to be a remarkably durable operation; as a result Elsa school later became an ongoing component of the Territory's education system.

#### Other Requests and Unmet Needs

##### Fortymile

Now and again the records yield traces of less successful attempts to persuade the authorities to provide schooling for small numbers of children in other remote districts. As previously mentioned, the mission school at Fortymile received assistance in 1907 and 1908 for a few white children attending classes there; some years later, in 1914, an effort seems to have been made to reopen it as "an assisted school, with the privilege of Indians to attend." In this instance the Indian agent reported that, lacking the requisite number of white children for a grant, the Bishop nevertheless kept the school open for a few years for "four or five white and four Indian children"

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<sup>31</sup>Information concerning the Elsa school at this period is found in the Keno file, Ibid.

with a former Oxford student, A. C. Field, in charge.<sup>32</sup> Soon afterwards, the settlement was apparently totally abandoned and by 1937 was reported by a visitor to have become a mere "ghost town, almost eerie in its loneliness."<sup>33</sup>

#### The Kluane-Burwash Area

Fortymile was at least situated on the Yukon River; more difficult of access was the Kluane-Burwash area northwest of Whitehorse which remained relatively isolated until the construction of the Alaska Highway. In October, 1917, Mr. T. A. Dickson, a hunter and guide at Kluane, asked Bishop Stringer to help him obtain an assisted school in that area. Having heard that six children would be required, he writes:

I have five children old enough to attend school. Jack Haydon has two besides a good many of the Aishihik Indians would attend school regular if there could be one arranged at or near my place. I will willingly put up a good school and have all the rations etc. for same free of cost. Besides supplying them with abundant meat and fish which is very plentiful at my place at the foot of Kluane Lake, Jack Haydon is in a good position to subscribe well towards the same and I hope that I will be able to do a little more than I have already stated. . . .<sup>34</sup>

It seems that no such school was ever opened, nor did a similar request from Eugene Jacquot at Burwash Landing in 1934 bring any results even though there were ten school-age children there, since the Territorial government was particularly short of funds at the time and had no money available for the purpose. A second request from Burwash residents in 1939, supported by a petition signed by Mr.

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<sup>32</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 931-1, part 1, J. Hawksley to the Department of Indian Affairs, 17 June 1916. Regarding A. C. Field, see YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1-a, Box 3, file 12.

<sup>33</sup>Northern Lights, Vol. 26, Nos. 3-4, Aug.-Nov., 1937, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 8, file 6, T. A. Dickson to Bishop I. O. Stringer, 20 October 1917.

Jacquot and thirty-two others, met with a similar refusal, presumably for the same reason.<sup>35</sup>

### Alternatives

Under circumstances such as these, parents unable to move to a larger community had to look for other alternatives. Some solved the problem by sending their children to Dawson or Whitehorse where they lived with friends or relatives while attending school; those of mixed parentage could be accommodated at St. Paul's Hostel, a residence established by Bishop Stringer in 1920 so that such children from the more remote areas might have access to Dawson Public School.<sup>36</sup> Some parents, better placed financially, sent their children to schools "outside," while others hired tutors to direct their children's lessons, sometimes sharing their services with other families in the neighbourhood. Finally, the mother herself occasionally assumed the task, as was the case at Stewart City and Tagish; in that event the Superintendent appears to have assisted by sending her the necessary texts and a curriculum guide. A further aid to home study were the correspondence courses developed after 1919 by the British Columbia Department of Education<sup>37</sup> or those supplied by the Calvert Correspondence School of Boston, Massachusetts, which Mr. McIntyre recalls as being particularly popular with Yukoners for many years.

### Yukon Schools, 1910-1940: Summary

Despite its inability to provide equal educational opportunities for all children in all parts of the Territory, it would be inappropriate to judge the Yukon school system too harshly for its performance during these years. Given the region's extremely small

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<sup>35</sup>Journals of the Yukon Council, 1934 and 1939.

<sup>36</sup>A list of the children attending Dawson or Whitehorse schools from the outlying areas of the Territory in 1934-35 will be found in the Appendix.

<sup>37</sup>In 1919 British Columbia became the first Canadian province to establish a correspondence division. Ten years later these original elementary courses were extended through the junior high grades and later to the senior high school level. Phillips, Development of Education, p. 132.

population, the vast distances between its settlements and the prevailing difficulties of communication, it is remarkable that the system functioned as well as it did. At its best, in the Dawson and Whitehorse schools, it offered the Territory's pupils an education very similar to that available at the time in other rural areas of western Canada where reliance continued to be placed mainly on small schools housing all elementary and secondary grades under one roof<sup>38</sup> until the trend to larger schools became widespread after World War II. The greatest handicap for much of the period was undoubtedly shortage of money, especially after 1933 when expenditures for the entire Yukon school system did not exceed thirty-five or forty thousand dollars a year.<sup>39</sup> However, it is well to remember that even in times of greatest economy Yukon teachers continued to receive their same basic salary, apart from the universal ten-percent cut imposed for a few years in the 1930s on all government employees across Canada; in this respect they were more fortunate than many of their provincial counterparts,<sup>40</sup> even if working conditions were far from ideal. In any case, brighter days lay ahead: before many more years elapsed the Yukon found itself entering a new and unforeseen phase that brought sweeping changes to all aspects of its society and renewed vigour to its school system.

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<sup>38</sup>Johnson, A Brief History of Education, p. 152.

<sup>39</sup>See the Appendix for a table setting forth the total expenditures on education as shown in the public accounts for the period.

<sup>40</sup>The depression years were particularly difficult for Saskatchewan teachers. According to Phillips, Development of Education, p. 229, the salaries of women teachers holding first class certificates fell in rural areas there from \$1,142 in 1930 to \$442 in 1934. Even these salaries could not always be paid. "In many districts teachers were given only the government grant of a dollar a day and usually, but not always, their board."



27. Mayo Public School pupils with teacher Dorothy Hoggan (left of door).  
Gold Commissioner and Mrs. G.P. MacKenzie (in front of door), c. 1923-24.



28. *Reverend Frank Buck, teacher, with Mayo high school class on church steps at Mayo, c. 1923-24.*

## CHAPTER VIII

### NATIVE EDUCATION: RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS (1906-1940)

For almost half a century following the death in June, 1906, of Bishop Bompas, that staunch advocate of Indian education, the Yukon's native children--like their counterparts elsewhere in Canada--remained outside the public school system. Until the 1940s, such education as they received continued to be provided through the efforts of the Anglican church with financial assistance from the federal government, an alliance at times fraught with tensions and misunderstandings and inevitably affected by the economic difficulties of the period. One notable result of their joint efforts was the establishment of two widely separated boarding institutions for children of native ancestry: Choooutla Indian Residential School near Carcross in the south-western corner of the Yukon and Shingle Point Eskimo Residential School on the Territory's remote Arctic coast. Each of these had its own purpose and each, according to circumstances, met with a different degree of success.

#### An Indian Residential School

##### From Fortymile to Carcross (1903)

Choooutla School,<sup>1</sup> the older and better known of the two, was the outgrowth of the little boarding home for orphans and neglected children that Bishop Bompas had transferred in 1903 from Fortymile to a small cabin behind the railway station in Carcross. Only a year later he moved the children and Miss Ellis, their supervisor, to larger quarters in the Indian village across the river, a location which in its turn soon proved inadequate for the school's growing population. The urgent need for improved facilities was noted by Mr. Bragg, the Territorial Superintendent of Schools, whose reports clearly portray

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<sup>1</sup>Pronounced "Choo-ut-la," the name is a Loucheux word meaning "laughing water," a reference to the stream running through the property to which the school was moved in 1912.



conditions there between 1907 and 1910.<sup>2</sup> The main building was, he tells us, a log structure of "a storey and a half, the half being so low as to amount to little more than a good garret" containing two cramped rooms used as dormitories for the girls and ventilated by "a good-sized window at each end, open day and night." Downstairs on the ground floor were a room about eighteen feet square used for both meals and lessons, two small rooms for the matron and her assistant, a very tiny and inadequately equipped kitchen and also "a back room with a little cache attached, this room being used for a laundry and storage purposes." In 1907 a log building was erected as a dormitory for the growing number of boys, with a small private room for their matron; two years later a separate one-room schoolhouse was built, freeing the large room in the main building for use exclusively as a dining hall while somewhere, according to Mr. Bragg, space was found for a workshop where the boys could do a little simple carpentry. All these improvements were, however, merely stopgap measures that enabled the school to carry on while the slow process of obtaining federal support for the construction and maintenance of a new building was under way.

#### The Struggle for Federal Funding

By 1906 the Diocese of Selkirk<sup>3</sup> was under the direction of its second bishop, Isaac O. Stringer, whose appointment in November, 1905, had enabled Bishop Bompas to retire. On assuming office, Stringer was dismayed to discover that the diocesan finances were in a precarious state. Learning that the CMS, which was still fully supporting three missionaries and the bulk of the Indian work in the Yukon, planned to withdraw its aid and transfer this responsibility to the newly formed Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada (MSCC), he decided to set out for England where he hoped by capitalizing upon the affection which Bompas had inspired to build up a

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<sup>2</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3962, file 147,654-1, (2), T. G. Bragg to Department of Indian Affairs, 1 May 1907, 14 May 1908 and 21 April 1910.

<sup>3</sup>Renamed "Diocese of Yukon" in August, 1907.

diocesan endowment fund as a memorial to his predecessor.<sup>4</sup> On his way overseas in November, 1906, he stopped at Ottawa to present the Honorable John Oliver, Minister of the Interior, with an appeal for a new boarding school at Carcross and a larger annual grant for his other mission schools in the Territory. On this visit he was accompanied by a new member of his clergy, the Reverend A. E. O'Meara,<sup>5</sup> whose previous legal experience enabled him to play a major role in negotiations with Ottawa concerning Indian matters in the Yukon. In March, 1907, O'Meara undertook in the Bishop's absence to remind the Minister of Stringer's appeal,<sup>6</sup> prompting in return a federal request for the Commissioner and the Superintendent of Schools to state their views as to what should be done about Indian education in the Territory and the probable costs involved.<sup>7</sup>

In reply Mr. Bragg submitted two detailed and thorough reports based on a number of visits to the mission schools. In the first of these, dated May 1, 1907, he echoed the opinions of his predecessor, J. T. Ross, by stating that in his view the Indian day schools at Moosehide and Selkirk were almost totally ineffective since the lack of teaching materials, irregular pupil attendance and deplorable sanitary conditions in the villages defeated the best efforts of the workers there. On the other hand, he reported that, despite its many limitations, he was "most favourably impressed" with "the progress made and the excellent work done" by the pupils at Carcross school under the direction of the Reverend John Hawksley with Miss Ellis as matron and the Misses Thompson and Hutchison, both with Montreal dip-

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<sup>4</sup>Report of the First Synod of the Diocese of Yukon, Whitehorse, Y.T., September 10-12, 1907. Bishop Stringer, missionary to the Eskimos and rector of Christ Church in Whitehorse from 1902 to 1905, was to prove as constant in his journeyings as Boapas had been, although his travels often took him much farther afield.

<sup>5</sup>Arthur Eugene O'Meara (c.1861-1928), son of a pioneer missionary to the Ojibways, was called to the Ontario bar in 1886, later entering the ministry at the urgent invitation of I. O. Stringer. Following his ordination in 1906 he was stationed for a time at Conrad City near Carcross; a few years later he left the Yukon for British Columbia where he is said to have become "a self-appointed Indian advocate." F. A. Peake, The Anglican Church in British Columbia (Vancouver: Mitchell press, 1959), p. 153.

<sup>6</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1, A. E. O'Meara to the Minister of the Interior, 18 March 1907.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., J. D. McLean to Acting Commissioner J. T. Lithgow, 23 April 1907.

lomas, as the classroom teachers. In his second report, written to the Commissioner later that year, he restated his opinion concerning the day schools and recommended that "a substantial grant be made for the erection of suitable buildings at Carcross" where, he felt, the work "should include in addition to the ordinary rudiments of a school education, carpentry and gardening for the boys and possibly blacksmithing, and cooking and general domestic service for the girls." In conclusion, he suggested that the required expenditure, which he estimated at about six thousand dollars, should be administered from the Yukon by the Bishop and urged that the matter be dealt with as speedily as possible so that a new building could be erected by the following summer.<sup>9</sup>

#### The Vowell and Green Survey (1908)

These reports, endorsed by the Commissioner and accompanied by information from O'Meara pertaining to the number, location and conditions of the various Yukon Indian bands,<sup>9</sup> failed to achieve the immediate results that Mr. Bragg had recommended and the Bishop had hoped for, since Indian Affairs officials in Ottawa were at that time preoccupied with an in-depth nationwide study of Indian education and were consequently unwilling to undertake new expenditures. Furthermore, they had also been approached by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church who were seeking aid for a proposed boarding school for Indians at Atlin, in an adjacent and equally unfamiliar region of northern British Columbia. Since more information about both areas was obviously required, the federal authorities asked the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for British Columbia, Mr. A. W. Vowell, and the Reverend A. E. Green, Inspector of Indian schools for that province, to extend their proposed visit to Atlin to include Carcross and any portion of the Yukon which they thought advisable "in order to obtain a thorough knowledge of the situation, which would enable the Depart-

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., T. G. Bragg to Alexander Henderson, 14 December 1907.

<sup>9</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 14, folder 8, "Memo for the Minister re Yukon Indians," typescript, 9 pp.

ment to decide in the best interests of all concerned with reference to the future school policy in this remote part of the Dominion."<sup>10</sup>

These two gentlemen duly arrived from Victoria, reaching Carcross on July 15, 1908. Here they were met by O'Meara and Hawksley and given the opportunity to spend a day at the school inspecting the buildings, which they found "totally inadequate," and the eighteen pupils who they noted were "bright and well behaved" and "fairly well grounded in the elementary rudiments of reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic." From Carcross they proceeded to Atlin where they investigated the need for a Catholic boarding school<sup>11</sup> and where they also interviewed Chief Teslin Billy in order to learn something about the history of his band at nearby Teslin Lake. They then separated, Mr. Green travelling by boat some five hundred miles downriver with O'Meara to gather what information he could about various Indian bands along the upper Yukon, while Mr. Vowell and Mr. Hawksley visited the Indians at Champagne, some sixty miles northwest of Whitehorse, before travelling overland to rejoin their colleagues in Dawson.

Their enquiries and observations led them to conclude that a boarding school was, under the circumstances, the most suitable way of educating the Yukon Indians. Such a school, they felt, needed to provide only "the simplest form of education, such as reading, writing and arithmetic and, it may be, carpentry," since that was all in their view that the Indians would need to enable them to be self-supporting, and anything more would "unfit them for their condition in life." With respect to day schools, they were of the same opinion as Mr. Bragg, considering them to be of little use except in localities where the native people resided all year round. In conclusion, they reminded the Department that there were thousands of Indians in British Columbia who had no schools and yet were "getting along com-

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<sup>10</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3962, file 147,654-1, Secretary to Indian Affairs to A. E. Vowell, 4 April 1908.

<sup>11</sup>Although the boarding school at Atlin failed to materialize, the Department did make a grant in support of the Indian day school conducted there by Father F. J. Allard, OMI. This school closed in 1910 owing to falling enrolment. Concerning Indian schools at Atlin, see the correspondence in Ibid., Vol. 6384, file 801-1, part 1.

fortably and making a good living for themselves and their families,"<sup>12</sup> apparently implying that they saw no immediate need for Ottawa to hasten the process of educating the Territory's entire native population.

### Indian Education: Federal Policies

Up to this point Ottawa's approach to Bishop Stringer's request had been one of extreme caution, mainly because the federal policy concerning Indian education had for some time been undergoing a review at the insistence of the three Protestant denominations involved in native schooling.<sup>13</sup> Such a national review was long overdue: the thirty or so Indian schools of 1858 had multiplied until in 1906 there were 226 day schools, 55 boarding schools and 22 industrial residential schools from the Maritimes to British Columbia.<sup>14</sup> To all of these the churches, both Catholic and Protestant, had made great contributions in buildings, manpower and money, supported by the federal government, which since Confederation had provided grants totalling nearly six and a half million dollars. By 1908, as the above Committee's report states, grave doubts had arisen as to the effectiveness of these joint efforts. The industrial schools which had seemed so effective in eastern Canada were by then being criticized as expensive and ineffective, especially in the western prairie regions where it was felt that their specialized trades training failed to equip the Indian pupils for conditions they would meet as adults. The boarding schools, for which the churches had always borne the major costs and which emphasized the teaching of basic literacy skills and agriculture, were seen as somewhat more successful, although the high

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<sup>12</sup>For these recommendations see Ibid., Vol. 3962, file 147,654-1, A. W. Vowell and A. E. Green, Report to the Secretary of the Indian Department, 14 August 1908.

<sup>13</sup>The information that follows is derived from a 20-page document setting forth the Department's views: Ibid., Vol. 6001, file 1-1-1, part 2, Report from the Department of Indian Affairs to the Members of a Joint Committee Representing the Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican Churches, 21 March 1908.

<sup>14</sup>Additional information concerning the various types of Indian schools and their development may be found in H. J. Vallery, "A History of Indian Education in Canada," a thesis submitted to the Department of History of Queen's University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, April, 1942, Ch. 6, 7, 8.

death rate from tuberculosis and "the adverse influences of reservation life on the discharged pupils" minimized their educational advantages. Careful consideration of his Department's policies had brought Mr. Oliver himself, as well as some of the senior members of his staff, to the firm belief that for both cultural and educational reasons the establishment of an improved type of day school on the Indian reservations would be a more humane, effective and economical course to follow. In British Columbia, where the treaty reservation system did not exist and where the Indians were seen as practically self-supporting, it was felt that a special study of each locality should be made and that, in fact, the children would be better off if left with their parents to learn their traditional skills, a view strongly supported by the Minister.<sup>15</sup> In short, the essence of the Department's report was, "Proceed with circumspection before large expenditures are incurred which would tend to perpetuate the present system [of boarding schools]."

The Yukon did not, of course, fit into any provincial pattern. Indeed, it must have seemed from Mr. Bragg's reports and from that submitted by Messrs. Vowell and Green that the Indians there would be better served by a small boarding school, especially since these official reports indicated that the nomadic life style of the Yukon's native people rendered local day schools almost worthless. Accordingly, when Bishop Stringer and Mr. O'Meara appeared before Mr. Oliver on February 28, 1909, for a final interview, the Minister--no doubt reluctantly--agreed to build and equip a school for thirty boarders at a total cost of \$17,500. To a list of thirteen other requests from the diocesan clergy for assistance in a number of educational and social programs<sup>16</sup> he turned a deaf ear, refusing for example to consider the provision of a doctor and hospital for the Yukon Indians and rejecting appeals for a second boarding school at Selkirk and an increase in the existing number of day schools. He was also reluc-

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<sup>15</sup>GSA, MSCC Series 2-14, 65 75-103, Frank Oliver to A.C.C., 28 January 1908.

<sup>16</sup>These requests were the outcome of suggestions made at the 1907 Diocesan Synod followed by a subsequent clergy conference. YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 14, folder 17, "Requests Regarding the Indians," typescript, 1 p., November 1908.

tant to "foster dependency" by appointing a Yukon Indian agent, although he did promise to reconsider this matter at a later date.<sup>17</sup>

With the necessary funding for the new building finally approved, attention turned to selection of an appropriate site. Mr. Bragg favoured Tagish Landing<sup>18</sup> but when in June, 1910, a partially developed homestead in a beautiful location only two miles from Carcross became available for a reasonable figure, Bishop Stringer persuaded the Department to purchase it.<sup>19</sup> At the same time, the Bishop accepted the Minister's offer of a yearly operating grant of \$200 per pupil up to a maximum of thirty, to take effect at the beginning of the 1911 fiscal year.<sup>20</sup> Until that date the school continued to be supported from the annual block grant of three thousand dollars paid to the Diocese for Indian education. Finally, by September, 1911, the Bishop was happy to announce that the new building would be ready for occupancy in December of that year.<sup>21</sup>

#### Chooutla School: The Early Years

In its old quarters, with only about twenty pupils and a capable staff of four who had stayed long enough to ensure continuity, the school seems to have retained to a marked degree the qualities of the group home that Bishop Bompas had begun at Fortymile almost twenty years previously. In his report of April, 1910, Mr. Bragg describes the children as well dressed, healthy and progressing well in their school subjects under the guidance of Miss Hutchison, the teacher engaged by Bompas in 1905, who also had full care of the boys, assigning their duties, seeing that they bathed twice a week and gathering them together for a bedtime story hour when they read

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Notes of Interview, February 28, 1909.

<sup>18</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 3962, file 147,654-1 (2), T. G. Bragg, Supplementary Report re Indian Schools in Yukon Territory, 23 June 1910.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., Vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1, I. O. Stringer to the Honourable Frank Oliver, 9 August 1910.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., Assistant Deputy and Secretary, Indian Affairs, to I. O. Stringer, 13 April 1911.

<sup>21</sup>See Bishop Stringer's report to the MSCC, n.d., in YA, Stringer Papers, Series 1-A-1, Acc.#82-16.

aloud to one another. Miss Ida Collins, "a lady of resource and ideas as well as energy," prepared all the meals, improvised furniture and did much to make the rooms comfortable and attractive. Assisting her with the sewing and housekeeping was a young Englishwoman, Maude Bell, whose cheerful disposition and musical talents seem to have made her a favourite with the children. The fourth staff member, Mr. W. D. Young,<sup>22</sup> had replaced John Hawksley as principal in 1909. From him the boys learned such outdoor skills as how to handle a boat and cut wood, as well as the use of tools in simple carpentry, while the girls were trained in cooking and housekeeping by the three female staff members. This type of learning, assimilated from shared experiences in a comparatively home-like atmosphere, had already enabled some of the girls to find employment as cooks or domestic help, while one boy who had come from Moosehide as a "ragged orphan" was said to be doing well as a teamster in Carcross. Even so, Mr. Bragg in his report of April 21, 1910, was calling for more specific training for employment, stating that in addition to their school subjects these pupils "must have something else to set them up in life, to keep them healthy and strong, and to provide an incentive, after they leave school, for living like white men and not returning to original Indian habits"--a well-intentioned proposal typical of its time which, however, failed to take into account the psychological and cultural stresses that the children would have to face in attempting such a transition.

#### A New Building: A Larger School (1911-)

##### Facilities and Staff

The new building must have seemed palatial to those who moved there in the winter of 1911-12. Situated on a hundred acres of land, the three-storey frame structure brought the school's operation un-

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<sup>22</sup>A former Ontario farmer and uncle to Mrs. Stringer, he was an experienced outdoorsman and carpenter who had originally come with the Stringers to Herschel Island in the 1890s. In the Peel and Porcupine River areas he must have met relatives of at least some of the pupils at Carcross. He served many more years in the Diocese, filling in as a lay worker and general handyman whenever he was needed in missions from Champagne in the South to Shingle Point on the Arctic coast.



der one roof, with dormitories on the upper floor, classrooms, staff rooms, office and sitting room on the main floor and the kitchen, dining room, furnace room and laundry in the basement.<sup>23</sup> In spite of these physical improvements, the transition year does not seem to have been an entirely happy one. A major staff turnover brought four new workers to the scene who before long were drawing accusations from an agent of the federal Auditor-General of inefficient management of money and lack of attention to the pupils' diet and health. The resulting dissatisfaction had, he said, caused a drop in enrolment and resulted in over-staffing<sup>24</sup>--a situation remedied at the year's end by the resignation of the principal, Mr. E. Dyfed Evans, and the other persons concerned.

In their place the Bishop hired Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Johnson, experienced lay workers from the Indian residential school at Hay River, N.W.T., to be manager and housekeeper respectively at Chooutla School. They were a fortunate choice and their arrival in March, 1913, followed shortly thereafter by that of the new principal, the Reverend W. T. Townsend, ushered in five or six years of comparative stability. During this period two significant administrative changes occurred: in November, 1913, the federal grant was raised to cover thirty-five pupils instead of thirty, permitting the staff to be increased to six and thereby spreading the workload more evenly, while April, 1914, brought the appointment of John Hawksley as the first Indian agent for the Territory, responsible for inspecting all Indian schools and reporting to Ottawa on all aspects of their operation.<sup>25</sup>

### Objectives

With a maximum capacity of thirty-five pupils, Chooutla Indian School was not intended to be a major instrument for educating the

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<sup>23</sup>Principal C. F. Johnson's report of April 1, 1918, describes this building as well as those added in the next few years such as the barn, workshop and principal's residence. YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 4, folder 11. Unfortunately, no provision was made for an indoor playroom, so necessary in the winter months.

<sup>24</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1, Edmund E. Stockton to the Department of Indian Affairs, 23 June and 29 November 1912.

<sup>25</sup>Mr. Hawksley held this position until his retirement in 1934. A fuller description of his duties is found in *Ibid.*, Vol. 5505, Letterbook pp. 219-222, Reel C-8877.

native population of the Yukon. The goal which emerged during this period was, rather, that of training children who appeared to be "the best in health and intellect" so that they might return to be leaders in their bands as well as "a foundation upon which the missionaries could build" and "useful citizens of the greater Canada of the future."<sup>26</sup> Selected by the Bishop or, in his absence, by the clergy or Mr. Hawksley, they came from all parts of the Territory from nearby Tagish to the remote Porcupine River region or even the Arctic coast.<sup>27</sup> Those from a distance often remained for years without a trip home because of the travel time involved and the expense, since Indian Affairs would pay transportation only when children first entered the school or when their time there was ended.<sup>28</sup> Since federal regulations stipulated that, to be eligible for the grant, pupils had to be between the ages of seven and eighteen and of full Indian status, younger children or those of mixed parentage now had to be turned away unless, as rarely happened, other arrangements could be found for their support.

#### School Routines

The routine established at this time was followed with relatively little change for many years. During ten months of the year the daily schedule was divided between regular school lessons and more practical matters. Only three hours of each day were spent in the classroom, the younger children attending in the mornings from nine o'clock to noon, with the seniors at a corresponding afternoon session. Following Miss Hutchison's retirement in 1914, her duties as teacher were

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<sup>26</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 4, Box 53, folder 6, The Chooutla Indian School, Carcross, Yukon Terr., pamphlet printed by the boys of the school, n.d., 4 pp.

<sup>27</sup>In 1917 two Eskimo boys came to the school from Herschel Island, returning home some five years later. One is said to have learned to set type, operate a printing press and play the violin while the other lad, besides his regular school work, became adept at shoe repairing. The Bishop hoped that both would become teachers and "leaders of others" since they had proved such apt pupils themselves. He also encouraged them to keep their language while at school, a practice that seems to have fallen into disuse since Bompas' day. Northern Lights, Vol. 11, No. 3, Aug. 1923, pp. 5-6. Old Log Church Collection, Whitehorse. See also YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 4, folder 11, I. O. Stringer to C. F. Johnson, 31 October 1917.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., folder 9, Russell T. Ferrier to John Hawksley, 5 August 1924.

taken over first by the principal, Mr. Townsend, and later by a series of qualified teachers. Although Mr. Hawksley's reports do not dwell upon details of classroom management, the children seem to have made satisfactory progress in their lessons, some even completing grade eight despite the slow pace of the half-day system. When not in class, their time was occupied with the necessary tasks of living. The boys, for example, helped with the vegetable garden which provided lettuce and radishes for summer salads and root crops for winter storage; they also helped with the haying and the care of such poultry and livestock as the school acquired in its efforts to be as self-supporting as possible, gaining along with their farm work some experience in carpentry and blacksmithing. During these years, some of the older lads learned typesetting and printing through production of the diocesan paper Northern Lights, while all took their share in the constant chore of cutting, hauling and sawing the many cords of firewood required for the long winter months. The girls, meanwhile, learned to cook, to bake bread, to sew, mend and clean house and to attend to the laundry and the ironing--without the modern advantages of electricity, at least until the mid-1920s.

Although so many tasks required attention, all was not drudgery. Accounts in the Northern Lights indicate that some time was set aside each day for play, outdoors if possible, while handicrafts such as knitting, beadwork and basketry occupied spare moments indoors. Some of the children went fishing in the lake while others were encouraged to snare small animals and sell the skins for pocket money; in the fall of 1916 we learn that Mr. Townsend spent his holiday hunting moose to supplement the school's food supply, taking with him Fred Boss, one of the pupils. Together, as Michael Gibbs records in his "History of Chooutla School," they secured four moose in record time; as Gibbs also notes, Townsend's successors were less active and their students did not eat so well.<sup>29</sup> In any case, such hunting expeditions do not appear to have become routine events. For the children who could not go home in summer, we read in Northern Lights of camping

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., Series 4, Box 53, folder 6, Michael Gibbs, "History of Chooutla School," mimeographed typescript, 17 pp., n.d., p. 5. Michael C. Gibbs was the last principal of the school, 1964-69.

activities and berry picking outings, while items in the same little journal tell of skating parties, picnics and sports days, all of which seem to have depended upon the interest, energy and talents of the staff employed at a given time. Religious instruction was, of course, always an integral part of the school program and Christmas a truly festive occasion, a real break in the school routine with a big tree, Santa Claus, gifts for everyone and a special dinner.

With its program and management well in hand, Chooutla School seems to have operated for some years with relatively little staff friction or cause for anxiety. An attempt by the federal authorities in 1914 to reduce the staff from six to five was successfully resisted by Bishop Stringer, who pointed out the danger of "burnout" inherent in a boarding school situation where staff members worked very long hours for low pay, a statement reinforced by Mr. Hawksley's report of January 7, 1915, outlining their yearly salaries as follows:<sup>30</sup>

Rev. W. T. Townsend .....	\$1200 without board
Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Johnson .....	\$ 900 with board
Miss E. J. Naftel (girls' matron) ..	\$ 400 with board
Miss A. Appleyard (boys' matron) ...	\$ 400 with board
Miss R. Sibley (kitchen helper) ....	\$ 300 with board

Since their Yukon public school counterparts with longer holidays and a shorter working day received from \$1800 to \$2100 a year, the matter was not reopened.

#### Effects of World War I

Although the first years of World War I made little difference to daily life at Chooutla School, its effects eventually became noticeable. For example, by 1918-19 the short supply and poor quality of the fabrics available for civilian use caused a reduction in the number of clothing bales sent to the school, so that the workers there

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<sup>30</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1, John Hawksley to J. D. McLean, 7 January 1915.

found themselves hard-pressed to keep the boys warmly clad in winter.<sup>31</sup> Then too, as the war years passed, Mr. Townsend became unsettled; his resignation in June, 1917, ushered in a troubled period which saw the principalship of Chooutla School change hands no less than eight times in the next thirteen years. While his successors may have been well intentioned and hard-working, some of them failed to understand native children<sup>32</sup> and others lacked the managerial skills required to keep this struggling enterprise afloat, especially after Mr. Johnson's departure in 1921.

Even more worrisome were the constant financial constraints of the period. To begin with, a seventy-five percent increase in the school's operating costs caused by wartime inflation led Mr. Johnson in 1919 to appeal for additional help from the government either in the form of a larger grant or a war bonus since he felt it was "scarcely fair to the staff or to the children that they should be stinted in the matter of food and other advantages."<sup>33</sup> However, although some increase was made in the per capita grant in 1920, the school was to remain hard-pressed for money for many more years. Nor did Chooutla, despite all precautions, escape the dreaded post-war "Spanish" flu epidemic of 1919-20 which, according to Michael Gibbs, sent all the students and four of the staff to their beds within a week, nursed by a number of Carcross residents who generously came to their assistance.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Their matron, writing to the Bishop, then in eastern Canada, implored him to try to find flannel shirts for nine boys, aged 12 to 14, although "anything dark and warm would be acceptable." YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 1, folder 12, Miss C. E. Bennett to Bishop Stringer, 24 November 1919. The ladies of the Women's Auxiliary to the Anglican Church provided much of the clothing for the residential schools as part of their missionary work.

<sup>32</sup>Dr. Grasset-Smith, a medical doctor, seems to have been one of Stringer's less fortunate appointments. Principal of Chooutla from 1919-21, he tried to enforce strict segregation of the boys and girls at the school, even when they were from the same family. YA, ACDYR, Series 1.1.a, Box 7, folder 11, Rev. Whittaker to Dr. Grasset-Smith, 2 July 1919.

<sup>33</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1, I. O. Stringer to the Secretary, Department of Indian Affairs, 27 March 1919.

<sup>34</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 4, folder 11-a, Chas. Johnson to I. O. Stringer, 7 April 1920; also Gibbs, "History of Chooutla," p. 8.

A Change of Management: A National Body in Charge (1921)

The burden upon the Diocese of maintaining its share of the school's operation is indicated by the financial report for 1918-19 which shows the total expenditures as \$16,829.23, of which \$6,689.95 was recovered from the federal grant, the balance being made up as follows:<sup>35</sup>

Value of clothing from the Women's Auxiliary.....	\$1,217.00
Monetary Gifts.....	1,638.00
Sundry Bonuses.....	36.18
Estimated Value of Farm and Garden Produce.....	2,932.50
Deficiency paid by the Diocese of Yukon .....	4,315.72
Total .....	\$10,139.40

Quite apart from this financial drain upon Bishop Stringer's limited resources, the search for qualified staff was difficult and time-consuming, especially in view of his frequent and prolonged absences from the Territory. He was considerably relieved, therefore, when in 1921 Chooutla School was transferred, along with a number of other Indian boarding schools, to the Indian and Eskimo Commission of the MSCC, based in Winnipeg, which thereafter assumed responsibility for all financial matters pertaining to the school as well as for its staffing. The federal grants were from that date on paid to the Commission, while the role of the Diocese was greatly restricted, the Bishop retaining only a voice in the selection of the principal and the task of finding potential students. Otherwise, he was expected merely "to visit the school and interest himself in its welfare."<sup>36</sup> As a result he now found himself in effect limited to his ecclesiastical function of ensuring that the children at Chooutla were receiving suitable religious instruction.

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<sup>35</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1, Department of Indian Affairs Memorandum, 23 April 1919.

<sup>36</sup>Report of the Synod of the Diocese of Yukon, Dawson, Y.T., July 29-31, 1923, pp. 6-7.

### Difficult Times: The 1920s

The MSCC soon found that in assuming responsibility for Chooutla, the smallest and most remote of the Anglican boarding schools, it had embarked upon a difficult and costly venture. Attempts to offset the deficit by greatly enlarging the school's capacity failed to win the approval of the Department of Indian Affairs and although in April, 1923, the Department allowed an increase in pupilage from thirty-five to forty,<sup>37</sup> such stringent economy measures were imposed upon the staff that by 1925 discontent had become rife. Frequent resignations and lack of consistent and firm leadership resulted in mounting tensions, sharpened by overwork and ill-health, while the ever-present threat of tuberculosis hung like a shadow over everyone at the school. Finally, by 1926 the Society found itself accused of skimping on supplies to such an extent that both staff and children were undernourished<sup>38</sup> and parents began to withdraw their children from the school. The principal's resignation in the fall of 1926 did little to help matters; as no replacement could be found, the rector of Whitehorse was persuaded to spend two or three days each week at Chooutla as a temporary measure that lasted well into 1927, when the Reverend William Tinney arrived from Manitoba to take charge. An energetic and hard-working man, he did his utmost to build up the school farm and improve conditions generally but, thwarted by the limited budget and by conflicts of policy, left at the end of two years to teach public school at Carcross. His last year at Chooutla was marred by a serious outbreak of influenza that affected all workers and children and was in turn followed by a second siege of "septic pneumonia" that resulted in the death of two pupils and kept the school, as Mr. Hawksley reported, "on a prolonged holiday" for many months. The one bright item of news in his 1929 report was that

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<sup>37</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1, J. Hawksley to J. D. McLean, 16 April 1923; McLean to Hawksley, 25 May 1923.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., Hawksley to McLean, 21 August 1926. See also YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 1, folder 9, Rev. G. A. Bagshaw's report to the Assistant Secretary-Treasurer, MSCC, 22 June 1926 and Ibid., Box 2, folder 16, A. Coldrick to the Bishop, 23 July 1930.

two students had passed the Territorial high school entrance examinations, one--Alice Moses--receiving an average of eight-six percent.<sup>39</sup>

Nor did the 1930s begin very well. Although classroom work was satisfactory, management under Mr. Tinney's successor was apparently lax, the building poorly maintained and the food supplies still only barely adequate.<sup>40</sup> Since he left at the end of that school year, the MSCC was by June, 1930, once more engaged in a desperate search for a principal as well as serious efforts to improve conditions and overcome the unsavoury reputation that the school had acquired over the previous decade.

### Recovery and Disaster: The 1930s

In November, 1930, despite an outbreak of chickenpox, the tide finally began to turn with the appointment of the Reverend H. C. M. Grant as principal. Both he and his wife had spent some years at Hay River and McKay Residential Schools and under his direction conditions began to show improvement, as Mr. Hawksley's report of March 25, 1931, shows. As confidence was gradually restored, applications for admission increased so that by 1934 the MSCC was pressing the government to build a \$10,000 addition to enlarge the school's accommodation to fifty. Since the financial constraints of the depression years did not permit any such outlay, Chooutla school continued to operate with 44 to 48 pupils packed into its dormitories, although the grant was still limited to forty. In addition, the staff grew from six in 1930 to nine in 1935, permitting a better distribution of duties and more effective management of the farm and garden, as well as the employment of a resident nurse. The 1935 report on the inspector for the Stikine agency of British Columbia, which placed a number of children in the school, was generally favourable,<sup>41</sup> as were those of the Yukon Indian agent who noted in March, 1938, that the food was wholesome

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<sup>39</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1, J. Hawksley to J. D. McLean, 9 July 1929.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., J. Hawksley, Report of Carcross Indian School, 22 July 1930.

<sup>41</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 3, folder 29, G. S. Pragnell, Stikine Agency Report No. 3, 31 July 1935.



and varied and that the children were well and warmly clothed, making good marks in their school work and receiving training in a variety of practical skills, while the staff members all appeared "to have the welfare of the children at heart."<sup>42</sup>

As a result of the crowded conditions at the school, the Yukon Indian agent and Mr. Grant began in 1938 to draft an appeal for increased dormitory space and for some additional equipment to improve the efficiency of its operation, hoping especially to obtain a tractor to haul the 250 cords of wood needed each year, as well as an ice-house to store the meat from the school's successful pig-raising venture.<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, before the federal authorities could begin to take action regarding these and other requests, disaster struck. On April 17, 1939, fire totally destroyed the school building and its adjacent workshop. Since the outbreak, caused by an overheated chimney, occurred just after lunch when the children were playing outdoors, no one was injured and it was possible to save much of the bedding, almost all the food supplies and some of the equipment. The residents of Carcross rallied around and within twenty-four hours the school was operating from its fourth home--a number of small log buildings in the community of Carcross itself.<sup>44</sup> In these makeshift quarters it carried on as best it could for the next few years.

#### Chooutla School: Operational Handicaps

The fire that destroyed the school building brought to an end the second phase in the life of the Indian boarding school at Carcross. In its twenty-seven years at the Chooutla site it had grown from a small group home into a larger, more formal institution offering basic Canadian schooling with a semi-vocational orientation. The

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<sup>42</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 2, G. Binning, A/Supt. (for the Yukon), Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report for the Year Ending March 31, 1938.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., Vol. 6480, file 940-5, part 6, H. C. M. Grant, Carcross Indian Residential School Requirements, 1939-40.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., Report on the Fire which Destroyed the Chooutla Indian Residential School Building and Workshop on April 17, 1939, typescript, 7 pp.

church's original goal, that of developing future leaders for the native people, seems to have remained relatively unchanged; certainly the school was not viewed as a means of educating the majority of the Territory's Indian children. The operational difficulties that beset it, particularly during the 1920s, limited its effectiveness to a considerable degree; upon examination, however, they appear in many respects to have been rooted in both the nature of the operation and its management.

In the first place, as the auditors pointed out in their reports for 1934 to 1937,<sup>45</sup> the small size and remote location of Chooutla School had, from the beginning, made it an expensive undertaking which required much greater financial assistance than either the government or the church was in a position to provide, particularly in times of economic uncertainty. Although the federal per capita grant increased over the years from \$200 for twenty-five pupils in 1911 to \$250 for forty pupils in 1939, the amount paid was based on actual pupil enrolments which at times fell below these numbers; furthermore, although salaries were far from high, they always consumed the greater part of the funds provided since no staff reduction was possible below a certain minimum if the school was to function at all. Since the church, for its part, was dependent upon voluntary contributions from its adherents, it was seriously affected when the national economy faltered; in addition, a massive financial disaster in 1932<sup>46</sup> increased the burdens borne by the MSCC and severely limited the Society's resources. In addition, the high cost of shipping goods to the Yukon doubled the price of each item sent to Chooutla and made this school very costly to operate, especially after 1921 when the MSCC, in accordance with its central purchasing policy, ordered all supplies from Winnipeg rather than Vancouver, as had been the case formerly. The

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., Vol. 6481, file 920-24, part 1, Auditors' reports re Chooutla Indian School, 28 November 1935, 12 November 1936 and 8 March 1938.

<sup>46</sup>In August, 1932, the episcopal endowment funds of five dioceses, including the Yukon, along with other church funds in the custody of a Winnipeg investment firm almost entirely disappeared in what were termed "the Machray defalcations." Details may be found in Frank A. Peake, The Bishop who Ate his Boots: A Biography of Isaac O. Stringer (Toronto: Anglican Church of Canada, 1966), pp. 159-162.

school's northerly location also limited the amount of farm and garden produce that could be raised locally, a factor that was for a time not well understood by the MSCC directors who seem to have based their expectations upon the agricultural experience gained in the Indian schools of southern Canada where climate and soil are more favourable and crops more dependable.

Finally, during this period the management of the school passed almost completely into the hands of persons in Ottawa or Winnipeg who, while no doubt conscientious, were generally unfamiliar with Yukon conditions and unable to deal quickly with incipient problems or staff discontents. Although John Hawksley as Indian Agent provided advice to his superiors in Ottawa and to the MSCC, he was based in Dawson where for most of the year he was as inaccessible to the workers at Chootla as the Superintendent of Schools was to the teachers of the outlying public schools,<sup>47</sup> with the added disadvantage that he played no part in hiring or paying the staff. Above all, the Bishop no longer had a close personal involvement with the school and although correspondence reveals his concern for conditions there, management decisions were no longer his to make. As Bishop Stringer commented in a letter to Dr. Westgate of the MSCC, "Unless a Bishop has a pretty free hand his influence and usefulness is curtailed and his position becomes practically impossible."<sup>48</sup> In short, remote control of an already isolated school like Chootla hampered its operation.

#### Limited Benefits and Unanswered Questions

Notwithstanding the problems and hardships that arose at Chootla School, it did to some extent meet its objective during these years since some Indian young people succeeded in becoming "teachers and leaders of their people," while all the pupils learned English and gained some knowledge of the skills needed to get along in

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<sup>47</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1, J. Hawksley to J. D. McLean, 7 January 1915; J. Hawksley to A. F. Mackenzie, 25 March 1931.

<sup>48</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 7, folder 9, I. O. Stringer to Dr. Westgate, 21 June 1927. See also Dr. Westgate's report entitled "Relationship of the Bishops to the Indian Residential Schools," Ibid.

the more complex world of the white man.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, on leaving school many found themselves caught, as it were, between two worlds, a situation that came to the fore in the diocesan synod meetings of 1936 when Mr. Grant brought the need for "after-care" of residential school graduates to the attention of that body, hoping for assistance in offsetting what he interpreted as a deplorable "reaction" on the part of some former pupils to the school's teachings. It would appear that the psychological stresses faced by children confronted by two such vastly different cultures were not well understood at the time and that the questions raised by the Minister during the 1908 federal review of residential school policies and practices were still unresolved.

### A Second Venture: An Eskimo Residential School

A second venture into residential school education developed some years later on the remote northern coast of the Yukon Territory where the first boarding school in Canada for Eskimo children came into being in 1929 through the combined efforts of the Anglican Church and the federal government. While Shingle Point School differed in many ways from Chooutla, it too was an outgrowth of many years of missionary teaching in the area that it served.

### Schools for the Inuvialuit: I. O. Stringer (1892) and Others

Although Bompas in 1870 had established contact with the almost unknown Eskimo people of the Mackenzie Delta area, Isaac Stringer was the true pioneer of Anglican church work among them. Arriving in 1892 as their first resident missionary, he won their confidence, learned their language and in 1896 set up a permanent mission on Herschel Island where many Eskimos congregated to trade with the American whalers who wintered there at Pauline Cove.<sup>50</sup> With the help of his

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<sup>49</sup>See an article by J. Hawksley in *Northern Lights*, Vol. 9, No. 3, August, 1921, as well as Gibbs, "History of Chooutla School," pp. 13, 19.

<sup>50</sup>Iris Warner, "Herschel Island," *Alaska Journal*, Summer, 1973, pp. 130-43. Feminine fashions of the late Victorian period had created a great demand for whalebone, derived from the baleen plates of the bowhead whale, then abundant in the Beaufort Sea. One whale could apparently produce, in addition to its blubber, a ton of baleen which sold for as much as five dollars a pound.

wife and Mr. W. D. Young, Stringer carried on classes for the Eskimos, devising materials to teach them to read and write in their own language; he found them to be apt pupils, eager to learn and especially adept at teaching one another.<sup>51</sup> When he left in 1901, the work at Herschel Island passed to another pioneer of the Delta area, the Reverend C. E. Whittaker, who stayed until the collapse of the whaling industry in 1906 caused the Eskimos to return to their earlier trading pattern at posts on the mainland. For almost a decade thereafter, mission work among them was carried on by an itinerant native catechist, James Atumaksina; not until Stringer had been Bishop of Yukon for some years were attempts again made to establish a year-round mission on the Territory's Arctic coast.

#### Shingle Point Mission (1920)

Stringer's efforts in this respect were first directed towards the reopening of the Herschel Island station, a plan which ultimately proved impracticable since the original church buildings were no longer available and fuel had become extremely scarce and very expensive. An experienced Arctic worker, the Reverend E. H. Fry, did manage to carry on regular day classes--taught by his wife in English--during his term there from 1916 to 1919, but after his departure school was held on the Island only occasionally by visiting clergy from the Mackenzie Delta area.<sup>52</sup>

By 1919, however, it was apparent that Shingle Point, on the mainland some fifty miles east of Herschel Island, was becoming a popular trading centre for the Eskimos. Accordingly, the Bishop dispatched the Reverend W. A. Geddes and W. D. Young to that region in

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<sup>51</sup>He describes his work among these western Eskimos, the schooling offered them and administrative procedures affecting them in a six-page letter to the Danish Minister in London, England, dated 26 May 1919. For an accompanying account of their customs and beliefs see C. E. Whittaker, "The Changed Life of the Eskimo," typescript, 4 pp. Both items may be found in YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 13, folder 4.

<sup>52</sup>Thomas Umaok writing to I. O. Stringer, 5 November 1925, reports that "a young lady on board Captain Klennenberg's Schooner, which wintered at Herschel last winter, used to teach the children each day for two hours, and the children that attended seemed to be doing fairly well, and were very anxious to attend every class." Ibid., Series 1-1.b, Box 9, folder 6.

the summer of 1920 to investigate the possibility of establishing a mission there. With plenty of driftwood available, they proceeded to build a log house and a year later, in 1922, they completed a small church. In this project they were assisted for a time by the Reverend E. Hester, a visiting clergyman who also reported that a day school held at the mission had "gone off splendidly, with sixty scholars enrolled and an average attendance of about forty."<sup>53</sup> The following year, attendance dropped sharply since few families stayed very long at Shingle Point; as a result, a regular day school did not become an ongoing part of the mission work there. Although the Eskimo people of the Delta area were reported to be seeking a boarding school of their own on the Arctic coast,<sup>54</sup> neither the church nor the authorities in Ottawa followed up their request at this time.

#### Requests for a Residential School (1924-)

Before long, however, other circumstances arose to provoke wider interest in the education of both Indian and Eskimo children of the Mackenzie Delta region. The Roman Catholics, who for many years had concentrated their efforts from the settlement of Arctic Red River to the south, had moved in 1924 to the new trading centre of Aklavik where, it was rumoured, they intended to open an Indian residential school. At once, age-old fears were aroused. Since the entire native population of the Delta was traditionally Anglican, the executive committee of the MSCC contacted the Indian Affairs Department pointing out that, if any assistance was forthcoming, preference should be given to establishing a Church of England facility at Aklavik.<sup>55</sup> Upon further reflection, this committee revised its opinion, suggesting instead that, since Indian children from the area could at-

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., Series 1.1.a, Box 4, folder 3, E. Hester to Bishop [Stringer], 1 September 1922. See also PAC, RG 85, Vol. 793, file 6334, J. Hawksley to J. D. McLean, 24 February 1923.

<sup>54</sup>The Eskimos complained that their children attending Hay River school picked up "bad traits" from the Indian pupils there. In addition, they lost their language, came to dislike Eskimo food, and returned home unable to trap or hunt, having become in fact "stranger[s] to the parents and the country." PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6476, file 919-1, part 1, Inspector S. T. Wood to Commissioner, RCMP, Ottawa, 29 November 1922.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., S. Gould to D. C. Scott, 30 May 1924.

tend the Anglican Indian boarding school at Hay River, the most pressing need was for a residential school for Eskimo children "with a small hospital attached, the same to be located at Herschel Island or some other suitable place on the Arctic coast."<sup>56</sup> This appeal was supported by the Eskimo people themselves who, dissatisfied with the intermittent nature of the mission schooling provided up to that time and unwilling to accept the long separations and cultural disadvantages involved in sending their children away to the Indian school at Hay River, formally petitioned the authorities for a boarding school of their own on the coast.<sup>57</sup>

The Department of Indian Affairs, while sympathetic to their request, had up to that time (1926) had only very limited contacts with the Eskimos, especially with respect to education; consequently, before a decision could be taken, administrative channels had to be cleared and more information obtained.<sup>58</sup> On December 29, 1926, Bishop Stringer met with Mr. Stewart, the Minister of the Interior, Mr. W. W. Cory, his deputy-minister in charge of Indian Affairs, and other officials from the Indian Affairs' and the Northwest Territories' Departments. At this meeting the basic question of the value of a residential school education once more arose, the Minister enquiring whether or not it would truly benefit the Eskimo children or merely unfit them for earning their living in traditional ways; since no agreement could be reached as to the best course to follow, the matter was dropped for the time being.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 23 September 1924.

<sup>57</sup>GSA, 75-103, MSCC Series 3-2, Box 61, C. E. Whittaker to Mr. Finney, 29 June 1926 and accompanying memo.

<sup>58</sup>For many years after Confederation, the Eskimos "were not looked upon as Indians and although aborigines residing in the Northwest Territories they were apparently considered wards of the Dominion Government but not the responsibility of any one Department." In 1924, the writer continues, an amendment to the Indian Act placed Eskimo administration under Indian Affairs; in 1927 it was transferred by an Order-in-Council to the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1676, file 250-1-1. Memorandum from Mr. Gibson re Indians Including Eskimos in the Northwest Territories, 28 September 1939.

<sup>59</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 7, folder 11, I. O. Stringer to C. E. Whittaker, 29 December 1926.

## The Arctic Mission

While government officials were deliberating, the Anglican church was taking steps to consolidate and extend its work among the Eskimo people throughout the entire Arctic, where isolated missions had been carried on for years. Since no Diocese of the Arctic then existed, a special Arctic Mission Fund was established in 1926-27 with a grant from the Hudson's Bay Company and support from the MSCC and a number of church societies in England, supplemented by private donations. The Reverend A. L. Fleming was placed in charge of this fund,<sup>60</sup> which was intended to provide for the administration of all the church's Eskimo work along with that of some northern Indian missions under a group called the Arctic Mission, a special committee of the MSCC. From that time on, Bishop Stringer played a less active role in negotiations concerning the education of Eskimo children in his diocese, although he provided information from his previous experience and from an extensive visit he paid to the Arctic coast in 1928.

### An Experiment: Shingle Point Eskimo Residential School (1929)

The Arctic Mission, unable to select a permanent site for an Eskimo boarding school,<sup>61</sup> proposed instead to establish a temporary facility, more or less as an experiment, to see what the response of the Eskimo people would be. For this purpose they chose Shingle Point where a plentiful supply of wood, fish and caribou meat was available, using the mission house and church that Geddes had built along with other buildings formerly occupied by the Hudson's Bay Company and Liebes and Company<sup>62</sup> of San Francisco. It was decided that

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<sup>60</sup>GSA, "Triennial Report of the MSCC," General Synod Journal, 1927, pp. 203-04. See also Report of the General Secretary to the Board of Management of the MSCC, 1928, pp. 17-18.

<sup>61</sup>It was thought desirable to locate the school at the place where the Mackenzie River entered the Arctic Ocean; at that time, however, efforts to find the main channel had not yet been successful. PAC, RG 85, Vol. 793, file 6334, Memo to W. W. Cory, 21 December 1928.

<sup>62</sup>As whaling decreased, a growing demand for Arctic fox pelts led H. Liebes & Co. of San Francisco to establish a trading post at Shingle Point in 1917, followed by the Hudson's Bay Co. in 1920. Both companies left the area once this fur "boom" had passed, within a decade. Ken Coates, "The Northern Yukon: a History," 8 August 1979, pp. 45-46.



the dozen or so Eskimo children enrolled at Hay River could then attend this school, together with others from the coastal area. Mr. Cory, the Deputy Minister, agreeing that "something should be done in the way of education of the Eskimo children . . . to enable them to better carry on their commercial pursuits" with members of the white race,<sup>63</sup> placed \$10,000 in the estimates for capital expenses, enabling Archdeacon Fleming to proceed with plans for the school.

Materials and supplies arrived by boat from Vancouver in time for Shingle Point Eskimo Residential School to open in August, 1929, with a staff of four: the Reverend H. S. Shepherd, BA, as principal, his sister as nurse-matron, Miss Bessie Quirt as teacher and Florence Hirst in charge of the meals.<sup>64</sup> In its cluster of little log buildings on a bleak and windswept shore the school began its first year with seven boys and ten girls in residence and one boy and five girls attending as day scholars.

#### A School on the Arctic Coast

The letters written by various staff members to Archdeacon Fleming in 1929 and 1930 give an intriguing picture of life at Shingle Point<sup>65</sup> during that first winter when they were discovering some of the problems that would have to be faced in this new situation. Who, for example, would have thought that lack of an icehouse would create difficulties in the Arctic? Yet an unusually mild winter spoiled that summer's catch of fish and caribou, so that the residents were forced to eat more "white man's food" than anticipated--scarcely a hardship, since the children apparently preferred it, but certainly much more costly. Mr. Shepherd also found it almost impossible to keep the boys supplied with boots, a problem for which he found a happy solution by having an Eskimo widow lady board at the school to make skin footwear for the children and, eventually, other clothing as well. While nothing

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<sup>63</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 793, file 6334, W. W. Cory to Archdeacon A. L. Fleming, 3 January 1929.

<sup>64</sup>GSA, Fleming Papers, MSCC General File, M 70-1, Series 3-B, file 15.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., Box 2, file 4.

could be done to bring the scattered buildings closer together, he soon was busy with plans to remodel them, hoping to accommodate fifty children the following year since the venture was, he felt, proving worthwhile.

As time passed, enrolments did in fact approach that number, but although the principal crowded as many children into the renovated warehouses as seemed safe, many others had to be turned away for lack of space. Parents from hundreds of miles away brought their children to the school and then set off hunting and trapping, as Fleming says, some "in Banks Land, some in King William Land and others at various points scattered over the whole of the Western Arctic coast,"<sup>66</sup> visiting them when they could and usually taking them away with them for the summer months. In addition, other families who camped at Shingle Point sent their children to the school as day pupils.

The general purpose of the education provided there was in line with the philosophy of the day, being intended, as Archdeacon Fleming noted in 1932, "as a definite effort to enlighten the minds of the Eskimo children, giving them the rudiments of education, teaching them cleanliness and sanitation, as well as to read, write, count, understand the value of money, and the like," since it was felt that "unless the Eskimo children are educated and in other ways fitted to meet the incoming tide of civilization, they are doomed."<sup>67</sup> Instruction was given in English, as at Chooutla School, since federal policy required that any school supported to any degree by the government had to teach in that language in order to fit the pupils to take their place in white society.<sup>68</sup> However, since the children at Shingle Point were in fairly constant contact with their own people, it seems unlikely that they lost their mother tongue; indeed the church authorities seem to have been, as Fleming says, "most anxious not to

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<sup>66</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 793, file 6334, A. L. Fleming to H. E. Hume, 7 March 1932.

<sup>67</sup>GSA, Fleming Papers, Series 3-B, file 23, Fleming to H. H. Rowatt, 22 April 1932.

<sup>68</sup>See footnote 51 above, I. O. Stringer to the Danish Minister, p. 4.

unfit the Eskimo for the life which he must lead under ordinary circumstances in the Arctic," and to have taken special measures accordingly:

With this end in view, the boys are taught to hunt the caribou, the birds, white whales, etc., as well as to make nets, catch the fish, dry them, etc. The girls are taught cooking, how best to utilize everything that comes to them, and in many other ways to become suitable citizens in Eskimo settlements in days to come. The fact that we have two Eskimo hunters at the School who take the boys hunting and fishing, etc., and two Eskimo women who teach the girls to sew boots, clothes, etc., is sufficient proof of the seriousness of our intention regarding these matters.

Christian teaching was, of course, an integral part of life at Shingle Point; Mr. Geddes, who became the Bishop of Mackenzie River Diocese in 1929, took a great interest in the school and visited it fairly frequently, while in addition the Reverend Thomas Umaok, the first of his race to become an ordained Anglican minister, made his headquarters at the school and helped the teachers there.

From the scattered records available, a few details have come to light concerning the operation and administration of Shingle Point School. Owing to its isolation, many of the federal regulations pertaining to residential schools had to be disregarded; for example, since most parents were constantly on the move, their signatures on government forms were frequently unobtainable, while the compulsory pre-admission medical examinations were almost impossible to arrange. Although Miss Quirt's reports give some indication of the class enrolments and subjects taught,<sup>69</sup> formal school inspections seem to have been non-existent; Archdeacon Fleming, in charge of the Arctic Mission, made his first visit to the school in the summer of 1934 and could stay only a day, long enough for a brief tour of the buildings, a visit to the classroom, a confirmation, a concert and a midnight game

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<sup>69</sup>Some of these may be found in PAC, RG 85, Vol. 793, file 6334.

of tennis in bright sunshine.<sup>70</sup> Federal government support was provided by an annual grant of \$200 per pupil, paid--at least for a time--out of its Arctic Relief Fund, which meant that all the children's parents had to be classed as "destitute" whether they were or not, and accounts for the fact that the per capita grant was fifty dollars less than that then being allowed for each pupil at Chooutla.<sup>71</sup> The Arctic Mission Fund assumed responsibility for all other expenses at the school, while the Women's Auxiliary helped by sending bales of clothing and other gifts, as it did in the case of other residential schools. Apart from some instances of possible typhoid-type infections, health problems seem to have been relatively few: such records as exist do not mention serious epidemics and, although the doctor from Aklavik could make only brief and infrequent visits, there was always a resident nurse at the school. Staff relations, as in any institution, underwent periods of stress; there seems, however, to have been a sustained effort at cooperation and such vacancies as occurred through illness were filled with as little delay as possible by replacements sent in from Aklavik or other northern points.

The climatic conditions at Shingle Point were, however, an almost constant source of anxiety. During the long winter months tunnels had to be dug to free doors and windows from the enormous snowdrifts produced by the Arctic blizzards and it was necessary to install "life-lines" to enable the residents to make their way on windy days from dormitory to schoolhouse to dining hall, and so on. Archdeacon Fleming quotes from a letter written by Nurse Shepherd, surely a masterpiece of understatement:<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>Described in an article written by him for Arctic News, June, 1934(?), pp. 10, 13.

<sup>71</sup>The maximum payable from the Arctic Relief Fund was \$200. See the correspondence in PAC, RG 85, Vol. 793, file 6334.

<sup>72</sup>GSA, Fleming Papers, file 15. Conditions at Shingle Point are described in an untitled pamphlet published by the Indian & Eskimo Commission of the MSCC, n.d., pp. 8-9, YA, ACDYR, Series IV.2, Box 52, folder 1. See also Isobel Wylie Hutchison, North to the Rime-Ringed Sun (London: Blackie and Son, 1934), Chapter 18. The writer is indebted to the Reverend Dr. J. H. Webster, who replaced Mr. Shepherd as principal of Shingle Point School during the latter's furlough in 1933-34, for helpful information concerning the Shingle Point School.

We have just had a very bad storm, which lasted several days. We were nice and warm and comfortable in the houses, but had to stay there until the storm abated. Thomas and the young men brought us food (such as could be safely carried in a blizzard.) A storm at Shingle Point is quite an experience, and one in the outside world could hardly imagine just what it is like without having lived through it.

Nor was this all. When the warmer months arrived, the site itself was endangered by the erosion resulting from high tides, pounding seas and drifting ice.

#### The Move to Aklavik (1936)

By the winter of 1931-32 the Arctic Mission, feeling that the experimental stage was over, began to urge that the school be established on a more permanent basis in a less exposed location. Accordingly, in January, 1932, Archdeacon Fleming wrote to the Northwest Territories' Department suggesting that a new site be chosen on the Delta east of the Mackenzie River at the point where it was proposed to settle the reindeer herd then being brought from Alaska; such a move would, he felt, ensure a constant supply of meat for the residents and also provide employment for some of the boys who, upon leaving school, might become herders.<sup>73</sup> As it happened, plans were by then under way for the Department of Indian Affairs to build a new and larger residential school in Aklavik to accommodate some 120 Indian and Eskimo children of the Mackenzie Delta area. When this school opened on August 30, 1936, the twenty-nine girls and nineteen boys then enrolled at Shingle Point were transferred to All Saints' Anglican Residential School there. With them went their principal, Sherman Shepherd, who seems to have maintained as head of this new institution the practical approach to native schooling that he had developed during his years at Shingle Point,<sup>74</sup> keeping the Eskimo chil-

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., file 24, Fleming to H. H. Rowatt, 2 January 1932.

<sup>74</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6476, file 919-1, part 1, H. Sherman Shepherd to R. A. Hoey, 5 April 1938. Mr. Shepherd remained as principal of All Saints' Residential School, Aklavik, until 1944.

dren at the school only long enough to ensure basic competence in the rudiments of an English education and encouraging them to maintain their native skills and family ties. In this respect the experiment at Shingle Point seems to have provided to some degree a more positive answer than did Chooutla to the 1908 debate concerning the value of residential schools.



29. *Boys at Carcross Indian Boarding School examining new carpentry tools, 1907.*



30. *J.R. Blythell and children going for a picnic. Carcross Indian Boarding School, 1907.*



31. *First Synod of Diocese of Yukon, September, 1907.*

Front (l. to r.): Rev. H.A. Cody, Bishop I.O. Stringer, Rev. J. Hawksley, Mr. A. Snyder (RNWMP)

Rear (l. to r.): Rev. J. Comyn-Ching, Mr. W.D. Young, Mr. P.R. Peele, Mr. Isaac Taylor, Rev. A.E. O'Meara





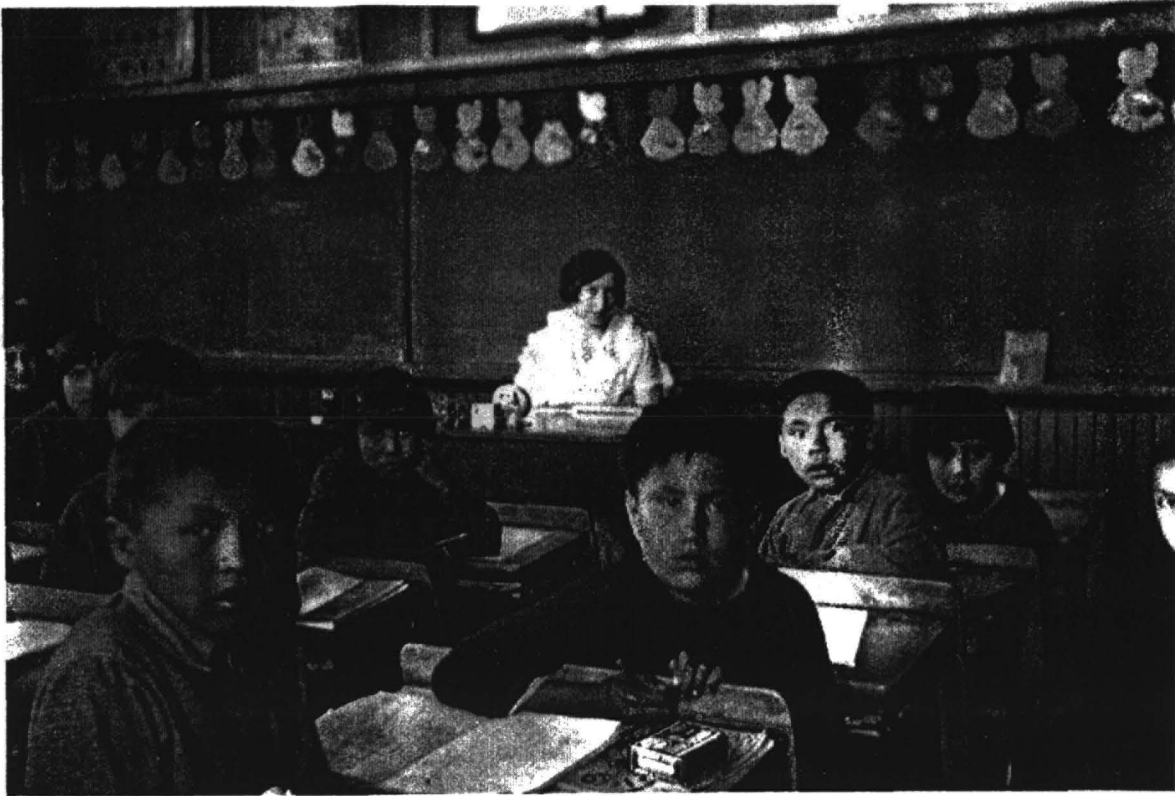
32. *Carcross Indian Residential School  
(Chooutla School), c. 1915.*



33. *"Big girls at Chooutla School, 1918."  
(l. to r.): Lydia, Jessie, Rachel, Maggie, Sophie, Alice and Lucy*



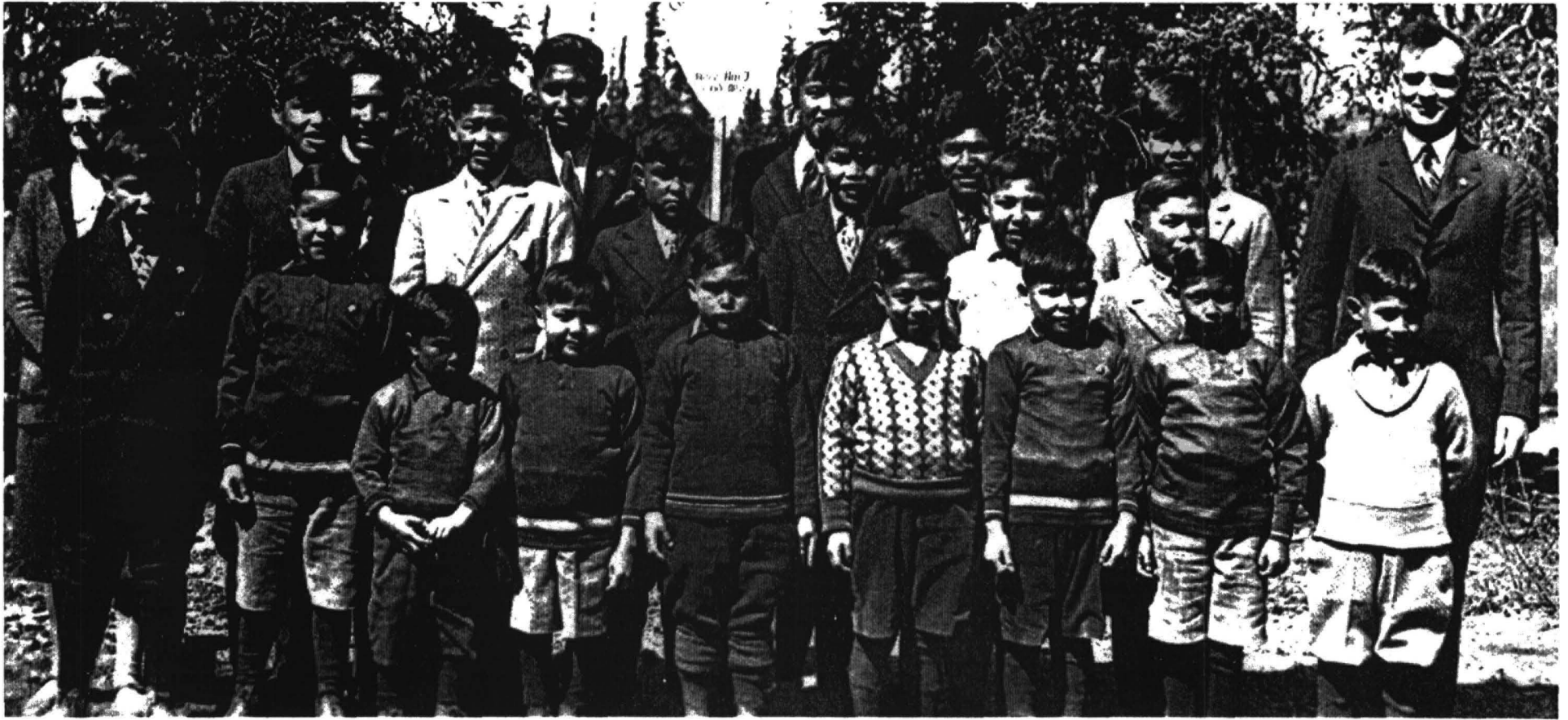
34. *Students and staff at Chooutla School, Carcross, c. 1916. Picture shows Bishop Stringer (at rear), Principal W.T. Townsend (front left), Mr. and Mrs. C.F. Johnson with their son and daughter (at extreme right).*



35. Chooutla School: inside a classroom (n.d.).



36. One winter's wood supply at Chooutla School, c. 1933(?).



37. Reverend H.C.M. Grant and members of the Boys Brigade at Chooutla School, c. 1933(?).



38. Residential School for Eskimo children at Shingle Point—on Western Arctic Coast—School Chapel and Boys' House.



39. Scenes from Shingle Point Eskimo Residential School, c. 1930.  
Top centre: Children at recess outside schoolroom.  
Lower centre: Cutting and hauling ice from a freshwater lake.

## CHAPTER IX

### ALTERNATIVES TO CHOOUTLA (1906-1940)

#### Ongoing Mission Schools

Owing to its limited facilities and remote location, Chooutla residential school near Carcross could directly serve only a small percentage of the Yukon's native children. Moreover, in spite of attempts to encourage more active recruitment it frequently operated below capacity since many Indian parents were reluctant to send their children there. Some were frightened by reports of illness and deaths at the school;<sup>1</sup> others were deterred by the long separation and the cultural loss that faced pupils at a boarding institution so far from home. The views of one mother, requesting the return of her thirteen-year old daughter, were widely shared:<sup>2</sup>

I want my daughter Gladys to come home to me now, I think she has had enough schooling . . . I do not want her to stay at school till she is 18; that is too long; when they are too long at school they won't have anything to do with us, they want to be with white people; they grow away from us. We are mothers and we feel it.

For many parents, however, there was another alternative. Their children could maintain their family ties and traditional life style and still obtain some instruction in the fundamentals of reading, writing and counting by attending classes offered in their own locality at one of the dozen or so mission schools that came into existence during these years. Intended as a means of bringing the basics of white schooling to a nomadic people, they developed as an extension of the day school system that Bishop Bompas had established in the 1890s at Fortymile, Moosehide and Selkirk.

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<sup>1</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 2, folder 16, A. Coldrick to I. O. Stringer, 23 July 1930.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., Series 1-1.b, Box 9, folder 10, Sarah Jane Esau to Bishop (Stringer), 31 August 1919.

## Moosehide Indian Day School

Although Mr. Bragg had been very critical of the results obtained at the Moosehide school, Bishop Stringer seems to have had no thought of closing it. Accordingly, no lapse occurred in the classes held at that locality, where Mr. Totty faithfully maintained the routine originally developed by his CMS colleagues:<sup>3</sup>

The pupils learn to read and write in English as well as the Indian languages. We use "Line upon Line" and other easy books leading up to the study of the Bible. One former pupil has lately been teaching us a new hymn tune. Some of them read and write their own letters, and also read the newspaper.

A shy and unassuming man whose talents lay rather in pastoral work than in the classroom, Mr. Totty's conscientious efforts came to a close with his retirement in 1926. The school then passed for a time to Mr. W. D. Young who proved, to Mr. Hawksley's relief, to be "a careful and painstaking teacher" under whom the pupils soon began to show "marked progress."<sup>4</sup>

They made even greater strides following the arrival in the summer of 1928 of the Reverend and Mrs. I. D. Daimpre. An energetic lady of perfectionist tendencies, Gertrude Daimpre soon had the classes reorganized along more modern lines,<sup>5</sup> introducing her pupils to drawing, painting and a wide range of other activities. That December, for

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<sup>3</sup>Diocese of Yukon Third Synod Report, Dawson, Y.T., 14-19 July, 1915, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 13, folder 17, J. Hawksley to Indian Affairs, 19 January 1927. At the time of his retirement, Mr. Totty was the last Yukon missionary still supported by the CMS in England. A few years later he moved with his family to New Westminster, B.C., where he died in 1945.

<sup>5</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6477, file 9271, part 1, J. Hawksley to I. D. Stringer, 5 February 1929. Mrs. Daimpre is said to have had Normal and College training and to have been before her marriage a supervisor of schools in the state of Massachusetts. She had also taught the Indian school at Kitkatla, B.C. Ibid., Hawksley to Indian Affairs, 30 September 1927.

example, she invited a number of Dawson residents, among them the Commissioner and the public school principal, to a Christmas concert at Moosehide at which all her pupils took part in presenting a program of some twenty numbers, including two plays.<sup>6</sup> By the following summer she was too exhausted to continue; she and her husband moved to England and the mission was placed in charge of Mr. and Mrs. Bentley, lay workers from Chooutla School. Rachel Bentley, also a qualified and experienced teacher, continued the work begun by her predecessor in a larger and brighter schoolroom converted from the old mission house where Bishop Bompas had once lived. When at the end of two years her health gave way, classes were once again entrusted to a resident clergyman, the Reverend C. W. Jenkins, who tried to improve attendance by adapting the class schedule to the life-style of the people, beginning classes somewhat later in the day than had been customary and offering evening sessions which former pupils might attend after work if they wished.<sup>7</sup> To what extent these practices were continued after his departure in the summer of 1934 is not certain; the records give few details of the classes conducted at Moosehide by the young clergymen who succeeded him, while the last Synod report for this period states merely that "the Moosehide child who leaves school at the age of fourteen or fifteen has been given a knowledge in English of reading, writing, arithmetic and hygiene."<sup>8</sup>

#### Selkirk Indian Day School

The day school that the Canhams had established at Selkirk in 1892 also continued to operate for many more years. On their transfer to the parish of Carcross in 1909, Selkirk mission was left for a number of years in charge of a succession of temporary incumbents and, as a result, year-round classes were discontinued until the arrival in 1916 of Miss Kathleen Martin as missionary-teacher restored permanence to the day school there. Best remembered under her

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<sup>6</sup>Northern Lights, Vol. 17, No. 1, February, 1929, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6477, file 9271-1, part 1, J. Hawksley to Indian Affairs, 3 April 1933.

<sup>8</sup>Journal of the Proceedings of the Eighth Synod of the Diocese of Yukon, Dawson, Y.T., 12-13 July 1936, p. 45.



married name of Mrs. Cowaret,<sup>9</sup> she carried on the tradition of the early church workers, travelling the rivers to visit scattered families, learning their language, giving such medical care and advice as she could, and becoming in many ways a mother-figure to the people of the Selkirk band. A qualified teacher, she held classes regularly but, like Mr. Canham, found her pupils' progress was greatly hampered by the nomadic habits of their families who were constantly on the move, visiting the settlement only long enough to pick up supplies during brief interludes in their yearly round of hunting, trapping, fishing and cutting wood for the river boats. From time to time during her many years there the resident clergyman took charge of the school in order to free her for a furlough or for other duties but, although classes were held regularly, infrequent and irregular attendance remained a constant hindrance to the children's progress.

#### Requests for Additional Schools (1907-08)

Despite the difficulties involved in their operation, Bishop Stringer strongly favoured the extension of day schools to centres other than Moosehide and Selkirk, his own experience at Herschel Island in the 1890s having convinced him of their effectiveness in providing not only the tools of literacy but also a moral training which he felt would help the native people withstand the less desirable aspects of white society. Furthermore, as early as 1907 he had begun to receive requests for education from Indians in more remote districts. O'Meara's visit to the Teslin Lake area of the southern Yukon had, for example, revealed a desire on the part of the Tlingit people there for a day school,<sup>10</sup> while similar requests had

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<sup>9</sup>Kathleen Adeline Cowaret (1887-1958) was a native of Manitoba, with a teacher's certificate from that province. In 1929 she married Alex Coward, a Selkirk trapper and big game guide, but, not liking his surname, chose to be known as "Mrs. Cowaret." Details of her life and work may be found in Five Pioneer Women, pp. 27-31, as well as in YA, ACDYR, Series IV.1, Box 51, folder 5 and in GSA, Stringer Papers, Series 1-A-5.

<sup>10</sup>O'Meara's account of his visit to Teslin in June, 1907, may be found in PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 930-1, part 1. The Tlingit Indians, a coastal people from the vicinity of Juneau, had been coaming inland to trap and to trade. Attracted to the Nisutlin Bay area of Teslin Lake by the trading posts that had been established there as a result of the gold rush, they were by this time starting to spend the winters in that region. A History of the Settlement of Teslin, Teslin Women's Institute, 1971, pp. 9-10.

come from the Indians at Little Salmon and Champagne during the 1908 visit of Messrs. Vowell and Green to those districts. Consequently, even before deliberations concerning the new boarding school at Carcross had been concluded, the Bishop had begun to establish a number of new mission schools.

#### Early Schooling in the Teslin Area (1908-10)

The first site that he chose for this expansion was at Teslin Lake, where a permanent Indian village seemed likely to develop<sup>11</sup> and where the Roman Catholic church had also begun to show some interest. In 1908 Stringer seized the advantage by bringing a young theological student, J. R. Blythell, to the Yukon to establish a mission post and day school at Nisutlin Bay on Teslin Lake. Reaching his destination on August 13, Blythell--like McDonald at Fort Yukon many years earlier--promptly "erected a temporary school and started to give instruction the same day" to some twenty Indians who were still there, the rest of the band having left only two days previously for their autumn hunt.<sup>12</sup> His task was easier than McDonald's since, as O'Meara reports, the Teslin people had already had some contact with Christianity through the Russian Orthodox Church on the Alaska coast and a good number had also by this time picked up a fragmentary knowledge of the English language. In addition to his daytime sessions, Blythell also held evening classes for those who were unable to attend school during the day. When his pupils left in September he reports that he "gave each of them a book containing writing exercises and instructions how to write them and also sent books to many who had previously left for their hunting grounds." Just where he obtained these materials is not known; it seems likely that he obtained a supply from the teachers at Carcross where he had been delayed for a time en route to Teslin.

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<sup>11</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 930-1, part 1, A. E. O'Meara to Indian Affairs, 8 December 1909.

<sup>12</sup>These and other details of Blythell's work at Teslin are from his report to the Department of Indian Affairs dated 3 December 1909, entitled "Particulars regarding Indians of Teslin Lake." Ibid.

That winter Blythell visited as many Indian campsites as he could, stopping at each long enough to hold services, give medicine, review his pupils' work and assign more writing exercises, while those whom he was unable to reach sent their "homework" to him at the mission. The following summer (1909), classes resumed on July 5 in his newly completed schoolhouse. This time, he tells us, he had thirty-eight pupils on his register, with others attending night classes three evenings a week. His work there ended, however, on a rather disappointing note:

The attendance at school continued very good. Unfortunately, I did not get the supply of books and pencils I had ordered. We used rough building paper and small pieces of pencil tied to pieces of sticks but even these crude materials could not last, so we were forced to close school about three weeks earlier than if our supplies had come. I was very sorry to see them going away without their exercise books, which they begged for and had had the previous Fall.

Blythell's report, written from Toronto some time later, indicates that almost all his students had been adults, including the chief of the band, Joseph Squam, then fifty-six years of age. While the support of the Teslin Indians had been clearly demonstrated, it now became necessary to ensure that schooling would continue to be available for them.

Some months previously Bishop Stringer, seeking financial assistance for this new venture, had formally requested that a supplementary grant be made available for the Teslin school from the federal appropriation for Indian work in the Yukon.<sup>13</sup> The authorities, however, disregarding entirely Blythell's efforts during the winter months, granted only \$125 for the fifty-four days that the school had been in regular session during his entire stay there. They also refused to commit their department to any further support on the grounds that "arrangements for opening a permanent school at this

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., A. E. O'Meara to Duncan Scott, 12 March 1909.

point were premature as the nomadic habits of the Indians prevent their taking advantage of a school except for a very short time each summer."<sup>14</sup> Undeterred by their negative attitude, the Bishop pushed ahead with plans to establish a second mission in an adjoining area, employing a year-round worker who could alternate his services between two Indian bands at times that were convenient to each. As a result, the Reverend C. C. Brett arrived in Teslin in 1910 to continue the summer work there, with instructions to spend the winter months at Champagne Landing,<sup>15</sup> where another band was accustomed to assemble at that season. This arrangement proved so satisfactory that Mr. Brett remained for the next few years as a full-time missionary-teacher in charge of both stations.

#### Federal Support for Local Mission Schools (1911)

At this juncture, officials of the Department of Indian Affairs, having decided that the time had come to change the grant system for Indian education in the Yukon, placed the boarding school at Carcross on a per capita basis and then turned their attention to the increasing number of day schools for which assistance was being sought.<sup>16</sup> In May, 1911, they proposed that grants to these small schools should be based in future upon an annual teacher's salary of \$720, with rental of the school premises at \$20 a month or \$200 a year. In addition, Department officials stipulated, presumably at their Minister's insistence, that this funding would depend upon classes being held for at least seventy-five days each year with a minimum average attendance of ten pupils.<sup>17</sup> Since none of the mission schools, with the

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., Indian Affairs to O'Meara, 13 December 1909. According to a letter from O'Meara to the Department dated 8 December 1909, the costs to the church of building and staffing the mission totalled by that time \$2,269.25. Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>This was a trading post established in 1898 on the Dalton Trail, an alternate route into the interior from the coast near Skagway. It later served the placer miners of the Kluane Lake area, some 150 miles northwest of Whitehorse.

<sup>16</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 930-1, part 1, Memorandum, Frank Pedley to Mr. Oliver, 28 April 1911.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., Indian Affairs to Bishop Stringer, 30 May 1911. The amounts mentioned were to be paid on a per diem basis for those days that the school was actually in session, so that the actual amount paid was reduced accordingly.

possible exception of the one at Moosehide, could hope to qualify for any federal assistance on these terms, it seemed as though the classes at Selkirk, Champagne, Teslin and Whitehorse (where a small Indian school had been operating periodically since 1902) were threatened with closure.

Several months passed before the Bishop, who had been absent all summer in the far northern part of his diocese, could respond to this unwelcome news. In his reply to the Department of Indian Affairs dated October 7, 1911,<sup>18</sup> he advanced strong arguments in favour of greater leniency towards these small Indian schools in a Territory where conditions were so difficult, suggesting that the minimum average attendance should be set at the more realistic figure of three rather than ten and the number of required school days reduced from seventy-five to forty. Since Mr. Oliver was no longer in office, the Department--unwilling to apply measures that would close the day schools in the Yukon--accepted the numbers proposed by the Bishop<sup>19</sup> and thereby established a policy that some federal officials would later view as unduly liberal, especially in times of restraint.

#### A New Category: Seasonal Schools

As time passed, about ten of these small schools came into existence in various parts of the Diocese, often being termed "seasonal schools" to distinguish them from the older day schools at Moosehide and Selkirk that operated more or less continuously throughout the school year. As the name implies, they followed an irregular and unpredictable schedule depending upon the movements of the Indian bands and upon the availability of teachers. Since each school developed in its own way in response to local needs, no two stories are alike but, taken as a whole, their histories add another dimension to our understanding of the Yukon's past.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., D. C. Scott to Frank Pedley, 28 November 1911.

### Teslin Seasonal School (Anglican)

Except for some years during World War I and again from 1919-22, the school at Teslin operated continuously every summer from Blythell's time until well into the 1940s. At the end of June, 1915, Mr. Brett left for Selkirk with happy memories of "the pleasant and harmonious relations" that had characterized Teslin during his five years there.<sup>20</sup> His successor, Wilfred Middleton, was the first of a long series of theological students who came for a few weeks or months each summer thereafter, gaining experience that tested their talents for teaching as well as their fitness for the ministry.<sup>21</sup> Since the Teslin Indians were so eager to learn, it appears that when the same student returned for a number of years his pupils made quite good progress in spite of the limited time available. In the early 1930s, for example, S. W. Semple, BA, spent three summers at Teslin, where he held school for forty or more pupils for three or four months at a time. Finding the numbers too great to handle effectively alone, he undertook to employ a bright pupil, Lily Jackson, as his assistant, paying her a small honorarium from his own stipend. In addition to basic literacy and arithmetic skills, he introduced a dozen "older Young People" to "simple Bookkeeping, letter writing, etc."<sup>22</sup> as well as a diversified sports program that included baseball and football. Feeling that his pupils deserved more encouragement, he urged that year-round schooling be made available for the Teslin people, possibly by a full-time itinerant missionary who could help the children advance more rapidly in their studies.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, as the depression intensified, Bishop Stringer's successors could not follow up Semple's suggestions: staff continuity was not established, the

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<sup>20</sup>Northern Lights, Vol. 3, No. 3, August, 1915.

<sup>21</sup>A list of the teachers, salaries and dates of classes held at Teslin by the Anglican Church from 1910-48 may be found in PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 9303-1.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., Vol. 6477, file 925-1, part 1, A. H. Sovereign to the Secretary, Indian Affairs, 21 August 1933.

<sup>23</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.b, Box 10, file 7, S. W. Semple, Reports on Teslin Mission 1931 and 1932; also Semple to Sovereign, 11 July 1932(?). His reports shed considerable light upon conditions at both the mission and the community, and also indicate that he included a number of métis children in his classes.

buildings fell into greater disrepair, and many families eventually turned elsewhere for schooling and support.

The Ottawa authorities, also preoccupied with the need for economy, had little direct help to offer despite the appeals made on the school's behalf by Mr. Harper Reed, the Indian agent for the adjacent Stikine area of northern British Columbia, who included this remote post in his annual trips to Atlin. Although he did his best to encourage teachers such as Semple, pointing out the need for better facilities and more equipment, Indian Affairs made little response. From Harper Reed's later accounts we learn of impending changes: in 1938 he reported that the Oblate Fathers were planning to establish a mission at Teslin to serve the Catholic Indians who migrated north to that point from below the British Columbia-Yukon border. As a result, by 1940 there were two denominations based in that community, each offering schooling in the summer months to the Indian children there.<sup>24</sup>

#### Champagne Landing Seasonal School

Upon his arrival at Champagne Landing in the late summer of 1910, Mr. Brett erected two small buildings where he could hold services and teach school whenever the Indians assembled in that neighbourhood. Before long, however, he found it advisable to spend much time travelling with them on their journeys to Klukshu and Dalton Post in order to prolong his contacts with them before he had to return to Teslin the following spring. After his last visit in 1914, the mission remained vacant until Mr. W. D. Young came in 1917 as a full-time lay worker. He remained at Champagne for almost three years, repairing the mission buildings, doing such teaching and preaching as he could, and chafing at the long periods of inactivity when the Indian families dispersed throughout the district and the post was practically deserted.<sup>25</sup> In 1922 it was reopened as a summer mission

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<sup>24</sup>PAC, IA, RG10, Vol. 6478, file 930-1, part 1, Harper Reed to the Secretary, Indian Affairs Branch, 16 August 1939 and subsequent correspondence.

<sup>25</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 7, Folder 19, I. O. Stringer to W. D. Young, 25 April and 19 May, 1917; also W. D. Young to I. O. Stringer, 15 July 1919.

with university students in charge. For thirteen of the following eighteen years it was staffed by one or another of Bishop Stringer's four sons, each of whom in turn undertook this ministry among the native people of the area.<sup>26</sup>

Details of this summer ministry are found in Alex Stringer's report to the 1928 Synod. The members of the Champagne band were, he tells us, "well-to-do and quite independent," the men being especially noted for their trapping ability. As for the school, he held classes regularly six days a week "wherever the Indians happened to be," and in his travels discovered that the children often did their best work while out in the camps, sometimes teaching one another on their own initiative. With almost fifty pupils on the roll, he felt that there was work for more than one teacher as "one man could spend the whole of his time at Kluane Lake with a full school while another could be kept busy at Champagne and Dalton Post," and a request had come for a worker at Aishihik Lake. Almost a decade later, his brother Randall gave a similar account of his experiences during his time as a student in this region.<sup>27</sup> However, this short summer exposure to schooling was too brief to be very effective. In 1939 the teacher could not report any students beyond grade two; "Progress was fairly good," he writes, "but greatly retarded by the constant moving of the tribe, making it necessary for the children to miss school."<sup>28</sup>

#### Whitehorse Indian Seasonal School

The Indian school at Whitehorse was much more erratic in its operation than those at Teslin and Champagne, reflecting not only the migratory habits of the native people of the district but also the

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<sup>26</sup>The eldest of the Stringer brothers, Herschel, spent four summers at Champagne from 1922-25, followed by Alex from 1926-30. He in turn was succeeded by Wilfred in 1931 and 1932, while the youngest brother, Randall, was there from 1936-38. Both Wilfred and Herschel were medical students who were able to do some informal clinical work during their time in the area.

<sup>27</sup>Northern Lights, Vol. 26, Nos. 3-4, August-November, 1937, pp. 4-5.

<sup>28</sup>PAC, IA, R6 10, Vol. 6477, file 925-2, part 1, J. W. Ellis, "Quarterly Report Ending August 31, 1939."



greater demands made upon the rector by the larger white population of that community. Early in 1902 Mr. Bowen had begun a day school in the church<sup>29</sup> which operated at intervals for some years, first under Isaac Stringer, Bowen's successor, who added a schoolroom to the rear of the rectory, and after 1904 with the Reverend H. A. Cody, Stringer's assistant, as teacher. In November of that year, as Cody recalls,<sup>30</sup> he began holding classes whenever possible every afternoon, teaching both children and old people to read the letters of the alphabet, the numbers and their names, while he in turn learned from them some 150 words of their language. In 1906 these classes lapsed, either because Cody, then in full charge of the parish, was too busy with other duties or because there were no pupils. In any case, no further teaching took place until late in 1910 when Cody's successor, the Reverend W. D. Blackwell, reopened the rectory schoolroom for nine children, all beginners, ranging in age from seven to seventeen.<sup>31</sup> Needing space for his own family, Mr. Blackwell moved the school in 1915 to a separate frame building that he built nearby for the purpose. Only a year later, however, his successor, the Reverend Cecil Swanson, proceeded to move this new building to the Indian reserve where for a short time classes were continued with the assistance of Mrs. Jackson, the Indian wife of Cody's former guide and interpreter.<sup>32</sup>

Almost a decade passed before the Whitehorse seasonal school was again opened in August, 1927, this time in a three-roomed shack near the rectory which had been renovated for use as a schoolhouse. Here Gertrude Daimpre taught the usual fluctuating numbers of children, varying from a dozen in August to three in December and dwindling thereafter until in March she had to close the school. By May, 1928, a sufficient number had reappeared to permit her to hold another

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<sup>29</sup>From a letter quoted in "Whitehorse Rapids," Greater British Messenger, n.d., p. 94. YA, ACDYR, Series IV.3, Box 52, Folder 10.

<sup>30</sup>Ted Jones, All the Days of his Life: A Biography of Archdeacon H. A. Cody (Saint John, N.B.: The New Brunswick Museum, 1981), pp. 87-172.

<sup>31</sup>Whitehorse Weekly Star, 23 December 1910.

<sup>32</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 2, Folder 16, I. O. Stringer, Memorandum, May, 1917.

er session before she and her husband left to undertake full-time Indian work at Moosehide. For the next five years the following rector's wife, Mrs. H. B. Metcalf, taught a few children in a building that was moved from the Indian reserve to the church property in town and which may well have been the one originally built by Mr. Blackwell. After 1933 the school was again closed and, since there were few Indian people in the vicinity, it apparently did not reopen until 1937, when Mr. J. Daisley, a summer student, held school for a few weeks. Later, in 1939, the rector, Mr. Alex Anderson, was able to revive this aspect of his parish work on a more regular basis for a few more years.<sup>33</sup>

#### Little Salmon-Carmacks Seasonal School

The first steps to provide schooling for the Indians of the Little Salmon-Carmacks band are recorded in Cody's account of his trip to that area in January, 1905. Discovering that "a considerable Indian town" was forming at the confluence of the Yukon and Little Salmon rivers, he secured the abandoned police detachment building there for use as a mission house in the hope that before long the Indians' request for a school could be met.<sup>34</sup> However, owing to Bishop Bompas' death, this plan was never followed up, nor did the band's second request for a school mentioned in the Vowell and Green report of 1908 bring any immediate results. Not until the summer of 1913 was Bishop Stringer able to send a full-time worker there in the person of Cecil Swanson, a young newly ordained clergyman. After building a log cabin and a church in the village,<sup>35</sup> Swanson began teaching, holding classes in the church until he was able to complete a separate schoolhouse, described by John Hawksley as "a well built log building with a good shingle roof and the ground fenced in by wire

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<sup>33</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6477, file 929-1, part 1, Extracts from Correspondence, 17 and 21 November 1942.

<sup>34</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series IV.3, Box 52, Folder 12, H. A. Cody, "Along the Gleaming Trail," The New Era, n.d., pp. 236-40.

<sup>35</sup>Cecil Swanson, The Days of my Sojourning: a Reminiscence (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1977), pp. 17-20.

fencing."<sup>36</sup> Although Stringer had hoped that Little Salmon would be a year-round station, the Indians tended to be away trapping for about six months at a time in fall and winter. Under the circumstances, it seemed advisable for Swanson to spend that period at Carmacks, a settlement on the Yukon River some twenty-five miles east of Little Salmon where a tiny white community was developing and from where he could continue to minister to the native people of the region. Accordingly, in August, 1914, when the Indians had left Little Salmon, Swanson proceeded to build another church and a small rectory at Carmacks, planning to alternate his time from then on between these two posts.

As it happened, the work at Little Salmon did not flourish. In 1916 the first of a series of severe epidemics of influenza took a heavy toll of the Indian population there; that same year Swanson was moved to Whitehorse and the missions at Little Salmon and Carmacks became vacant. Apart from some weeks in the summer of 1917, no classes were apparently held at either point until 1922, when those missions began to be staffed by summer students. By 1928 it was becoming apparent that the native people preferred to visit Carmacks rather than Little Salmon; the school at the latter point met for only two weeks that summer and thereafter ceased to function as a separate entity, while the village eventually became a ghost town.<sup>37</sup>

This change in trading patterns encouraged the Bishop to keep the Carmacks mission open all year. In 1929 the Reverend Gordon Ashbee held school for the Indians for a total of eighty-one days and also earned the gratitude of the white residents by tutoring four of their children during his time there. By June, 1930, however, the mission had to be closed again since a poor fur harvest had forced the Indians to move to the outlying wood camps in search of work. The situation was much the same the following year; times were hard, and with no credit available at the stores the native people did not

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<sup>36</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6477, file 926-1, part 1, J. Hawksley to Indian Affairs, 7 October 1914.

<sup>37</sup>Some information concerning these missions at this time may be found in the Journal of the Proceedings of the Sixth Synod, Dawson, Y.T., 29 July to 6 August 1928, pp. 37-38.

linger near the settlement.<sup>38</sup> All through the 1930s school was held only sporadically and despite the efforts of the various summer students at the mission, who often accompanied the families on their travels in order to have more time with the children, pupil progress remained minimal.

#### Hendrickson's Camp School

One brief attempt to hold a summer school for the Indian children at a wood camp occurred in 1917. Finding that a Mrs. Beulah Lamb was willing to teach at Hendrickson's Camp, located near Big Salmon on the Yukon River above Carmacks, Bishop Stringer sent her a few supplies that enabled her to hold classes there for twenty-nine days that summer. Even in this situation, with the families assembled in one place, participation was disappointing: although she had seventeen pupils on the roll, the average attendance was limited to about four children<sup>39</sup> and the experiment was apparently not repeated.

#### Ross River Seasonal School

Bishop Stringer's attempts to establish a mission and school among the Indians of the Ross River area also met with very limited success. Considered to be on the outer fringe of the Little Salmon-Carmacks parish, this region was so remote and inaccessible that even Mr. Hawksley with his long experience in the Territory could only write of it from hearsay. He reported that about two hundred Slavi Indians from Fort Norman in the Mackenzie River area were apparently in the habit of gathering at two trading posts near the headwaters of the Pelly River and that some of them had been taught to read and write in their own tongue by James Pelisse, a native catechist who travelled with them.<sup>40</sup> This rather meagre information was supple-

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<sup>38</sup>Northern Lights, Vol. 20, No. 1, Nov. 1931-Feb. 1932, p. 12.

<sup>39</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 4, Folder 17, Mrs. B. Lamb to I. O. Stringer, 16 October 1916. See also the items in PAC, RG 10, VI. 6040, file 166-7-1, part 1.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., Vol. 6478, file 931-1, part 2, J. Hawksley, Report of the Ross River Band of Indians, c. 1914. Hawksley had himself trained James Pelisse during his years at Fort Norman.

mented by Cecil Swanson following his visits to the region in 1914-15. Ross River itself he described as flowing into the Pelly about 280 miles above its junction with the Yukon, being accessible in the summer only by boat and in the winter overland by dog team from Little Salmon, a distance of about 160 miles. Besides confirming Hawksley's account of the Mackenzie Indians, Swanson reported the presence of two other bands, the Pellies and the Liards, and urged the Bishop to establish a mission among them as soon as possible.<sup>41</sup> This recommendation was, however, ill-timed since the shortage of men and money brought about by World War I prevented Bishop Stringer from undertaking new projects. The best he could do, apart from visiting the post himself, was to send James Wood, a graduate of the Carcross residential school, to hold day classes in English there for twenty-three days in July, 1916.<sup>42</sup> A second appeal for a mission and school at Ross River came in 1923 from John Unsworth, a student who spent a week there that July. Noting that the native people trapped and hunted over an area of hundreds of miles and were at the post for only about a month each year, he proposed that a boarding school be built "near the store where the children could be fed and housed during the winter months," adding that Taylor and Drury had some "excellent buildings" available for that purpose.<sup>43</sup> This suggestion was also impossible to implement; from then until 1926 schooling at Ross River remained in the hands of summer students who came from Carmacks for brief visits during which they held services and taught some rudiments of English to a few adults and children at this remote station.

Four or five years later, some degree of permanence was established with the appointment in April, 1930, of the Reverend John Martin, a native clergyman in deacon's orders, as the first resident

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<sup>41</sup>Diocese of Yukon, Third Synod Report, pp. 36-37.

<sup>42</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 5, Folder 11, I. O. Stringer to W. Middleton, 6 February 1917. James Wood also relieved for a time in 1916 at Selkirk and at Moosehide in 1921.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., Box 6, Folder 35, J. Unsworth, "Report of Student's Visit to Ross River, July, 1923." The Indian people of both the Ross River and Rampart House regions from time to time requested a boarding school in their area but it appears that the general shortage of money and workers prevented any such development.

missionary at Ross River.<sup>44</sup> A Loucheux Indian from the lower Mackenzie, he had spent some time at Moosehide before coming with his family to the Pelly River area where his daughter Mary became the first teacher to hold school on a regular basis at Ross River. Educated by her father, with only a short period of schooling at Moosehide under Mr. Totty, she was described by Mr. Hawksley as "bright and energetic."<sup>45</sup> He provided her with a small supply of school materials with which she carried on systematic classes for her brother and sister and a few other children--doing, as she says, the best she could. As for the majority of the children there, she could offer classes for them only during their brief stay at the post in the summer months.<sup>46</sup> Her very commendable efforts ended in 1935 when she moved with her father and family to Mayo; after their departure the mission was closed and schooling lapsed entirely for many years.

#### Mayo Village Indian School

In extending activities to the Mayo area, Bishop Stringer again relied upon his native clergy from the northern Yukon. In 1916, when the Mayo Indian band was settled on a reserve located some miles below the town on the opposite side of the Stewart River, they were accompanied by Julius Kendi, an Indian catechist from the Porcupine region. After building a "neat and commodious schoolhouse" he proceeded to hold day classes regularly for some six pupils. Since he spoke little English, the children learned to read and write in their own language and, according to Mr. Hawksley, were by their second year "progressing very nicely."<sup>47</sup> In 1919 he left Mayo for a time to

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<sup>44</sup>Northern Lights, Vol. 18, No. 2, May, 1930, p. 9.

<sup>45</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 931-1, part 2, John Hawksley to Indian Affairs, 29 April 1932.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., Mary Martin, General Report of Ross River School. Her command of English as evidenced by her report to Indian Affairs seems to have been better than Mr. Hawksley's comments would indicate. With Loucheux as their mother tongue, both Mary and her father had to learn Kaska, the language of the Ross River area. Her father took great interest in matters of language, compiling during his years in Ross River a dictionary of words in that language. (From an interview with Mary [Martin] Moses, 18 November 1985.) John Martin's Kaska vocabulary may be found in YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 14, folder 4.

<sup>47</sup>From a typescript in the author's possession written by John Hawksley, 28 August 1917, entitled "Report of the Mayo Band of Indians."

visit the Porcupine and Peel country, returning to resume his pastoral and teaching duties at the Mayo Indian village<sup>48</sup> at some time in the mid-1920s. Following his transfer to Old Crow in 1929, classes at the Indian reserve were discontinued for some years until the arrival of John and Mary Martin in 1935 brought renewed activity to the mission there. Under Mary's direction day school classes began in mid-August for thirteen children, all beginners, continuing regularly<sup>49</sup> until the following June when floods swept away all the buildings on the reserve, including the church where classes were held. Following this disaster, the church was rebuilt; classes resumed there in the fall and continued with Mary as teacher until at least December, 1937.

#### Rampart House Seasonal School

Rampart House, deserted for a decade following the withdrawal in 1893 of the Hudson's Bay Company from the Porcupine River area, had seen a renewal of activity when Daniel Cadzow took over the post in 1904. Once again the Indian people began to assemble there but, in the absence of a resident missionary, the long-established Indian mission and day school were not reopened for some years. In 1911, as a result of a severe outbreak of smallpox, many of the native people decided to abandon the site and move some sixty miles up the Porcupine River to the present location of the village of Old Crow.<sup>50</sup> For a time this new settlement was looked upon as an outstation of Rampart House but eventually the situation was reversed, Old Crow becoming the major community in the area.

In this northern part of the Diocese the church had long relied heavily upon its itinerant native teachers and catechists, products of the pioneer efforts of Archdeacon MacDonald and the other Tukudh missionaries. In 1909 John Tizya, an Indian catechist, was reported to

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<sup>48</sup>References in the reports of the 1928, 1931 and 1936 Diocese of Yukon synod meetings indicate that Julius Kendi taught school at Mayo for eleven years in all, holding two sessions a day, assisted by his wife.

<sup>49</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 931-3, part 1, Quarterly School Report, 31 December 1935.

<sup>50</sup>YA, MS 82/67, Effie Linklater, The History of Old Crow, c. 1959-60.

be visiting the camps along the Old Crow River and in 1911 Bishop Stringer, wishing to reopen the Rampart House mission on a permanent basis, sent the Reverend Amos Njootli there to live and work among the people of the area.<sup>51</sup> For some years he carried on school faithfully in the traditional way, travelling with the Indians to their hunting grounds, "making service" and teaching them to read and write in their own language.<sup>52</sup> In order to have an English school, the Bishop in 1916 appointed Jacob Njootli, a former pupil at Carcross, as teacher at Rampart House; as a result the authorities provided a small grant to the Diocese for the days that the school was in operation, payable upon receipt of the appropriate forms.<sup>53</sup> Under these conditions classes continued there until Jacob Njootli left in 1920; thereafter the school was reorganized and treated as a branch of the one at Old Crow.

#### Old Crow Indian School

Meanwhile, during a visit to Old Crow in June, 1917, Bishop Stringer had been surprised to find that Murdo Balaam (also known as Murdo Jootli), a young graduate of the Hay River residential school, had for some months been holding "a very creditable school" without any special facilities or outside help. The Bishop at once contacted Mr. Hawksley, asking that the young man be provided with slates and phonic primers, along with "some sort of a map" and other books such as "an arithmetic, Geography, Copy Books or perhaps Scribblers and pencils."<sup>54</sup> Mr. Hawksley promptly passed the request to his superiors in Ottawa, who authorized provision of these supplies and a per diem grant on condition that reports were received regularly--a matter of no small difficulty in view of the extremely remote location of the village. For the next few years Murdo Balaam held classes fairly

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<sup>51</sup>Diocese of Yukon, Third Synod Report, 1915, pp. 27, 44. Married to the adopted daughter of John Tssieltla, Amos Njootli was the first Yukon Indian to be ordained (1911). He passed away February 18, 1923, at Rampart House.

<sup>52</sup>PAC, IA, R6 10, Vol. 6478, file 931-1, part 1, I. O. Stringer to J. Hawksley, 19 November 1914.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., Indian Affairs to J. Hawksley, 23 November 1916.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., file 932-1, part 1, I. O. Stringer to Mr. Hawksley, 19 June 1917.



regularly at Old Crow, some of the children attending school both there and at Rampart House as their families moved around the area in their seasonal pursuits. In 1920 the Reverend G. L. Moody took charge of the mission work in the Old Crow-Rampart House district, assisted at times by two Chooutla graduates, Maggie Fredson and Maggie Daniel. In 1926 when Moody's successor, the Reverend A. C. McCullum, moved the mission headquarters to Old Crow, these same two girls seem to have continued to help him with classes held in the area.<sup>55</sup>

Systematic schooling lapsed for a time in this district after 1930, since Julius Kendi, then in charge of the mission, could not maintain the English school himself and administrative changes in the diocese left no one with authority to make other arrangements for its continuation. In addition, during this period near-famine conditions affected the region for some years: in 1935 Sergeant Binning of the RCMP reported that a poor muskrat catch and extreme scarcity of game had caused the village of Old Crow to be "the heaviest in the Yukon in regard to relief," while the lack of a day school and the tubercular appearance of the children were, he said, a matter of serious concern. To remedy the situation, he suggested that the Department should send a trained nurse "who was also a teacher" there for the summer months to conduct school for the children and look after the general health of the Old Crow people.<sup>56</sup>

His proposal prompted some discussion between the federal authorities and Bishop Geddes, who was then in charge of the Diocese, with the Bishop advocating a year-round day school along the lines of those at Selkirk and Moosehide rather than the holding of a short-term summer session.<sup>57</sup> However, on the advice of its director of medical services, the Department went even further, making provision in its 1936 estimates for a permanent year-round nurse-teacher for the village of Old Crow. Pending the appointment of this person,

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., John Hawksley to J. D. McLean, 13 February 1926.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., extract from the report of G. Binning, 17 July 1935.

<sup>57</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 13, folder 17, W. A. Geddes to the Deputy Superintendent-General, Indian Affairs, 17 September 1935.

as Archbishop of Rupert's Land. His successor, Bishop A. H. Sovereign, spent only six months in the Territory before being in his turn transferred to another diocese, while Bishop W. A. Geddes, a former Yukon missionary to the Arctic, did not arrive in Dawson until 1933 and, like Stringer before him, was thereafter frequently absent from the Territory.<sup>67</sup> Although both Sovereign and Geddes tried to maintain the seasonal schools, Stringer's initiative and administrative skills were greatly missed, while his death on October 30, 1934, deprived his successors of a consultant with long years of northern experience to whom they could turn for advice. A similar loss of a key person occurred in April, 1934, when John Hawksley retired at the age of seventy and moved to Vancouver, leaving the Yukon without a resident Indian agent. His long association with the North and his personal knowledge of the Territory's Indian people could not easily be replaced. The position remained vacant for a time, being eventually filled as an economy measure on an acting basis by members of the RCMP who were responsible for administering welfare payments to the native people and were therefore seen as the logical persons to assume this added role.<sup>68</sup>

#### The Depression Years

These changes in personnel coincided, unfortunately, with the serious problems of the depression years. In addition to the economic difficulties affecting the entire nation at that time, the Anglican church was faced with a major internal financial crisis known as "the Machray disaster" that swept away the endowment funds of many western dioceses, including those built up by I. O. Stringer for the benefit of the Yukon. As a consequence, efforts to restore these losses had to take priority over such matters as the renovation of

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<sup>67</sup>Originally from the Magdalen Islands, W. A. Geddes had served as a missionary to the Eskimo people of Herschel Island and the Mackenzie Delta from 1920 to 1927, becoming Bishop of the Mackenzie River Diocese in 1929. When that diocese was dissolved in 1933, he was transferred to the Yukon, serving as its fourth bishop until his death in 1947 after a long period of ill-health. Northern Lights, Vol. 29, No. 3, August, 1940, pp. 4, 6. See also YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 2, folder 16, I. O. Stringer to A. Coldrick, 17 September 1933.

<sup>68</sup>YA, YRG 1, Series 1, Vol. 59, file 34362, 1/3, G. A. Jeckell to R. A. Gibson, 17 April 1939.

aging mission buildings.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, in the reorganization of the various dioceses affected by this catastrophe, the Yukon's Eskimo missions were transferred to the newly formed Diocese of the Arctic, a move that took from the Yukon church the aspect of its work which over the years had held the greatest appeal for private donors. As the depression deepened, revenues from the Department of Indian Affairs dropped, decreasing by fifteen percent in 1932-33;<sup>70</sup> the succeeding years brought only additional cuts and frequent delays in the payment of the federal grants for the day and seasonal schools as well as a decline in the MSCC contributions to the diocese. Inevitably, the extreme financial stringency imposed by these conditions affected the Indian mission schools, which by the end of the decade were ill-prepared to meet the new demands that were to arise in the 1940s.

#### Schooling for Métis Children: St. Paul's Hostel

These schools were not the only evidence of Bishop Stringer's concern for education. He was also responsible for establishing at Dawson City a hostel for part-native children living in remote areas where no government school could be opened and where no mission could be located. Such children could not attend Chootla School, since the federal government assumed responsibility for their education only if their parents were "living as Indians on a reserve."<sup>71</sup> Otherwise, they were expected to attend the public schools established by the government of the province or territory in which they resided.

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<sup>69</sup>The Journal of the Eighth Synod of the Diocese of Yukon, July 12-13, 1936, Appendix I, contains much information concerning the personnel changes and financial problems of this period. See also the reference in Chapter VIII, f.n. 45. It is worthy of note that "by far the best effort in connection with the Restoration Fund was made by the Indians of the Old Crow district." (p. 21).

<sup>70</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 2, folder 16, A. C. Coldrick to Archbishop Stringer, 20 March 1933.

<sup>71</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6481, file 941-1, part 1, Memorandum to the Honourable James Lougheed, 2 May 1921. Although such children were not eligible for the per capita grant paid by Indian Affairs to the Yukon's Indian day and seasonal schools, the Bishop apparently allowed métis children to attend classes if they wished but warned the teacher not to report them on the forms submitted to Ottawa.

Once it had become evident that métis children were no longer acceptable at Chooutla, the Bishop began to seek some alternative solution for those lacking access to a nearby public school. In 1917, requests from parents at such widely separated points as Kluane, Selkirk and Big Salmon led him to consider "the possibility of providing some sort of boarding school" at Selkirk for these children.<sup>72</sup> Since no Territorial school seemed likely to develop there, he relinquished this plan in favour of establishing a hostel in Dawson where the children could live and have the advantages of attending Dawson Public School. In 1920 he began this experiment, starting on a very modest scale in the hope that additional financial support would be forthcoming once its value had been established. Before long he was able to report that this hostel, located in a house purchased for the purpose near St. Paul's Church, was indeed an accomplished fact with four children in residence, "Percy Dewolfe's boy, Van Gordon's[sic] girl, and a girl and boy of Archie Linklater of Rampart House," with others expected to come the following summer.<sup>73</sup> In charge he placed Miss E. J. Naftel, who had spent five years as girls' matron at Chooutla, with Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hickling of Dawson as her assistants.<sup>74</sup>

Interest in the new project grew rapidly and by the following spring the Bishop, faced with the need for expanded facilities, requested assistance from the Department of Indian Affairs.<sup>75</sup> Although his proposal received sympathetic consideration, it had arrived at a time when the Department was trying to curtail its expenditures at Chooutla and had no extra money for a new project which was, strictly speaking, outside its jurisdiction. Furthermore, the Territorial government could not be expected to support it, since the Council's federal grant had just been reduced by a massive fifty percent. The Minister of the Interior and his Department officials, agreeing that

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<sup>72</sup>Bishop Stringer's letters to the parents concerned, all dated 10 May 1917, may be found in YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.b, Box 8, folder 12.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., Series 1-1.a, Box 2, folder 9, I. O. Stringer to Archdeacon Canham, 13 November 1926.

<sup>74</sup>Details pertaining to the early years at St. Paul's Hostel may be found in a 2-page typescript entitled "Commentary on New Problems Facing the Yukon Church," c. 1921, in the Stringer Papers, GSA, M74.3, 3J3.

<sup>75</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6481, file 941-1, part 1, W. W. Cory to D. C. Scott, 11 April 1921.

such an institution deserved assistance, undertook to treat St. Paul's Hostel as a special case, channelling some federal funds to it under the general heading of "Indian Education" while at the same time insisting that it was not on that account to be viewed as a residential school approved and supported by the Department of Indian Affairs.<sup>76</sup> Since their request to Treasury Board for supplementary funds for this rather ambiguous solution had not been submitted in time for approval that year, the Bishop went ahead with his own plans. Unable to obtain a larger building, he had an annex built onto the existing hostel, thereby doubling the space available and making room for the nineteen children who were to arrive that fall before the close of navigation.

By the following summer, this experimental phase was drawing to an end. On June 1, 1922, the Department of Indian Affairs advised Bishop Stringer that \$5,000 had been voted to help defray the expenses already incurred in connection with the hostel and that beginning with that fiscal year he would receive a per capita grant of \$220 a year for up to thirty children plus a bonus of \$20 per child, so that the total grant equalled that then being given for a pupil at Chooutla School.<sup>77</sup> It was expected that the parents would continue to pay \$25 per month for each child, while the Bishop planned to maintain his contacts with "other friends" in Canada and England who might be willing to contribute to the support of the institution.<sup>78</sup> In addition, the Dominion Women's Auxiliary promised financial assistance as well as its customary provision of such clothing as the children might need. Finally, the MSCC increased its grant to the Diocese for mission work, thereby doing its share to help offset the added cost of this new project, while agreeing at the same time to leave the management of the hostel entirely in the hands of the Bishop and his diocesan advisors.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Details of this plan and the ensuing agreement are set forth in an Indian Affairs memorandum dated 21 May 1921, while the status of the hostel is clarified in a letter from Dr. S. Gould of the MSCC to D. C. Scott, 15 September 1922. Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., Scott to Bishop Stringer, 1 June 1922.

<sup>78</sup>From information in an Indian Affairs Department memorandum re St. Paul's Hostel, n.d., Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 4, folder 11-a, I. O. Stringer to C. F. Johnson, 3 May 1922.

With these regular sources of income assured, the Bishop could proceed with further plans. Since Miss Naftel and the Hicklings were leaving, he offered the position of manager to Mr. C. F. Johnson, who was happy to move from Choooutla School to St. Paul's Hostel where he would be directly responsible to the Bishop rather than to the MSCC in Winnipeg.<sup>80</sup> With his wife as housekeeper, he brought consistent and capable direction to the hostel's affairs from 1922 until his death thirteen years later. In 1923, the search for more suitable quarters ended with the purchase of the former Good Samaritan Hospital buildings which adjoined the church property; extensive renovations were carried out, although an addition begun in 1928 could not be completed for lack of funds.<sup>81</sup> Connected to the city's water, sewer and electrical services, the buildings were well suited for this new purpose and also had a good garden which in normal years supplied the institution with several hundred dollars' worth of produce.<sup>82</sup>

During this period the hostel accommodated each year about thirty boys and girls between the ages of six and sixteen who came from widely separated parts of the Territory, generally accompanied by other brothers and sisters.<sup>83</sup> As in Bompas' day, some of the children were motherless and at times their number included a few pre-school little ones who were in need of a home. From the beginning, the operation seems to have gone relatively smoothly, without the staff tensions that plagued Choooutla, while the children were

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid., Johnson to Stringer, 17 April 1922. Mr. Johnson, originally employed at Hay River, had known the Bishop for many years. In October, 1909, he had been Stringer's companion on a journey overland from Fort McPherson to Dawson City which nearly had a tragic ending when a series of misfortunes and the onset of winter brought them to the verge of death from starvation. Peake, The Bishop who Ate his Boots, pp. 108-09 and 118-128.

<sup>81</sup>Northern Lights, Vol. 17, No. 4, November, 1929, p. 8.

<sup>82</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6481, file 941-1, part 1, Comparative Statement of Receipt and Expenditure, 1925-31.

<sup>83</sup>A list of twenty-nine children living at the Hostel in October, 1927, indicates that ten families were represented at that time, some with as many as four or five children there. Most of the names are well known in the Yukon today. YA, ACDYR, Series 1.1.a, Box 4, folder 11.

reported as being well cared for in a home-like atmosphere and doing well in their studies at school.<sup>84</sup>

Although the presence of the hostel was generally well accepted by most residents of Dawson, some evidence of latent prejudice emerged in 1926. Brought to a head by an epidemic of measles (during which the hostel residents were quarantined for eleven weeks), complaints probably arose from the fact that the presence of part-native children in the school was seen by some as a threat to community health. Since the Bishop had previously been assured by Commissioner MacKenzie and Superintendent Mahon that the métis had "as much right in the public school as any other children," he decided to let matters take their course;<sup>85</sup> eventually reason prevailed and the situation passed. It is also possible that some white parents in isolated locations, disappointed at being unable to obtain an assisted school in their own locality, were critical of the special federal support being given to St. Paul's Hostel. In 1927-28 Bishop Stringer did in fact look into the possibility of housing a few white children there but may have been deterred from further action by the lack of space in the building and the potential threat that their presence might have posed to his federal grant. Since neither the Diocese nor the Territorial government could afford to establish a separate hostel for white children without additional federal funding, that matter had to be dropped.<sup>86</sup>

During the depression years of the 1930s the Hostel did not escape its share of problems and difficulties. In 1932 a sudden drop in the number of children caused a major cut in the federal grant, while

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<sup>84</sup>"St. Paul's Hostel proved its value once again when our children won three first places, two second, two third and three fourths in their respective grades in the June examinations." Northern Lights, Vol. XXV, No. 3, August, 1936, p. 7.

<sup>85</sup>See the correspondence between the Bishop and C. F. Johnson dated 20 November and 28 December 1926. YA, AC-DYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 4, folder 11.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., Stringer to Johnson, 20 April, 1927. For correspondence between J. H. Bryne and Bishop Stringer concerning the need for a white hostel in Dawson, see also Ibid., Box 2, folder 2, 14 December 1927 and 2 February 1928.

at the same time other sources of funding declined sharply, including the annual contribution from the MSCC. Mr. Johnson's death in 1935 was another blow: in October of that year Bishop Geddes in desperation asked the MSCC to assume full responsibility for the hostel on the grounds that the 1934 deficit would force him either to close it or abandon two of his mission stations.<sup>87</sup> The Society, in no haste to add to its own burdens, asked first to have the accommodation increased to forty and the federal per capita grant raised in order to provide more revenue.<sup>88</sup> However, before any action along these lines could be initiated the tide had begun to turn. The Reverend L. A. Chappell, transferred from Moosehide mission to take temporary charge of St. Paul's following Mr. Johnson's death, remained for three years more, assisted by his wife. By 1939 the hostel had under their direction regained its normal complement of residents and a measure of financial stability. Consequently, by the close of the decade no further effort was made to remove it from diocesan control.

#### Bishop Stringer and Indian Education

St. Paul's Hostel seems to have been a source of considerable satisfaction to Bishop Stringer, particularly in view of the scholastic progress and athletic successes of the children it served who from its beginning gave promise, as he had hoped, of becoming "good and useful citizens" of the Territory.<sup>89</sup> As for the residential school near Carcross, his involvement with it had, after the MSCC takeover in 1921 become more remote. While he had fostered its establishment and was happy to see some of its graduates returning as teachers to their own communities, he must have been saddened by the internal difficulties of the 1920s which were beyond his power to alleviate. Finally, although the intermittent schooling provided at the various missions was criticized as costly and unproductive,<sup>90</sup> he refused to

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid., Series 5, Box 53, folder 6, W. A. Geddes to Dr. Westgate, 31 October 1935.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., Westgate to Geddes, 23 November 1935.

<sup>89</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6481, file 941-1, part 1, I. O. Stringer to Duncan Scott, 31 January 1922.

<sup>90</sup>For Indian Affairs' comments on the cost-effectiveness of the Yukon's seasonal and day schools see, for example, Ibid., Vol. 6478, file 931-3, part 1, R. T. Ferrier to John Hawksley, 15 November 1924. See also YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 13, folder 17, H. McGill to Bishop Geddes, 21 November 1942.



be discouraged but remained firm in his belief that even if only a few children benefited, the attempt was well justified.<sup>91</sup>

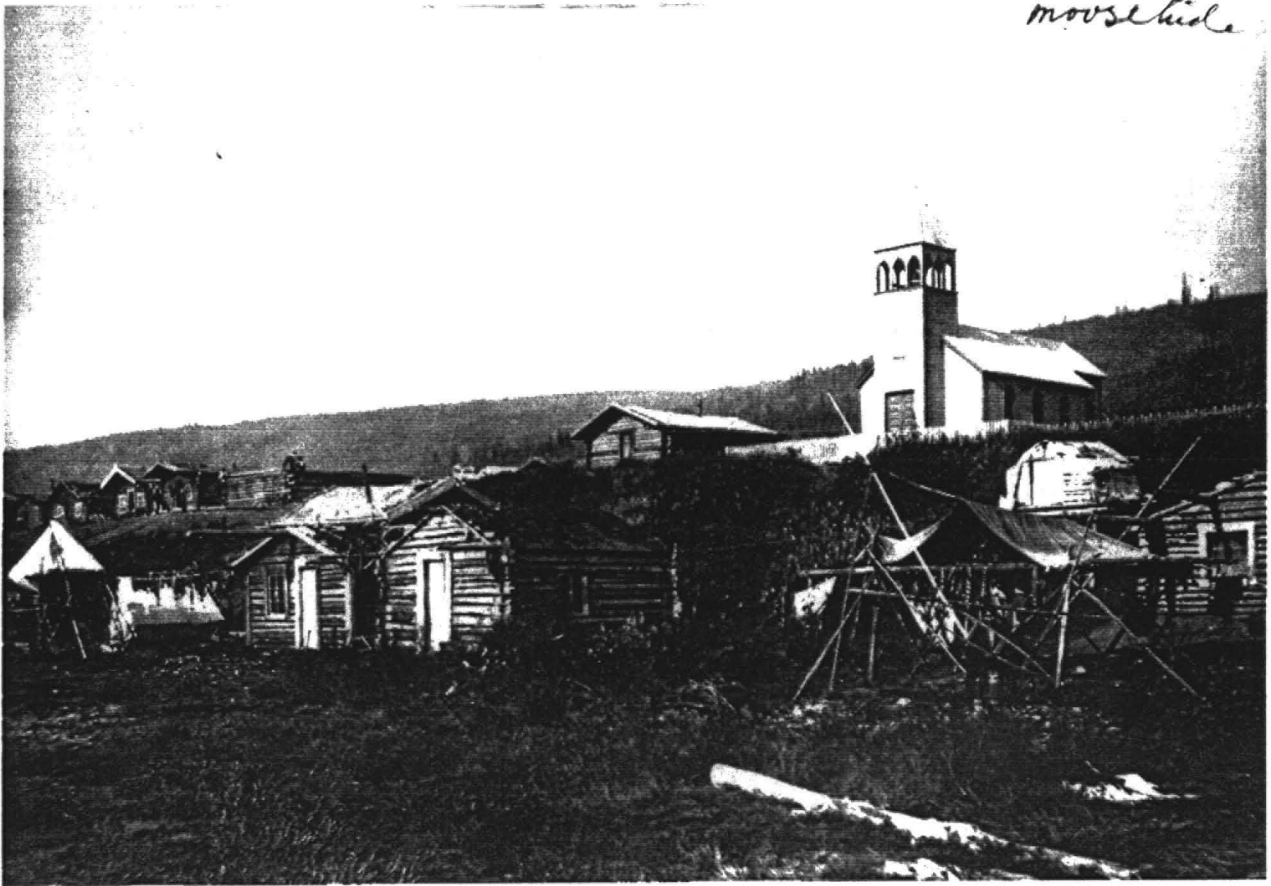
All these undertakings seem to have sprung from his lifelong conviction that education was, as he expressed it, "good in the final analysis for all branches of the human race."<sup>92</sup> As a young lad, he had affirmed its priority in his own life by choosing a college education rather than the gift of a quarter section of Ontario farmland. Later, as Bishop of Yukon, he made every effort to provide "a reasonable amount" of schooling for the indigenous people of his diocese in the belief, as he said, that this was "about all we can do for the natives of this country outside of giving them the Gospel of Christ and encouraging them to improve their condition physically as well as mentally and morally." Certainly, as the day of the itinerant missionary passed, most members of the widely scattered bands of Indians in the Yukon would have received nothing at all in the way of basic literacy training if they had not had access to the seasonal and day classes that Isaac Stringer made available to them.

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<sup>91</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 931-3, part 1, I. O. Stringer to Rev. John Hawksley, 9 February 1925. See also Ibid., Vol. 6477, file 925-1, part 1, A. H. Sovereign to the Secretary, Indian Affairs, 21 August 1933.

<sup>92</sup>Quotations in this paragraph are from an address delivered by Bishop Stringer in Dawson and reported in the Dawson News, 17 April 1926.

*moosehide*



40. *Moosehide Indian village, n.d.*



41. *Reverend Benjamin Totty, 1920.*



42. Mission school at Fort Selkirk, n.d. Kathleen Martin (Mrs. Cowaret) at right, n.d.



43. *Anglican Church and rectory, Whitehorse, c. 1923(?)*.



44. *School house at Little Salmon, 1914.*



45. *Children at Ross River Mission Day School, c. 1931(?)*.



46. *Teslin Lake Seasonal School, c. 1917. Pupils and teacher (Heber Wilkinson) in front of dance hall which served as their classroom.*



47. *Reverend Julius Kendi and his wife Persis at Mayo, n.d.*



48. *New Rampart House school children with Jacob Njootli, teacher, c. 1919.*



49. *St. Paul's Hostel, Dawson City.*  
*The right-hand part is the original building;*  
*the 1921 addition is on the left of the picture.*



50. *Bishop I.O. Stringer (rear) with children and staff at St. Paul's Hostel, 1923.*  
*Principal C.F. and Mrs. Johnson at rear (right), also Miss Vale.*



## CHAPTER X

### THE REAWAKENING: TERRITORIAL SCHOOLS (1940-1955)

#### The Yukon and World War II

##### Northern Defence Projects (1942-46)

The quiet routine of life in the Yukon, little affected by the outbreak of hostilities in Europe, was abruptly broken by the United States' entry into the war in December, 1941. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor endangered the Aleutians, creating the urgent need for an overland route for the defence of Alaska and thereby thrusting the Territory into an unexpected position of military importance. Within a few months, four U.S. army regiments and dozens of civilian contracting firms had begun to build a road through more than a thousand miles of northern wilderness between Dawson Creek, B.C. and Fairbanks, Alaska. This remarkable engineering feat, carried out in record time at a cost of some \$138 million, roused the Yukon from its long period of dormancy and brought in its wake economic and social changes which neither the territorial nor the federal authorities of the time could have foreseen.

The route selected for the Alaska highway has been termed a "not-so-simple matter of joining the dots," the dots in this case being points on a map representing a chain of small airfields built by the Dominion government to facilitate access to the Yukon by air from Edmonton.<sup>1</sup> To bring men and supplies to the central portion of the route, the American government leased the White Pass and Yukon railway for the duration of the war; as a result, Whitehorse became a major base for troops and civilian workers engaged in highway construction and other subsidiary projects that formed part of the total

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<sup>1</sup>Jim Lotz, Northern Realities (Toronto: New Press, 1970), p. 53. These early airfields later became bases on the North West Staging Route for the shipment by air of supplies and planes to Alaska and onward to Russia.

plan for northern defence. These included the building of an access road to Haines, Alaska, as well as the construction of pipelines to bring fuel from Skagway to points along the new highway and the upgrading of existing airfields to handle the flow of warplanes destined for Russia. The most difficult, costly and controversial of these supplementary defence projects<sup>2</sup> was the five-hundred-mile Canol pipeline designed to bring crude oil from Imperial Oil's field at Norman Wells in the Northwest Territories to a refinery in Whitehorse. This pipeline, begun in June, 1942, reached completion twenty months later in April, 1944, and at the same time brought into being a three-thousand-mile overland telephone line, the first in the region, which linked Norman Wells and Fairbanks, Edmonton and Helena, Montana.<sup>3</sup> Within three years all this unprecedented activity had opened up vast and hitherto unknown areas of the Yukon and ended forever the Territory's isolation.

#### The Aftermath of the War Years (1946-53)

As each of these projects reached completion the American troops and civilian support services moved on, leaving only a fraction of their number behind to provide necessary maintenance. When the war ended, control of the Canadian portion of the Alaska highway passed to the Dominion government; at the beginning of April, 1946, the Canadian army formally assumed responsibility for what was then termed the Northwest Highway System and proceeded to establish Camp Takhini as its base in Whitehorse. Since an inland source of fuel for the Alaska war effort was no longer necessary, the Whitehorse refinery was dismantled and the Canol pipeline and its accompanying road fell into disuse. Now that the wave of frenzied wartime activity had passed, Yukoners could settle back to await further developments and ponder the changes that had overtaken their Territory in so brief a period.

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<sup>2</sup>C. Cecil Lingard and Reginald G. Trotter, Canada in World Affairs, Canadian Institute of International Affairs (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1950), pp. 65-73.

<sup>3</sup>Lotz, Northern Realities, pp. 54-55. For the Canol project see Stan Cohen, The Forgotten War (Missoula, Montana: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1981), pp. 3-38.

It soon became evident that a new era had begun. Dawson City, bypassed by the Alaska highway (to the great disappointment of its inhabitants),<sup>4</sup> found itself superseded as the Yukon's centre of population and activity by Whitehorse, which the war years had transformed from a quiet hamlet to a dusty, overcrowded shack town.<sup>5</sup> Its growth was further stimulated by an increase in mining activity as exploration companies took advantage of the Alaska highway and an expanding network of secondary roads to investigate the Territory's mineral potential. Before long, the town had also become the main supply centre for a number of new highway settlements that developed as trucking services and road travel replaced the traditional slow and seasonal river traffic. In addition, the postwar population growth and the renewal of interest in northern development created a greater demand for government services, thereby placing enormous pressure upon the Territorial administration which had become largely a "one-man show" during Mr. Jeckell's years as Controller.<sup>6</sup> Following his retirement in 1946 and in recognition of the new developments in the Territory, Ottawa moved in 1948 to restore the office of Commissioner and in 1951 to increase the number of Territorial councillors from three to five. Furthermore, the federal presence, which had almost disappeared over the years, underwent marked expansion as more federal services began to be provided in the Yukon.<sup>7</sup> All these trends

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<sup>4</sup>See the correspondence in YA, YRG 1, Vol. 69, file 21, part 1.

<sup>5</sup>Paul M. Korosil, "The Changing Landscape of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory: a Historical Perspective," People of the Living Land, B.C. Geographical Series, No. 15, 1972, pp. 193-97.

<sup>6</sup>In 1941 the government staff in the Dawson office consisted of only six employees in addition to Mr. Jeckell, some of whom performed both territorial and federal duties. (PAC, RG 85, Vol. 510-4, part 2, Memorandum, A. L. Cumming to R. A. Gibson, 22 April 1941.) By 1944, conditions there had changed very little as wartime restrictions prevented the hiring of additional staff. (YA, YRG 1, Vol. 55, file 3340, Gibson to G. A. Jeckell, 24 May 1944.) In Mayo and Whitehorse a Territorial agent looked after local matters with periodic visits from Mr. Jeckell, who carefully checked their accounts, counted their supplies and investigated complaints.

<sup>7</sup>By 1950, the growing number of federal officials stationed in Whitehorse included those concerned with forestry, water resources, geological services, Indian affairs, customs and excise, immigration and northern health, as well as members of the RCMP, the Department of Transport and the Department of National Defence.

culminated in the transfer in 1953 of the capital from Dawson to Whitehorse, by then the larger and more accessible of the two chief communities in the Territory. Obviously, old ways were being left behind and a new pattern of life was emerging.

#### Territorial Schools: A Time of Growth

As Mr. Jeckell's annual report for 1942 indicates, the early war years gave no hint of the rapid growth that was soon to occur in the Yukon school system. At that date there were only five schools in the Territory: the two at Dawson and those at Mayo, Carcross and Whitehorse. The entire teaching body consisted of nine teachers for a total of 270 pupils, the majority enrolled in Dawson Public School. Since the Superintendent, Mr. Hlland, was fully occupied with his teaching duties there, it seems reasonable to assume that Mr. Jeckell, himself a former teacher, kept a close eye upon school matters during his routine visits to the various communities.

#### Whitehorse Public School

That spring (1942) a dramatic change began as Whitehorse, then a little settlement of some eight hundred residents, found itself suddenly overrun by an influx of thirty thousand American soldiers and civilian workers. Army installations sprang up ten miles from town at McRae to handle incoming supplies; a tent camp was set up on the hill overlooking the valley and whole sections of the main town area were taken over by the military authorities and contractors who required space for their workshops, offices, staff quarters and hospital services. Local facilities were strained to the utmost, hotel rooms were at a premium, and vacant land was soon covered with an incredible clutter of tent-frame dwellings and makeshift buildings not unlike those in Dawson during the goldrush years. Although the U.S. army promptly installed its own water and sewer services, the original residents were less fortunate and epidemics soon began to threaten the overcrowded community. Following the death of a pupil from dysentery in October, 1942, the medical officer closed the public school for ten days, a move which led some parents to petition the Territorial government for the immediate replacement of the school's outdoor privies and indoor chemical toilets (reserved for the use of

the girls) by "an adequate number of flush toilets" and appropriate washroom facilities.<sup>9</sup> Although the onset of winter, along with lack of funds and the impossibility of obtaining materials and labour at short notice, prevented any improvements being made at that time, Mr. Jeckell did authorize the spending of four thousand dollars the following year--to repaint and rewire the three-room school building. Not until 1944 did it become possible to connect Lambert Street School to the army water and sewer system and install modern sanitary facilities and a drinking fountain.<sup>9</sup>

That year was a particularly difficult one for the over-burdened Territorial administration in Dawson. Hampered by wartime restrictions and shortages and uncertain as to the future that faced Whitehorse once the "boom" was over, Mr. Jeckell was reluctant to spend money on upgrading community services or building a school there. Some of the townspeople's demands were, he felt, quite frivolous; others, in his view, could not be considered until the residents accepted incorporation and shared the cost of improvements by paying school and property taxes instead of relying upon the Territorial treasury for all benefits. In this regard, his reply to a federal request for explanation of certain proposals put forward by a Whitehorse candidate for Territorial Council is revealing:<sup>10</sup>

Respecting the proposal for a Federal Grant to be made to the Territory for the upkeep of existing children's playgrounds . . . my comment is that there is no limit to the demands of some people. Residents of the Yukon pay no school taxes and still are not satisfied with their present conditions.

It is interesting to note that the candidate in question had sufficient local support to be elected.

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<sup>9</sup>YA, YRG 1, Series 1, file 305-b, L. Higgins to J. E. Gibben, 27 October 1942.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., G. A. Jeckell to Higgins, 6 September 1944.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., Vol. 59, file 34362-3, Jeckell to R. A. Gibson, 24 February 1944.

Since something had to be done at once to accommodate the steadily increasing number of pupils in Whitehorse, Mr. Jeckell agreed as an interim measure to lease additional classroom space if a suitable location could be found. Early that August he was informed that the Dowell's Camp building, a two-storey frame structure used as an office and dormitory by a contracting firm employed by the American army, had become available. Situated in the vicinity of Third Avenue and Wheeler Street in a crowded area just outside what was then the northern boundary of the town, it was reported to have space downstairs for "two large classrooms, laboratory, office, hallways, modern toilets and washrooms," with additional room upstairs for an auditorium.<sup>11</sup> Supplies were immediately ordered and renovations begun; that September (1944) the principal moved the secondary and upper elementary grades from the Lambert Street school to these new quarters where they managed as best they could until their desks and blackboards, delayed by shortages of labour and materials in the furniture industry, arrived the following February.

Acquisition of this second building provided only short-term relief: even though most wartime construction was ending, other developments continued to attract families to the town, many with young children. The arrival of seventy more pupils between September, 1944, and March, 1945, brought the school's enrolment to a total of 192 in all grades; the resultant overcrowding was solved by hiring an additional teacher for a new grade 2-3 class, installed for the time being in the Dowell area school. As the population continued to grow, it became necessary to find other classrooms in the vicinity, and in 1947 a former army barracks was moved to the Lambert Street school grounds to provide a fourth room for what had become the town's primary school. This structure, of a type only too familiar to Whitehorse residents of the era, was a one-storey prefabricated frame building, about twenty feet wide and sixty feet long, intended for temporary use during the war emergency. Drafty and poorly lit,

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., Telegram, L. Higgins to Jeckell, 10 August 1944.

it was heated by two oil stoves fed from barrels attached to the outside walls and, like the other school facilities in the town, was in its turn soon overcrowded.

By early 1949 it was clear that measures of this type would no longer suffice to meet the urgent need for accommodation of the 244 pupils then enrolled, plus an additional 212 pre-school children for whom space would soon be required. That February a group of mothers, whose application for a new school had been refused by Commissioner Gibben on financial grounds, sent the Minister of Mines and Resources in Ottawa a petition outlining the situation in their community and requesting that "immediate consideration be given and action taken to provide for the construction of a new school, which will meet with the approved educational standards throughout Canada."<sup>12</sup> Their request, accompanied by photographs and supported by a letter from the town's public health officers, was further strengthened by a statement from Mr. C. K. LeCapelain, a federal official who had been stationed at Whitehorse during the war years and who was well acquainted with conditions there. His description of the Dowell area school reinforced that given in the parents' petition:<sup>13</sup>

It is of temporary wooden construction without central heating; there being 19 oil stoves scattered throughout the building. The stairways are too narrow; the fire escapes made of wood; the insulation is poor so that the building is cold and draughty in the severe sub-zero weather sometimes experienced in that locality; the windows are draughty and give insufficient and improper light for the classrooms. The building is surrounded by warehouses and equipment shops and there are no playgrounds. At the best it is a makeshift and at the worst it is a firetrap. No wonder the parents are worried over the safety and health of their children.

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<sup>12</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 325, file 630/200-1, part 1, Dorothy M. Wilson to the Hon. J. A. McKinnon, 12 February 1949, and attached petition dated January 1949.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., C. K. LeCapelain to Mr. Gibson, Report re Whitehorse School, 25 February 1949. Mr. LeCapelain served as federal liaison officer in Whitehorse for two and a half years, until 24 March 1944.

In addition, he outlined the financial problems then facing the Yukon government, pointing out that the fund set aside from liquor profits for post-war construction had been seriously depleted because of federal refusal to continue the customary annual grant-in-aid to the Territory while such a nest egg remained.<sup>14</sup> Although a new federal-territorial financial agreement had been reached in 1948, the Territory's reserves were by then insufficient to meet the full capital cost of a new school, estimated at about \$600,000. Mr. LeCapelain suggested therefore that, since the Department of National Defence had so many children in Whitehorse, "it would be sensible for it to combine its funds with those of the Yukon government for the provision of a common Public and High School Building and facilities," rather than to have schools erected at the Army and RCAF stations.

Although this course of action was readily approved in principle, delays persisted and another year passed before the necessary financial agreements between the Territorial government and the federal departments concerned were finally completed. Under their terms, the Yukon undertook to contribute half the estimated cost of the new building or \$300,000, the amount remaining in its liquor reserve fund. The balance was to be shared equally by the Department of National Defence and the Department of Mines and Resources, the federal body then responsible for Yukon affairs.<sup>15</sup> Since the building was the first of its size and type to be erected in the North, construction procedures became the subject of prolonged debate complicated by lack of agreement as to the exact number of classrooms that would be required and, while discussions continued, costs of labour and materials steadily increased. As for the administration in Dawson, it was caught up in the period of rapid change and disorganization that followed Mr. Jeckell's retirement and was accordingly unable to expedite

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<sup>14</sup>The federal grant, reduced to \$50,000 in 1939, was discontinued entirely in the mid-1940s. The Territorial government was informed after the war that the grant would not be renewed as long as this liquor reserve fund existed.

<sup>15</sup>Correspondence pertaining to these agreements may be found in PAC, RG 85, Vol. 630/200-1, part 1.



matters to any degree.<sup>16</sup> As the editor of the Star pointed out, the Council had--apart from voting money--left the new school "to be pushed around by more authorities than it takes to build a battleship."<sup>17</sup> Since overheated stoves and faulty chimneys in the Dowell building had already caused a number of near-calamities, avoided only by the constant vigilance of "Andy" Young, the resident caretaker, this expression of public frustration seems remarkably mild.

Two years later, on August 15, 1952, the long-awaited new facility, known as Whitehorse Elementary-High School, was opened for public viewing, to the general delight and approval of the entire population. With the Dowell area and Lambert Street buildings no longer used for school purposes, all pupils were now housed in a modern two-storey concrete structure containing eighteen classrooms, an auditorium-gymnasium, home economics and science laboratories, a library room, and basement play space for use in the winter. Unfortunately, the respite was brief. In this time of rapid community expansion, the new school soon proved barely adequate for the needs of grades one to twelve<sup>18</sup> and, although the Superintendent of Schools used it as his base, no space could be found for temporary Territorial government offices which had to be relegated to the Dowell building. Besides being too small, the new school proved upon completion to be considerably more costly than had been anticipated, exceeding the original estimates by about \$107,000. As Territorial funds could not absorb this overrun, the federal departments concerned undertook to find this amount, with the Department of National Defence contributing a further sum of \$25,000 for furnishings and equipment, an item which had somehow been completely overlooked in the planning process.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Mr. Jeckell's firm hand and wide knowledge of the Territory were greatly missed. The disorganization may be partly attributed to the fact that between 1947 and 1952 three incumbents succeeded to the office of Commissioner: Mr. J. E. Gibben (1947-50), Mr. A. H. Gibson (1950-51) and Mr. F. Fraser (1951-52). Of these, only Mr. Gibben had previous experience in the Yukon government; the other two had held federal administrative posts in Yellowknife.

<sup>17</sup>Whitehorse Star, 17 March 1950.

<sup>18</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1261, file 600-1-3, part 4, R. Hulland, Annual Report on the Operation of Yukon Territorial Schools, 1952-53, pp. 4,6,7.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. 1241, file 311/2006, part 1, Memorandum for the Deputy Minister, 19 March 1954.

By September, 1953, only a year later, overcrowding was again forcing the adoption of stopgap measures. There were by then 648 pupils in a building designed for 550, with the prospect of there being 700 in attendance before the end of the school year. Since space for five more classrooms over and above the original eighteen had to be found, the library room and three of the four basement playrooms were converted into classrooms, the fourth doing duty as an art room. In addition, the old Lambert Street school building had to be reopened for use by a grade one class. In view of this new emergency, the federal government was once again approached for capital assistance<sup>20</sup> and once again the same departments came to the rescue, offering to share construction costs on the same basis as formerly. This time, plans included not only a ten-room addition to the recently opened public school facility but also an apartment block adjacent to Lambert Street School for use by the town's single male teachers. The total cost of these projects was estimated at about \$400,000, plus an additional \$21,815 for furnishing both buildings.<sup>21</sup> As no delays were anticipated, completion seemed probable by the summer of 1955.

While work on the addition to the school went forward, teachers and pupils faced conditions reminiscent of those in Dawson Public School at the turn of the century. Every room of the building was overcrowded, storage space was non-existent, and the playground area was found to be totally inadequate for eight hundred pupils of all ages. The principal, Mr. Stanley Hovdebo, encountered constant organizational problems as pupils arrived every week from all parts of Canada while others in turn withdrew as their parents moved south. Despite all difficulties, the elementary classes made good progress, although Mr. Hulland, like Mr. Bragg before him, was less satisfied with the high school grades, where he found too many students leaving be-

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., Vol. 327, file 630/200-1, part 3, W. G. Brown to General Young, 3 October 1953.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Vol. 1242, file 311/2006, part 2, Paul Mathieu to R. G. Robertson, 15 October 1954.

fore graduation in order to take paid employment in the community.<sup>22</sup> The disadvantages of the school's location on Fourth Avenue, a main thoroughfare, also became evident as the noise from the nearby army fire hall and from the White Pass Company's trucking base across the street disturbed the classes, while mud and dust from the unpaved busy roads were a constant nuisance factor. Asked to comment on the new school, a grade seven boy wrote:<sup>23</sup>

[The school] is situated in a very poor location. Children at play may dart thoughtlessly out into the main street and get seriously injured or even killed. There are no grounds on which to play games. . . . When spring comes and the snow melts, water runs into a ditch which is a real temptation [sic] for children to play in. . . .

His point of view was probably shared by many.

The unattractive surroundings and the overcrowded conditions at the new school may have obscured the fact that it was after all a vast improvement upon the buildings that it had replaced. Another pupil in the same class had perhaps a longer memory. "I don't see why we would want to complain about this school," she wrote. "You can't imagine the joy of many pupils when it was opened--modern and complete with washroom facilities. Let us give thanks." In fact, parents, pupils and teachers alike must all have given thanks when in September, 1955, the new addition was ready for use. Although it only partially solved the ongoing school accommodation problem in Whitehorse, it offered at least some temporary relief for the situation while further action was being considered.

#### Christ the King School, Whitehorse

Pressures upon Whitehorse Public School would have been even greater during this period had it not been for the emergence in the

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<sup>22</sup>YA, Yukon Records Office Files (YROF) 1-37-1, folder 3, R. J. Hulland, Annual Report on Yukon Schools, 1953-54.

<sup>23</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 712, file 630/200-1, part 4, Excerpt from a Grade Seven-A class paper, Whitehorse Elementary-High School, 1955, May Nelson, teacher.

mid-1940s of a Catholic school in that community.<sup>24</sup> When the Right Reverend Jean Louis Coudert, OMI, arrived in the Territory in 1941 as Vicar Apostolic (Bishop) of Whitehorse, he was seeking primarily to strengthen and extend his church's ties with the native people of the southwest Yukon. Other needs soon developed as the upheaval of 1942-43 brought an increasing number of Catholic families to Whitehorse. In response to their requests for a school of their own, he proceeded to erect a two-storey frame building near his church in the hope that it might serve as a convent-school for both day pupils and boarders from outlying districts. At the same time, he approached various religious orders for assistance with the new project.

As a result of the Bishop's appeals, four Sisters of Charity of Providence arrived in the fall of 1946 and on November 25, even before the classrooms were fully completed, the school officially opened its doors to six pupils in grades one to four. The following January the Sisters began offering music classes, and since only one boarder had arrived they decided to make use of the dormitory space in the convent building for a small kindergarten group of nine children. Generous donations that included school desks and three pianos as well as food, clothing and money encouraged the new venture and by September, 1947, with sixty-nine pupils in grades one to eight and eleven boarders, additional classroom space was urgently required. Accordingly, the Sisters arranged to have a small building, twenty-two feet by sixteen, renovated as a kindergarten, while a former army barracks, moved to a site at the rear of the convent, was converted into a school. By June of 1949, Christ the King School, with 43 day pupils, 23 boarders, 33 music students and 37 children in kindergarten, was firmly established in the community.

As funds permitted, improvements to the original convent building added to its comfort and convenience, while in the summer of 1950 the

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<sup>24</sup>Details concerning Christ the King School are derived from Hortense Quesnelle, SP, Précis of the Chronicles of Christ the King Convent, pp. 1-8; Rusty Erlan, "25 Years of Service," Whitehorse Star, 18 November 1971, and also from interviews with Father E. Morriset, OMI, Whitehorse, 9 and 29 July 1986.

former rectory on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Wood Street was moved closer to the convent and an upper storey added to increase the dormitory space for the residents. By the fall of 1951 it was becoming obvious that all the school's facilities would before long be inadequate to meet the growing needs of the Catholic community; that September the Sisters began to enrol grade nine students and a year later were hard pressed to find space for 107 day pupils, 24 boarders and a kindergarten of 50. In his 1952 inspection Mr. Hulland remarked upon the difficulties the Sisters were facing, especially at the primary level where one teacher was trying valiantly to cope with fifty-one children in a combined grade 1-2 class. At his suggestion, an additional teacher was added to the staff in September 1953, bringing the total number to five and reducing somewhat the size of their classes. Overcrowding, however, remained a serious problem until a new and larger building could be erected.<sup>25</sup>

Since its inception in 1946, Bishop Coudert had been questioning the Territory's method of financing Christ the King School which, like St. Mary's in Dawson, operated with the aid of an annual per capita grant from the Yukon government. When in the spring of 1952 Commissioner Fraser announced a twenty-five percent cut in this grant, the Bishop increased his efforts to obtain a more satisfactory basis of funding for the operational costs of the Catholic schools of the Territory.<sup>26</sup> Wishing to provide a building comparable to the public school then under construction in Whitehorse, he sought to enter into a similar cost-sharing agreement with the federal and territorial authorities. After prolonged negotiations, an agreement was finally signed in August 1955 between the trustees of Christ the King School and the Yukon government for the building of an eight-room school at an approximate cost of \$337,000. Under its terms the Department of National Defence was to contribute \$151,000 and the Department of Northern Affairs \$11,000 for the children of their respective non-taxable dependents attending the school; the balance of \$175,000 was to be shared on an equal basis by the Yukon government and the

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<sup>25</sup>R. Hulland, Annual Report for 1952-53 and 1954-55.

<sup>26</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1260, file 600-1-3, part 3, J. L. Coudert to Major-General H. A. Young, 6 February 1953.

trustees of the school.<sup>27</sup> As the contractors had already begun work that March, the new school was ready for occupancy early in January, 1956. However, the whole question of the ongoing status and funding of the Catholic schools in the Yukon remained unresolved and was to become for the rest of that decade a major problem for officials at all levels of government.

#### Alaska Highway Joint Schools

The demand for additional school accommodation was not limited to Whitehorse: as early as August, 1944, Ottawa had begun to receive requests for educational facilities in the maintenance camps then being established by the U.S. army along the Alaska highway. At first Mr. Jeckell reported that there were too few children in these camps to justify any immediate steps on the part of his government to set up schools and suggested instead that their needs could easily be met by enrolling them in the British Columbia Department of Education correspondence courses at their parents' expense, the customary procedure at that time in the Yukon's more isolated areas.<sup>28</sup> Later that year, high-level discussions in Ottawa revealed that the employment of married workers in the maintenance camps along the B.C. sections of the highway had led to reduced labour turnover and resulted in greater efficiency and economy. Since that province had already begun to establish schools in the camps near Fort St. John, Blueberry and Fort Nelson,<sup>29</sup> the United States authorities urged the Territory to take similar steps as a means of attracting married men with families to the road camps along the Yukon section of the highway.<sup>30</sup>

Although Mr. Jeckell was loath to involve his administration in the uncertainties that so frequently accompanied the operation of

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<sup>27</sup>Bishop Coudert, Address delivered at the opening of the new school, 10 January 1956, Petit Journal de la Providence, pp. 133-36.

<sup>28</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 979, file 14743, Charles Camsell to W/C P. A. Cumyn, 19 September 1944; G. A. Jeckell to R. A. Gibson, 6 November 1944.

<sup>29</sup>Regina Leader Post, 2 October 1944.

<sup>30</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 979, file 14743, Major-General W. W. Foster to Mr. A. D. P. Heeney, 29 December 1944.

one-room schools, he arranged to discuss the matter with Colonel Harvey of the U.S. Northwest Service Command, the officer responsible for maintenance of the highway. At a meeting held in Whitehorse in January, 1945, they reached an agreement whereby the American authorities would provide the required school buildings and furniture, as well as heat, light, water, and lavatory facilities. All that would be required from the Territory would be classroom supplies and the teacher's salary. The parents would purchase the text books at cost; these would be sent to each school by the Territorial government.<sup>31</sup> Since these would be in effect assisted schools, Colonel Harvey offered to try to group families with school-age children together so as to maintain the required minimum number of seven children at camps where schools became established. When the Canadian Department of National Defence assumed responsibility for highway maintenance in the spring of 1946, this cooperative policy remained in force, ending only when a camp was closed or when a school had become large enough to be totally supported by the Territory.

As soon as these arrangements were in place, Mr. Jeckell set about opening a school at Watson Lake Junction Camp, where requests for educational facilities had first originated. With Mr. Hulland's consent, the wife of one of the camp employees began to hold classes there in early April, 1945. Unfortunately, the expected number of children did not materialize; attendance soon dropped from eight to five and by mid-June, with only three pupils remaining, Mr. Jeckell found it necessary to close the school.<sup>32</sup> Later that summer, in order to obtain a better view of the situation, he conducted a thorough personal investigation into the educational needs at all the maintenance camps along the Yukon section of the Alaska Highway. Although there were too few children to justify the reopening of the school at Watson Lake Camp, he felt that the required number could be found at both Teslin Lake Camp and the one located at Destruction

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid., G. A. Jeckell to R. A. Gibson, "Educational Amenities at the US Road Camps, Yukon Territory," 1 February 1945. It should be noted that the teacher's accommodation was also provided at each camp at no expense to the Territory.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 6 August 1945.

Bay on Kluane Lake. Shortly thereafter, a sudden changeover of personnel at both these places left the possible enrolments there very uncertain and prevented the making of any firm plans for hiring teachers. Disappointed by this apparent setback, Mr. Jeckell predicted that "the effort to obtain married employees for the maintenance work and to establish these families in Highway Camps, and then hold them there" would in all likelihood prove to be a futile undertaking.<sup>33</sup>

Despite his pessimistic views, attempts to establish educational facilities in the road camps did in fact meet with success. That September (1945) the arrival of new families permitted schools to open at Destruction Bay and Teslin Lake. Both proved to be more durable than the Watson Lake venture: the one at Destruction Bay, later known as Kluane Lake School, went on to become a permanent Territorial school; the one at Teslin, reestablished during the winter of 1946-47 some twenty-five miles further north at Brook's Brook, operated continuously until that camp was closed twenty years later. In September, 1947, a third school began at Swift River, about seventy miles south of Teslin, followed in the fall of 1949 by another at Haines Junction, a hundred miles northwest of Whitehorse. Although the Swift River School ceased to exist in the 1960s, the one at Haines Junction grew rapidly until by 1954 its enrolment had increased sufficiently to permit the opening of a second classroom with an additional teacher. Finally, in 1953 the establishment of a new maintenance camp near the Alaska-Yukon border brought Beaver Creek School into being. Although its enrolments have shown little growth, the school there has continued to operate to the present time, typical of the ungraded classrooms to which a good number of present-day Yukon residents owe some or all of their early education.

Although no school developed at the Watson Lake road camp itself, highway families in that area obtained access to one in 1950 following the opening of a school at the airport for five dependents of RCAF personnel, along with a few other children from a nearby settlement known locally as "Brodhagensville." Like the classrooms in

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<sup>33</sup>ibid.



the maintenance camps, this was a joint operation with the RCAF supplying a one-room log schoolhouse and accommodation for a teacher selected and paid by the Territory. Before long, children from the airport area were joined by others living along the highway from eight to fifteen miles away; by the fall of 1952 increasing enrolment led the RCAF to provide a larger building with space for two classrooms so that an additional teacher could be employed when needed.<sup>34</sup> Two years later, to eliminate the expense and inconvenience of the journey to the airport and reduce the numbers at the school there, the government decided to give the highway residents a school of their own. The new building, opened in November, 1954, was a "Panabode" structure<sup>35</sup> containing one classroom and an apartment for the teacher and was located at the junction of the airport road and the Alaska highway, a point known as the "Y." Both schools continued to operate independently for a few years until provision was made for their consolidation into a local system to serve the entire Watson Lake area.

As their original advocates had hoped, the schools at the highway camps and the Watson Lake airport undoubtedly played a major role in attracting a stable work force to these relatively isolated points. Better maintained and equipped than the pioneer assisted schools had been, their chief drawback lay in the frequent turnover of their staff, few of whom remained for long owing, as Mr. Hulland noted, to the isolation and enforced close contact between the teacher and the pupils and parents.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, many very competent teachers accepted the challenge of a year or two at one of these points; under their direction the pupils made generally good

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<sup>34</sup>From information supplied by Mrs. Katie Johnson, a pioneer resident, 7 November 1986; also YA, YROF 1-37-1, folder 1, R. J. Hulland, "Interim Report" (submitted with his Annual Report for 1951-52).

<sup>35</sup>These prefabricated buildings with walls of interlocking wooden "logs" became popular throughout the Territory owing to their neat appearance and relative ease of construction.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., Hulland, Annual Report, 1949-50. Kluane Lake School seems to have been particularly difficult to staff, while the airport school at Watson Lake was much more successful in retaining its teachers, possibly because of the cheaper living accommodation offered there.

progress<sup>37</sup> and in addition benefited from the spirit of independence and helpfulness so frequently nurtured in one-room schools.

The rapid school expansion of these years was confined to the southwest Yukon where the presence of a large number of Department of National Defence personnel justified extensive federal support. Elsewhere in the Territory, the growth of school facilities proceeded more slowly and was more closely linked to the state of the economy and the Territorial budget. As a consequence, until the mining industry began to revive in the early 1950s, demands upon the school system in these areas were few and the changes relatively minor.

#### Dawson Public School and St. Mary's Catholic School

The years that brought so great an upheaval to Whitehorse had little effect upon conditions in Dawson City; as a result, both the public school and St. Mary's Catholic School emerged from the 1940s relatively unchanged. From the few accounts available<sup>38</sup> it appears that although the public school ceased in 1944 to be the largest in the Territory, its enrolments remained fairly stable and in fact gradually increased from 125 in 1943-44 to 156 in 1949-50. This growth permitted the appointment of an additional teacher, relieving Mr. Hurland of the full responsibility for all high school classes, a load he had carried for the past decade. The school continued as before to be very much part of the community: in January 1950, classes were cancelled for three weeks so that it could house patients from St. Mary's hospital, destroyed by fire on a fifty-below-zero winter night. Later, in September, 1952, the Administration building in turn played host to the various classes until major repairs to the school's foundations and heating system were completed. Serious staffing problems arose in conjunction with the polio epidemic of 1953: the entire teaching body resigned that June and for the first time in twenty years suitable replacements were hard to find. The unfortunate staff

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., Annual Report, 1953-54, p. 7.

<sup>38</sup>At the time of writing, no Superintendent's reports for 1940-43 and 1945-46 had come to light, while the records for 1944-45 and 1946-47 give only statistical data.

tensions that plagued the school the following term were resolved only when a former teacher, Mr. Claude Campbell, returned as principal in April, 1954.

No such problems arose at St. Mary's School, which continued to operate smoothly under the direction of the Sisters of St. Ann. However, during these postwar years this school too saw a gradual increase in its enrolment so that in September of 1955 a second classroom was opened for the first time since 1922. The additional teacher was assigned to the primary grades, enabling the principal, Sister Mary Anthony, to spend more time with the older pupils at the upper elementary levels.

#### Mayo Public School

As increasing mining activity attracted more families to Mayo, the little school there, still operating in its original quarters, began to be seriously overcrowded. In July, 1948, some fifty residents approached the Territorial Council with a petition requesting that an additional teacher be hired for the high school grades.<sup>39</sup> To satisfy their request, the government arranged to have a small frame house moved to a site near the existing school so that the teacher, Miss Ruth Batty, could hold classes separately for the nine upper-grade students. The second classroom was in charge of her sister Margaret who came that year to teach grades one to seven in the old building. For the ensuing four years (1949-53) these two classrooms were in charge of Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Burt, who found themselves faced with a steadily increasing number of pupils from grades one to matriculation, the enrolments being especially heavy at the primary level. To relieve the overcrowding, a third classroom was opened in October, 1952, in the nearby IODE hall with Miss Doris Batty as the teacher for grades four, five and six. Despite the inconvenience of holding classes in three separate buildings with limited facilities, teachers and pupils accepted the challenge and the Superintendent reported very favourably upon their progress.

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<sup>39</sup>Yukon Territorial Council, "Votes and Proceedings, 1949."

In 1954, at the insistence of the new principal, Mr. D. Machan, supported by the Parent Teacher Association and the local Chamber of Commerce, the authorities agreed to improve the education facilities at Mayo.<sup>40</sup> After buying a house for the principal's use--the one formerly used having been condemned by the Territorial Health Inspector--the government in 1954-55 voted \$25,000 for the immediate construction of a new Panabode-type school with adjoining apartments for two lady teachers, similar to the one at Watson Lake "Y." Although the new building proved difficult to heat during the cold winter months and did not fully satisfy parents of the primary-grade children, who were still housed in their original quarters, it helped to alleviate the unsatisfactory school conditions that had developed at Mayo during these postwar years.

#### Elsa Public School

Elsa School, closed in 1942, reopened on September 23, 1952, with ten pupils in attendance. Once again the mining company, United Keno Hill Mines, provided a school building as well as steam heat, light, water, and a small house for the teacher, a mine employee's wife. Enrolments increased as Elsa became more and more a "family" camp until by 1954-55 the Company had to provide a second classroom. By that date the school was well established and the Superintendent, although disappointed at having to find new teachers each year, took comfort in noting that the children were doing better than average work in comfortable and bright surroundings.

#### Keno City Public School

In September, 1953, another small school began in the little settlement of Keno City, some twelve miles from Elsa. This too was a

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<sup>40</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1469, file 630-204, Leila Barwise to F. J. G. Cunningham, 11 February 1954; also the latter's memorandum to Commissioner W. G. Brown, 17 February 1949. Further details concerning Mayo School are derived from the Superintendent's reports for the period and from information supplied by former teachers, Mrs. Ruth (Batty) McIntyre and Mr. Donald Machan.

joint operation, with Mackeno Mines Ltd. supplying the classroom and the required utilities, while the Yukon government provided desks and instructional materials and also moved a building from Mayo to Keno for use as a teacher's residence. In view of the extreme shortage of applicants for teaching positions in the Territory that summer, Miss Ruth Batty, who had been principal of Mayo School from 1946 to 1949, agreed to move to Keno to pilot this new project through its first year. Although there were only nine pupils at first, the presence of a school drew more families to that community; enrolments gradually increased and by the spring of 1955 the Superintendent's report indicates that the fourteen pupils then enrolled were progressing well under the direction of a capable and popular teacher, Miss Anna Zawalsky.<sup>41</sup>

#### Carcross Public School

The war years and their aftermath seem to have brought very little change to the public school at Carcross. Still housed in a little log building rented from the Anglican church, it served a small group of fifteen to twenty-five children and was marked by an almost yearly turnover of teachers, few wishing to remain longer in cramped and inadequate quarters described by Mr. Hulland as the poorest in the Territory. In 1952-53, increased enrolments encouraged the government to purchase the partly completed Peterson home and remodel it for school purposes with a classroom on the lower floor and an apartment upstairs for the teacher.<sup>42</sup> With a good well to supply water and electric power brought in from the Indian school at Chooutla, the newly modernized building soon proved its worth as parental support and teacher enthusiasm led to a decided improvement in pupil progress.

#### Teslin: An Experiment in Integration (1948-)

At Teslin, events in this period took a somewhat different course. During the construction of the Alaska highway the original

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<sup>41</sup>YA, YROF 1-37-1, folder 3, R. Hulland, Interim Report, September 1, 1954 to March 31, 1955.

<sup>42</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 327, file 630/211-1, Fred Fraser to General Young, 6 September 1952.

settlement centred around the Indian camp and the trading post had gained a fair number of new white residents. When the relocation of the road maintenance camp in late 1946 deprived these families of access to a school and left them with an insufficient number of children for one of their own,<sup>43</sup> Mr. Hullah and Mr. Jack Meek, the newly appointed Yukon Indian agent, proposed an innovative solution. Having learned that the federal government was beginning to advocate the integration of native Indian children into the mainstream of Canadian education, they suggested that it would be appropriate to combine the white children at Teslin with the Indian pupils from the Anglican seasonal school there, establishing in effect a jointly operated school along the lines of those at the maintenance camps but with the Territorial government and the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources as the cooperating parties.<sup>44</sup> With the rather hesitant consent of the federal authorities, Teslin Lake Joint School was opened in September 1948 and was reported from the beginning to be "an assured success," owing largely to the abilities of the teacher, Miss Joan Adams.<sup>45</sup> Hers was a true pioneer experience: as she recalls, she reached Whitehorse in late August from her previous post at Telegraph Creek, B.C. to find that Mr. Meek was away and that no preparations had been made for herself or for her schoolroom. Upon his return they toured Teslin, where they found the best available building to be the old Taylor and Drury warehouse; someone from the local airport installed a stovepipe and a makeshift blackboard and after a week of strenuous scrubbing she managed to create a presentable classroom in which to welcome the children. For her own living quarters she was assigned an unwinterized cabin on the lakeshore some distance from the school, previously reserved for the occasional visits of the public health nurse. Her class register lists some fifteen pupils, at least nine of them in grade one. As Mr. Hullah noted, this school was unique since it was the only one in the Territory at that date with both Indian and white children officially

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<sup>43</sup>Teslin Women's Institute, A History of the Settlement of Teslin, pp. 10-11.

<sup>44</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 930-5, part 1, R. J. Hullah to R. J. Meek, 4 October 1948.

<sup>45</sup>Miss Adams, now living in Kelowna, B.C., returned briefly to the Yukon in 1953-54 as helping teacher at the Airport School at Watson Lake; she has kindly provided the details concerning her year at Teslin.

accepted<sup>46</sup>--certainly a "first" in this respect.

Although Miss Adams left Teslin at the end of June, 1949, her good work was carried on for the next two years by her successor, Miss Mary Clancy, who had previously been in charge of the Territorial school at Carcross. Conditions were still difficult, since the old log building was hopelessly inadequate for the fourteen Indian and twelve white pupils in spite of the installation of fluorescent lighting, an additional window and two ventilators.<sup>47</sup> Early in 1951, according to Mr. Hulland's report for that period, the number of Indian pupils greatly diminished, leading Mr. Meek to recommend that the Territorial government should assume full responsibility for Teslin School. Accordingly, that summer the Yukon government undertook the construction of a new public school building at a cost of \$15,000 with accommodation for thirty pupils and upstairs living quarters for the teacher--the first such expenditure financed by the Territory for many years. For the first three years of its operation, to judge from the class registers, none of the original Indian pupils attended; by September 1954, however, their names reappear, indicating that by then Teslin Public School was once again an integrated school.<sup>48</sup>

#### Financial and Administrative Developments

This post-war school expansion called for changes in the long-standing financial and administrative procedures governing education in the Territory. In 1947 the Yukon Council, having received no grants since 1943-44 and having as a consequence spent a large part of its reserves, applied to Ottawa for assistance. Since the resulting financial agreement of 1948 seemed unlikely to satisfy the increasing

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<sup>46</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 930-5, part 1, "Extract from the Report Submitted by R. J. Meek for the Quarterly Period April 1st to June 30th, 1949."

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., "Extract from Sup't Meek's Quarterly Report . . . dated November 15, 1949."

<sup>48</sup>By 1954-55 a number of Indian-status children were apparently being accepted in some Territorial schools on a quid pro quo basis, no fee being charged for them since the Department of Indian Affairs was by then accepting approximately the same number of white or white-status children in its schools. YA, YROF 10-29-1-11 (1953-59), F. H. Collins to Mr. Robertson, 30 November 1955.

demands of the 1950s, a federal interdepartmental committee was appointed in 1951 to make a thorough study of the Territory's financial problems, including those arising from escalating education costs. This committee's report, submitted in April 1952, outlined the prevailing conditions and advanced a number of suggestions for further action.<sup>49</sup>

#### School Funding: New Plans

These investigations showed that up to that date new school construction had been undertaken only when it could be entirely financed from current reserves, as with the small Teslin school built in 1951, or when the federal government agreed to bear the major portion of the costs, as in the case of the new Whitehorse public school. As for the highway schools, the agreements for their joint operation had relieved the Territory of any capital outlay for their construction, while the Catholic church owned and operated its schools in Dawson and Whitehorse, assisted by an annual grant from the Yukon government. Although the committee felt that federal aid for specific school construction projects was entirely reasonable in view of the demand created by the influx of National Defence and other federal personnel, its members were of the opinion that "the citizens must recognize the necessity of taxing themselves an adequate amount for both the construction and operation of schools."<sup>50</sup>

In fact, a move in this direction was already under way, a first attempt to raise money for education purposes by means of property taxes having been made during the previous fiscal year through a Public Purposes Levy<sup>51</sup> imposed on all property in the municipalities of Dawson and Whitehorse. This measure remained in force only one year; on the recommendation of the federal committee it was rescinded

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<sup>49</sup>YA, YRG Series 8, Vol. 6, file 7-A, Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Territorial Financial Problems, April 1952.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>51</sup>Yukon Territory, Municipal Ordinance, Sec. 427, 11 May 1950; rescinded 10 May 1951. See also PAC, R6 85, Vol. 1261, file 600-1-3, part 2, Fred Fraser to Colonel Cunningham, 6 December 1951.



and replaced in May 1952 by a specific School Levy of ten mills on the total assessment of each municipality in the Yukon<sup>52</sup>. On the committee's advice, the government also sought to increase the revenue for schools through a 1952 amendment to the Liquor Ordinance which placed a special surcharge on all alcoholic beverages consumed in the Territory--already a major source of general income.<sup>53</sup> In addition, the Territory proceeded to collect fees from various federal departments on behalf of certain categories of pupils. At first this annual per capita fee of \$150 was levied only in respect of children of the Department of National Defence personnel attending Whitehorse Public School; within the next few years this practice was extended to those attending other Territorial schools and eventually to pupils from families of other federal employees who were not subject to property taxes.<sup>54</sup> Since all these sources of revenue combined (including the liquor tax) could meet only part of the total costs of education, the balance of necessity still came from the general Territorial funds.

#### School Ordinance: The 1950 Revision

Another significant step was taken at the 1950 fall Council session when Commissioner Gibben introduced what he termed "a revised and up-to-date School Ordinance, better fitting [the] local educational set-up." This revision, the first since 1914,<sup>55</sup> was intended to clarify certain sections of the earlier Ordinance, especially those governing the hoped-for eventual establishment of district schools, public or separate, supported by the taxpayers and managed by

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<sup>52</sup>Municipal Ordinance, Secs. 427-31, 10 May 1952.

<sup>53</sup>Yukon Territory, Liquor Ordinance, Sec. 70 (1); see also PAC, RG 22, Vol. 255, file 40-11-1, part 1, Col. H. C. Craig, "Confidential Report on the Administration of the Yukon Territory," p. 8, 18 July 1952. The purpose of the surcharge is not stated in the ordinance, but it appears that the public, understanding its intent, made no objection.

<sup>54</sup>A proposal to this effect, put forward in 1951 by Commissioner Gibben, became the general policy. PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1261, file 600-1-3, part 2, A. H. Gibson to the Director, Northern Administration, 7 August 1951.

<sup>55</sup>An Ordinance Respecting Schools, 3 November, 1950.

elected boards of trustees.<sup>56</sup> However, as no school districts came into being, public financial support could only be derived from the taxes mentioned above, while public input was limited to that provided in some communities (e.g., Mayo, Carcross and Whitehorse) through local Parent-Teacher organizations and, in the case of Whitehorse Public School, through a school committee appointed by Commissioner Fraser.<sup>57</sup>

### The Superintendency

These new financial and legislative measures were accompanied by a reorganization in 1952 of Mr. Hulland's duties. This step was by then long overdue, as it had become impossible for one man, with limited funds at his disposal and no assistance other than that of his wife as part-time secretary, to supervise the growing number of schools in the southern part of the Territory while at the same time serving as full-time teacher of the high school classes in Dawson. In June of that year Commissioner Fraser, attributing the many deficiencies that he had found in the Yukon's school system to what he felt were Mr. Hulland's weaknesses as an administrator, relieved him of all teaching duties and transferred him on a trial basis to Whitehorse as full-time Superintendent of Schools.<sup>58</sup> This move on the part of the Commissioner, although a necessary and progressive step, was marred by what was generally viewed as his undue criticism of a faithful employee. When two years later Commissioner W. G. Brown abruptly dismissed Superintendent Hulland, parents and teachers alike voiced their indignation, as did the members of Council, who considered this hasty action to be yet another example of the dictatorial tendencies of Ottawa and its appointed agent, the Commissioner.<sup>59</sup> To defuse the issue, the federal authorities invited Mr. Hulland to come to Ottawa for

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<sup>56</sup>With such clarification in view, the new ordinance was divided into two parts, Part I entitled "Territorial Schools" and Part II "District Schools."

<sup>57</sup>This committee functioned only during Mr. Fraser's term as Commissioner. Members included the Territorial Agent and the commanding officers of the army and airforce bases in Whitehorse.

<sup>58</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1261, file 600-1-3, part 4, Fred Fraser, Memorandum for the Director, 13 April 1954.

<sup>59</sup>Yukon Territorial Council, Votes and Proceedings, 1954, First Session, pp. 2-5.

a meeting with the Honourable Jean Lesage, the Minister of Northern Affairs. Their discussion led to the reversal of the Commissioner's action and Mr. Hulland's reinstatement as Superintendent for the ensuing school year; in addition, it was agreed that immediate steps would be taken to obtain an assistant superintendent who would familiarize himself with the Territory, undertake a number of specific studies and prepare himself to take over as Superintendent in June 1955 when Mr. Hulland's resignation would take effect.<sup>60</sup> At that date "Jack" Hulland, then approaching his sixtieth year, relinquished his office after twenty-four years of service in the Yukon so that, as he said, a younger man could assume a position which had become increasingly onerous and complex.<sup>61</sup> The new incumbent, Mr. Harry Thompson, found himself responsible for sixteen schools, sixty teachers, fifteen hundred pupils and an embryonic Department of Education. Careful direction would be required if the Yukon's education system was to meet local needs and keep pace with developments elsewhere.

#### Teacher Recruitment and Retention: Salaries and Housing Benefits

Of the many problems that had confronted Mr. Hulland during his later years as Superintendent, the most persistent and troublesome was that of teacher recruitment and retention. In this respect the Yukon was not alone, since a serious teacher shortage affected all parts of Canada after the war; the Territorial government, however, could no longer compete with school boards in the provinces who were in a position to offer higher salaries and better living conditions than were available in the Yukon. In an attempt to attract a greater number of applicants and to persuade teachers to stay for a longer period, efforts began as early as 1948 to provide such inducements as those described later by Commissioner Fraser:<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1261, file 600-1-3, part 4, R. G. Robertson to W. G. Brown, 13 May 1954.

<sup>61</sup>Mr. Hulland had not even been provided with a car for highway travel, but instead had to rely upon the generosity of other travellers. After a term as Territorial Councillor for Whitehorse, he returned to the classroom and served for some years as a teacher and student counsellor in the high school there. Much loved and respected by his students and fellow teachers, he later moved to the Okanagan district of British Columbia, where he died in the late 1970s.

<sup>62</sup>YA, YROF 10-29-1, folder 1-a, Fred Fraser to General Young, 17 September 1952.

Commencing after Mr. Jeckell's retirement a policy was adopted of paying the transportation of teachers into the Territory from Outside points, and later accommodation was provided for teachers over the Liquor Store in the City of Dawson. This policy was enlarged again in the summer of 1951, by providing accommodation for teachers in the former Richard's residence at Whitehorse. At the same time a decision was made to provide teachers with return transportation to their point of origin, after one full term.

These measures not only aroused the hostility of other less-favoured Territorial government employees but also failed to take into account the gap that had developed between teachers' salaries in the Yukon and those offered elsewhere.

This aspect of the problem came to the fore in 1950 when the Whitehorse teaching staff, by far the largest in the Territory, requested that the salary schedule be amended to give greater recognition to qualifications and previous experience. When no action followed, they raised the issue again in 1953, making it known that some of them were being paid less than would have been the case had they stayed in their former positions in British Columbia or in Yellowknife, N.W.T.<sup>63</sup> Although a new and improved schedule based on that of the Northwest Territories was introduced in April 1954, Mr. Hlland found that increases at the high school level were still not sufficient to attract teachers with superior qualifications, particularly in the field of science. As his assistant commented, a beginning salary of \$2,950 per annum for a person with five years of university training seemed low in terms of the high living costs and harsh climate of the Yukon.<sup>64</sup> The new schedule was nevertheless an aid to recruitment, especially when coupled with direct attempts to attract teachers from Saskatchewan and Manitoba rather than from the more affluent pro-

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., R. J. Hlland to W. G. Brown, 25 February 1953; also Hlland, Interim Report for 1950.

<sup>64</sup>Hlland, Interim Report for 1954-55; also YA, YROF 1-37-1, folder 5, H. Thompson, Report on the Operation of Yukon Schools, 31 March 1956.

vince of British Columbia, as had been the custom since the curriculum change of 1934.

The provision of housing benefits remained essential in all communities since private accommodation was practically unobtainable and hotels were generally expensive and not always comfortable. In Whitehorse, where the problem was particularly acute, the single ladies had for some time been accommodated in a large house owned by the government; to relieve the overcrowding there an additional house, "the Murray annex," was leased in 1953. As no such provision was made for the single men teachers in that community, a marked imbalance developed in the teaching staff there: by that date the principal and a part-time woodworking instructor were the only male teachers out of a total of twenty-five. Not until 1955 did the completion of the new Lambert Street apartment block provide quarters for up to twelve single men at moderate rates, thereby ending what some viewed as discriminatory treatment of the male teachers in Whitehorse. Finally, since most applicants for teaching positions in the Territory tended to be young and unmarried, in search of adventure in what they assumed would be a temporary frontier posting, the lack of an annuity plan for their retirement years<sup>65</sup> does not seem to have deterred them from coming to the Yukon, although a few may have found it a reason for leaving.

#### Curriculum: Attempts at Enrichment

In the schools, instruction continued along the lines established in 1934 when Mr. Patterson had introduced the British Columbia curriculum into the Yukon. Over the years it had proved relatively easy to implement, at least up to grade seven. However, the dual pattern set up by that province for its secondary grades created problems for small high schools. It implied the creation of two streams, one a traditional academic "University Program" leading to matriculation ex-

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<sup>65</sup>The Annuity Plan Ordinance (May 1950) enabled Yukon government employees to participate in the federal Department of Labour annuity scheme. Prior to its institution, no such benefit had been open to them. Teachers were not included in the plan.

aminations and entrance to university and the other a "General Program" consisting of somewhat modified courses and more "practical" classes in commercial or vocational subjects leading to a high school graduation diploma. In the Yukon, the small enrolments in the upper grades severely limited the extent to which both these programs could be implemented and as a result all students, whether university-bound or not, tended to receive an education that was largely academic in nature, with little opportunity to experience the range of elective subjects then becoming available in many Canadian schools.<sup>66</sup>

Some attempts at curriculum enrichment began in the late 1940s as regular classes were supplemented by educational films and school broadcasts--the latter introduced to the Yukon in 1948 through the facilities of the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals and radio stations CFYT in Dawson and CFWH in Whitehorse.<sup>67</sup> In addition, although no consistent program of optional courses could be offered, records indicate that classes in manual training, sewing and some commercial subjects were offered from time to time to the older pupils in the larger schools whenever an instructor was available and suitable classroom accommodation could be found. In 1952, when plans were being made for the new school in Whitehorse, the proposed expansion of the art program there drew sharp criticism from Commissioner Fraser, who regarded such classes as expensive "frills" that should be entirely supported by the parents.<sup>68</sup> His dismissal of the teacher--a nationally recognized artist--provoked a public outcry that reached the ear of the Minister of Northern Affairs in Ottawa<sup>69</sup> and may well have contributed to that unpopular Commissioner's early recall. In any case, Miss Farley's art classes were continued, along with others in woodworking and home economics; by 1955 some part-time music in-

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<sup>66</sup>Johnson, A Brief History of Canadian Education, pp. 144-47.

<sup>67</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1261, file 600-1-3, part 2, Philip Kitley to Mr. H. L. Keenleyside, 7 April 1948; J. E. Gibben to R. A. Gibson, 29 April 1948.

<sup>68</sup>YA, YROF 10-29-1, folder 1-a, F. Fraser to R. Hulland, 15 July 1952.

<sup>69</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 326, file 630/200-1, part 1-a, Mrs. J. D. Scott to the Honourable R. Winters, 18 August 1952; also the Whitehorse Star, 29 August 1952.

struction was also being offered in that school and plans had begun for instituting a regular commercial department there.

### Pupil Health

One of the greatest benefits of the growing federal interest in the North was the far-reaching tuberculosis control program launched in the summer of 1947 by the Department of Northern Health and Welfare. Public health nurses based in Whitehorse undertook to travel each year along the Alaska highway and into the more remote settlements in the Territory accompanied by a mobile X-ray unit that detected cases of active tuberculosis among both Indian and white residents. During these and other journeys, the nurses were also able to immunize children against such diseases as diphtheria, smallpox and tetanus, and to give advice as to the care of those affected by measles or influenza.<sup>70</sup> As a result, the threat of tubercular infection and other communicable diseases diminished as time passed, while the long periods of quarantine disappeared and school attendance improved. These measures also did much to reduce opposition to the presence of Indian or part-Indian children in the public schools.

The last major epidemic of the period occurred in the summer of 1953 when a serious outbreak of poliomyelitis took its toll of both children and adults in the Territory. As death or severe crippling touched many families, public gatherings were forbidden, community activities came to a standstill and all schools were closed at the beginning of June. In view of the emergency, grade twelve students were excused from their final examinations, the B.C. Department of Education granting them university entrance standing on the basis of their class work during the previous months. Many teachers left the Territory and the widespread publicity concerning the epidemic that

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<sup>70</sup>A vivid account of the work of an Alaska highway nurse with the Department of Northern Health and Welfare may be found in Amy V. Wilson's book entitled No Man Stands Alone (Sidney, B.C.: Gray's Publishing Company, 1965). Since no provision was available in the Yukon for the prolonged treatment then required for tuberculosis, patients were sent to sanatoria "outside" such as Charles Camsell Hospital in Edmonton, where many spent long months or even years separated from friends and families. Education was, however, available there for both school age and adult patients.

appeared in newspapers across Canada discouraged new applicants, thereby greatly increasing Mr. Hullah's staffing problems. Fortunately, the onset of colder weather brought this outbreak to an end and the later development of the Salk vaccine prevented any similar recurrence of this dread disease.

Along with the emphasis upon the control and prevention of communicable diseases came a growing awareness of other health needs. In the course of their visits, the nurses had, for example, discovered widespread evidence of dental neglect. Although, as the records of Council proceedings reveal, the matter of dental care for school children was repeatedly brought to the government's attention,<sup>71</sup> little could be done by the school authorities at that time and another decade was to elapse before a beginning could be made upon a Yukon school dental program. In the early 1950s concern for student health also prompted a Dawson doctor to press for a return to the earlier Yukon pattern of scheduling the summer holidays from the beginning of June, when the children could take advantage of the long sunny summer days, to mid-August when cooler autumn weather could be expected.<sup>72</sup> Once again, no action was taken and, although similar proposals continued to arise from time to time, no great deviation from the B.C. school calendar occurred until much later, when the long vacation at the Old Crow school was for a time scheduled to coincide with the annual muskrat trapping season.

#### Summary: Growth of the School System, 1940-55

The resurgence of activity that began in 1943 and led to such rapid expansion of the Yukon's school system is reflected in the following statistics given by Mr. Harry Thompson during an address delivered to the Kiwanis club of Whitehorse in November 1955.<sup>73</sup> By that date, the Territory's fourteen public and two separate schools

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<sup>71</sup>Yukon Council, Votes and Proceedings, May and October 1950; October 1951; October 1952.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., October, 1950.

<sup>73</sup>YA, YROF 10-29-1, folder 1-a.



were serving more than 1500 pupils through a combined teaching staff of sixty-seven teachers. The rapid rate of school growth is clearly seen from the following figures:

Date	Schools	Classrooms	Teachers	Pupils
1935	5	9	10	177
1945	7	14	14	441
1950	11	29	31	759
1955	16	60	67	1,530

In other words, the enrolment had doubled in the previous five years and more than tripled in a decade. As he also indicated, a change had occurred in the demographic makeup of the Territory. In 1903 the school population of 469 pupils represented one-thirtieth of the total population of the Yukon, estimated at about fifteen thousand; by 1955 the proportion had changed so that one Yukoner in five was a school-age child, or 1,800 (including pupils at Indian schools) out of a total of almost ten thousand.

In Whitehorse, the growth had been phenomenal, with especially heavy enrolments at the primary level:

Whitehorse Elementary- High School	Date	Classrooms	Enrolment
	1945	5	150
	1950	13	363
	1951	15	445
	1952	19	531
	1953	22	642
	1954	27	802
	1955	31	930

Christ the King School	Date	Classrooms	Enrolment
	1946	1	30
	1949	2	72
	1950	3	103
	1951	3	106
	1952	3	133
	1953	5	177
	1954	5	150
	1955	5	162

By 1955 the largest school in the Territory was Whitehorse Elementary-High School. Its student body totalled more than nine hundred pupils and bore testimony to the postwar "baby boom," with nine of its thirty-one classrooms assigned to grade one children and only a dozen students in grade twelve. Next came Christ the King School with 162 pupils in grades one to nine, followed by Dawson Public School where there were 131 pupils in twelve grades. With many young children still to join the system and more families arriving as the economy continued to expand, the Territorial government was faced with the urgent need to establish additional school facilities and to broaden the scope of its educational services.



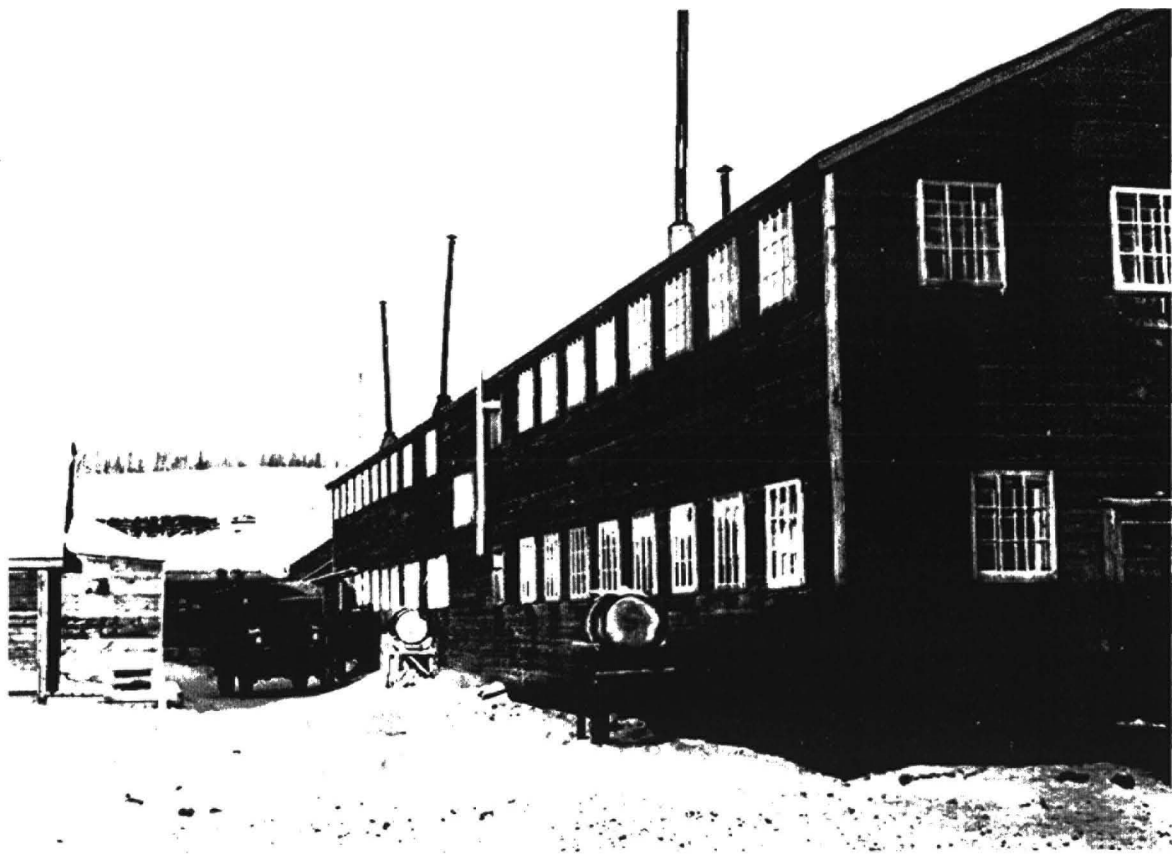
51. *Downtown Whitehorse, 1953.  
"Federal Building" (centre) under construction;  
"Army" hospital buildings at lower right.*



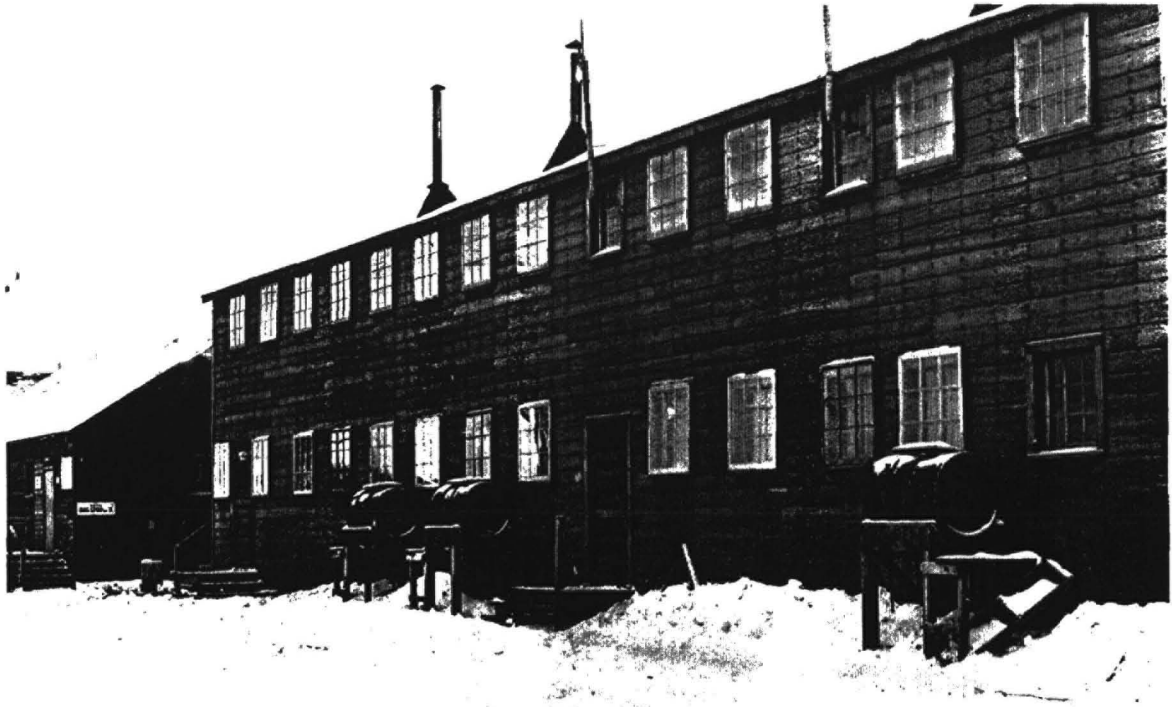
52. *Lambert Street School primary annex, 1947.*



53. *An overcrowded classroom in main Lambert Street School building, 1948.*



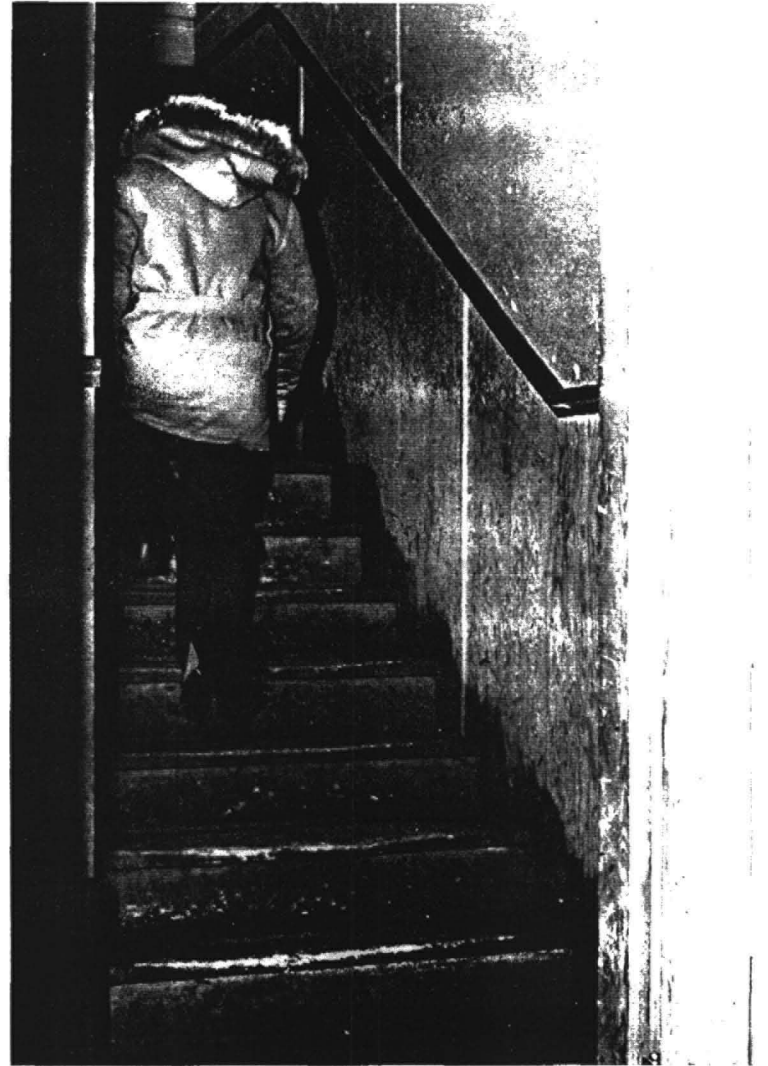
54. *Whitehorse Public School, Dowell Area building, 1948. This building originally housed employees of an Alaska Highway construction company.*



55. *Dowell Area School building, Whitehorse. Classrooms were heated by individual oil heaters, a constant worry owing to danger of fire.*



56. Dowell Area School building: "a fire-trap."



57. Dowell Area school building: narrow stairs.



58. *The new Whitehorse Elementary - High School nears completion, 1952.*

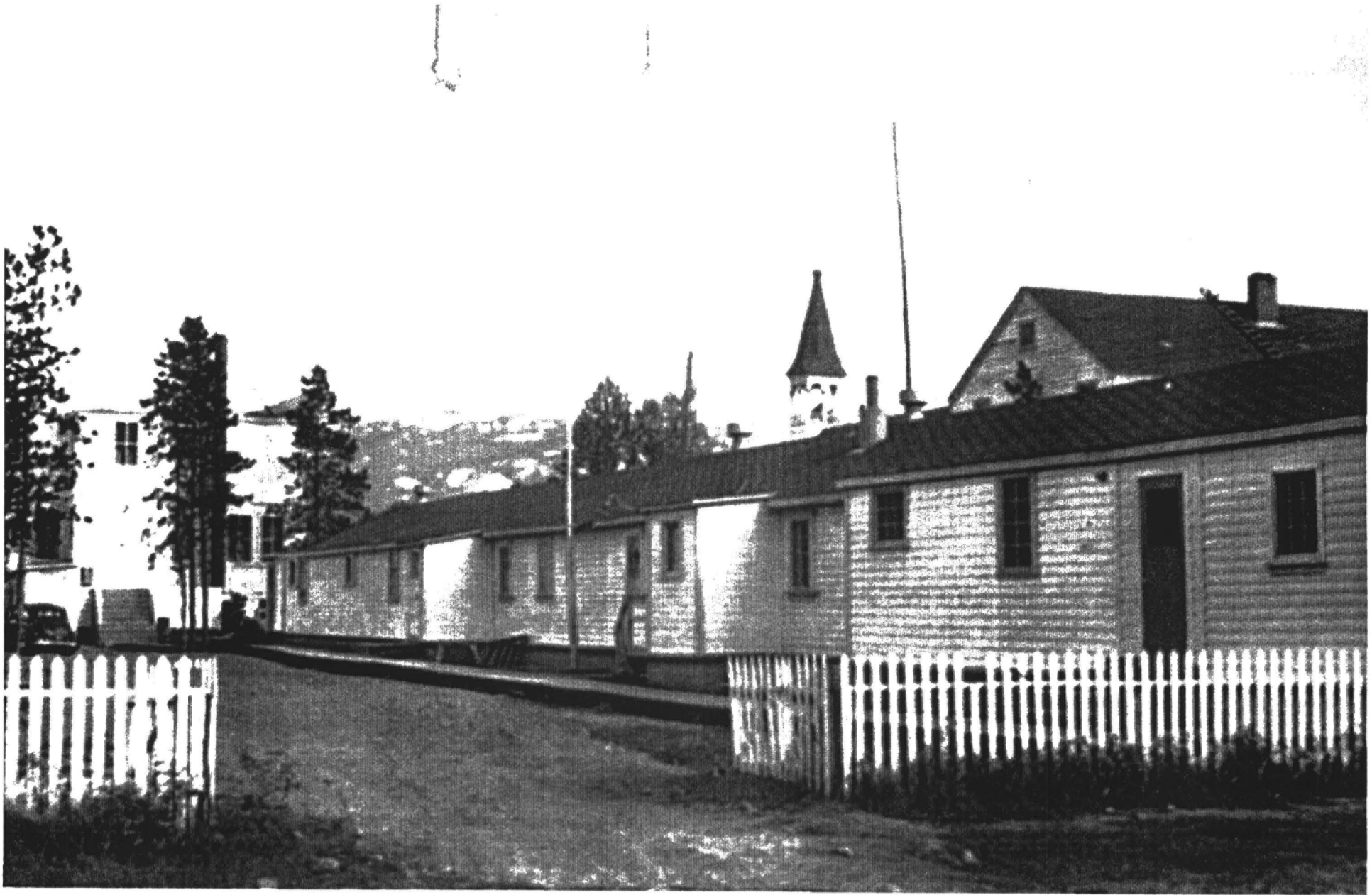


59. *Sacred Heart Cathedral and rectory, Whitehorse, erected 1901. (Photo c. 1941.)*



60. *Sacred Heart Convent and former rectory, c. 1950. The rectory was moved closer to the convent, enlarged, and converted for use as a student residence.*





61. *Christ the King School, Whitehorse, c. 1950.*

*A former barracks building behind the convent served the Catholic community from about 1947 until a new school opened in 1956.*



62. *The classroom at Swift River Maintenance Camp, n.d.*



63. *Teacher R. McNiven and pupils outside Swift River School, c. 1947.*



64. *Haines Junction Maintenance Camp school, 1953. The senior classroom (r.) was also used as the camp recreation hall. The teachers' apartment was in the centre, and the junior classroom at the far left.*



65. *Senior pupils at the school's Christmas concert in the "rec hall" at Haines Junction camp, 1953.*

## CHAPTER XI

### INDIAN EDUCATION: NEW TRENDS (1940-1955)

The postwar changes in the public school system had little immediate effect upon the Indian children of the Territory; their education remained almost entirely a federal responsibility, channelled through church-directed boarding institutions or local mission schools. Yet here, too, growth and change gradually became apparent as increasing government support and expanding denominational activity brought a number of new Indian schools into being in the southern part of the Yukon and set in motion developments which reflected national trends.

#### The Call for Change: A Search for New Directions

In 1938 both the federal authorities and the churches, dissatisfied with the quality of education provided by their Indian schools, had begun to study ways of improving the situation.<sup>1</sup> Their discussions, set aside during the war years, were resumed in 1946, but on a much broader scale. At that date the Ottawa government, in response to widespread public concern over the obvious inadequacies in Canada's treatment of her aboriginal people, set up a special Parliamentary Joint Committee to investigate a wide range of matters pertaining to them, including education. Its enquiries, concluded in 1948, brought to light the fact that few Indian children were at that time progressing beyond the primary grades and that, in addition, some eleven thousand were receiving no schooling at all.<sup>2</sup> In its report the Committee called for sweeping changes in legislation and recommended that Indian children be educated "wherever and whenever pos-

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<sup>1</sup>GSA, MSCC Records, GS 75-103, Series 2-15, Box 27, T. B. R. Westgate to Canon Gould, 18 July 1938; Gould to Westgate, 30 July 1938.

<sup>2</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6002, file 1-1-1, part 8, "Recent Developments in Indian Education in Canada," April, 1951. Investigations had also revealed that eighty percent of Canada's Eskimo population was receiving no education.

sible in association with other children" so that they might be better equipped to take their place in the larger Canadian society. In view of the gravity of the situation, Parliament moved at once to increase its expenditures upon Indian day and residential schools and to provide for expansion of medical and social services for the native people. In June, 1951, the resulting changes were incorporated into a new and completely revised Indian Act.

Throughout this period, the churches that had for so long shared the responsibility for educating Canada's Indian children<sup>3</sup> were also seeking changes. In 1946, the Anglican General Synod reviewed the report of a special committee investigating that denomination's Indian work.<sup>4</sup> This report focused upon the residential schools, partly because of the large deficit involved in their operation and partly because of the urgent need to modernize their facilities and upgrade the quality of the instruction they provided. Along with the "immediate reforms" required in these areas, this church committee pointed out the need for a reduction in the amount of physical labour required of the children, an improvement in their diet, and "a transformation in the spirit and outlook" of some of the schools to ensure that the pupils were "happy and healthy and spiritually improved." Although some innovative suggestions concerning the introduction of specific native studies were put forward in the accompanying preamble, the thirteen recommendations contained in Part IV of this document made no direct reference to curriculum, possibly because it was a matter that required further study by Indian Affairs education officers or because other problems were considered to be more pressing. Directed mainly towards administrative and financial concerns, the recommendations called for immediate improvements in buildings and staff and stressed the need for a massive increase in the federal operating grants to keep pace with the rising costs of salaries, food, clothing and fuel. A month later, in November, 1946, all the denomina-

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<sup>3</sup>The Roman Catholic church operated more than half the day and residential schools across Canada, followed by the Anglican, United and Presbyterian churches.

<sup>4</sup>GSA, MSCC Records, 65 75-103, Series 2-15, Box 26, Indian Work Investigation Committee, Report to the General Synod, Winnipeg, 1946, p. 8.

tions cooperating with the government in Indian education joined in presenting to Ottawa a united demand for a fifty-percent increase in their grants.<sup>5</sup>

Although their appeal brought an immediate reappraisal of the whole basis of federal support for the operation and maintenance of residential schools, the churches soon found that the additional income did not begin to keep pace with the cost of living, which continued to rise steadily throughout the postwar years. At the Anglican schools, staffing standards fell to a low ebb because the wage scale did not attract competent workers; the Women's Auxiliary found that it could no longer supply the more expensive items such as trousers and heavy jackets for the boys and, while the MSCC struggled (with some success) to reduce its accumulated deficit, staff morale continued to decline. In 1951 Canon H. G. Cook, Superintendent of the MSCC Indian School Administration, reported that a "defeatist attitude" was affecting many key workers and advised the Society to consider relinquishing some of its schools.<sup>6</sup>

His proposal was by no means as radical as it might seem. Some years previously, in 1948, all three Protestant denominations operating Indian schools had supported the Parliamentary Committee's recommendation that Indian children should in future be educated in association with others and had even gone so far as to suggest that their residential schools might in time become hostels operated under religious auspices but at government expense, the children being educated in nearby federally supported classrooms or in "white schools" in the vicinity.<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that the Roman Catholic church, which operated by far the greatest number of Indian schools across the country, did not share this desire to relinquish control of the secular aspects of education nor, with access to the assistance of

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., Box 27, "Statement Presented to the Minister of Mines and Resources, Ottawa," 27 November 1946.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., Box 26, Henry G. Cook, "Memorandum of Indian School Administration: Financial Situation," 9 July 1951.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., "Draft Memo to Protestant Members of Parliament from the Protestant Churches Engaged in Indian Education," 4 pp., n.d.

its teaching orders, was it then affected to the same degree by staffing problems.

All these deliberations were to have a considerable impact upon the education of the Indian children in the Yukon, since decisions taken at this time prepared the way for their eventual full integration into an expanding Territorial school system. Before that point could be reached, however, other events had already begun to change the long established pattern of Indian schooling in the Yukon.

### Chooutla Indian Residential School

#### Temporary Quarters and Plans for Rebuilding

In April, 1939, fire had totally destroyed Chooutla School, leaving the pupils and staff unharmed but homeless. With the assistance of the local residents, they were promptly moved across the frozen lake to the nearby settlement of Carcross, where the town's merchant, Mr. Matthew Watson, at once proceeded to make accommodation available, offering them the use of a number of empty houses in the village. The former rectory became the girls' residence, the largest available cabin was turned into a dormitory for the boys and another was set aside as a schoolroom. In addition, the White Pass railway donated its section house for temporary use as a kitchen and dining hall where, that first night, the foreman and his crew prepared dinner for the entire group, a kindly gesture that was much appreciated.<sup>a</sup> This relocation, accomplished with the utmost speed and efficiency, was accepted in a spirit of adventure, since it was generally assumed that before long the school would be rebuilt on its original site.

Having decided that "the only way to meet this catastrophe was to carry on as if nothing had happened," Mr. Grant and a number of school employees returned to Chooutla the next morning to collect the classroom equipment, all of which had been saved, including even the children's scribblers. That same afternoon the teacher, Miss Hall,

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<sup>a</sup>H. C. M. Grant, "Report on the Fire at Chooutla School."

resumed her normal lesson routine; by then, too, the acting Indian agent had visited the new site, authorized the local purchase of urgently needed supplies, and agreed to a monthly rental of \$75 for the various buildings to be used by the school. Within a few days, ten children who had been temporarily returned to their parents' homes in Carcross resumed full-time residence at the school, bringing its total enrolment to the original number of forty-four.<sup>9</sup> With these arrangements completed and the school operating normally, Mr. Grant turned his attention to plans for rebuilding.

A strong advocate of the "cottage system," he proposed the construction of six or seven small log buildings that would accommodate altogether some eighty pupils. The advantages of such a plan would, he suggested, be twofold: in the first place, if any one building were destroyed by fire the loss would not be too great, and secondly, in such surroundings the life of the children would be more like that in their home situation.<sup>10</sup> Such a proposal was probably ahead of its time; certainly it failed to win the approval of the MSCC, who found the cottage system costly to build and "quite unsuitable" for a school in "a northern latitude," recommending instead that Ottawa retain the single large unit that had become the standard pattern for Indian residential schools in all parts of Canada. A few innovative modifications, however, were incorporated into the government's preliminary plans, which called for the erection of "two distinct and separate buildings," one to consist of two classrooms with a full basement for vocational purposes and the other to contain dormitories for sixty pupils along with living quarters for the staff. Both structures were to be of logs and their actual construction was to be directed by the church.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, at the beginning of

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<sup>9</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6480, file 900-5, part 6, Grant to R. H. Hoey, 3 May 1939. The children came back to school at their parents' request.

<sup>10</sup>See his report, page 8 and also ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 11, file 15, Grant to the Rev. Robert C. Ward, 25 October 1939.

<sup>11</sup>Concerning plans for rebuilding, see PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6480, file 940-5, part 7, T. B. R. Westgate to Dr. H. W. McGill, 28 June 1939, and R. A. Hoey to Westgate, 13 July 1939. The architect's drawings are included in this file.



January, 1940, all progress was halted: with world conditions so uncertain and a national election pending, Indian Affairs officials could not commit an incoming administration to any capital expenditures for Indian schools.<sup>12</sup> In fact, only a few weeks later, they strongly reprimanded Mr. Grant for his hasty action in renting two additional log cabins for school use, warning him that the "extraordinary conditions" brought about by World War II allowed for no increase in Indian school operating expenses, no matter how great the need.<sup>13</sup>

#### Wartime Difficulties: The MSCC's Response

With all prospects of rebuilding ended, the staff and pupils carried on as best they could in these makeshift quarters. In the next two and a half years they faced many problems, ranging from an unhappy and unexplained episode of stealing to financial and material constraints imposed by the war. Increases in the cost of food and clothing strained the operating budget and national shortages limited the availability of such staple items as sugar, butter and other fats. Other needs also had to be set aside. For example, repeated appeals for a tractor to haul the school's wood supply proved unavailing even when they reached the federal minister himself, who expressed the opinion that the use of horses for logging "provided valuable training for the senior pupils." The fact that the journey to the logging area involved a seven-mile trip in northern winter conditions could not offset the financial realities of a country at war.<sup>14</sup>

Difficulties of another sort arose following the takeover by the United States' government of the White Pass and Yukon Railway. One morning in the spring of 1942, some 1,500 American soldiers arrived by train from Skagway, pitched camp, unloaded their equipment and began that same day to construct an access road linking the railway at Carcross to the main route planned for the Alaska Highway. The ef-

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., (unsigned) to Westgate, 15 February 1940.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., R. A. Hoey to H. C. M. Grant, 19 March 1940.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., part B, Grant to Mr. Jeckell, 17 July and 21 August 1941; Ross Kilby to R. M. Warren, 25 October 1941; Hon. T. A. Crerar to Warren, 14 November 1941.

fect of their presence on the operation of a boarding school in such a tiny community may be imagined: before long, Mr. Grant was requesting permission to employ a night watchman for the protection of the girls and the women staff members.<sup>15</sup> At this point, the MSCC and Bishop Geddes sought to relocate the school, hoping to obtain either the former Commissioner's residence at Dawson--not occupied as such since 1916--or a vacant RCMP building that had once been Dawson's court house. However, before the pros and cons of remodelling and heating these buildings could be resolved, the medical health officer in Whitehorse ordered that Chooutla School be closed because of the general increase in communicable disease in the southwest Yukon resulting from the wartime population influx in that area. With respect to the school itself, he reported that an epidemic of measles had affected every child but one and resulted in one death, and noted that the dormitories were overcrowded, the water supply unprotected, and the sanitary facilities totally inadequate for use by forty pupils.<sup>16</sup>

As a result of Dr. Roth's ultimatum, federal and church authorities at once resumed negotiations for moving the school temporarily to Dawson; in the meantime, the doctor agreed to permit the continued use of the cabins at Carcross provided the enrolment was reduced to no more than twenty pupils. Accordingly, half the children were sent home and the school continued to function, with Ottawa paying the full grant for the remainder of the 1942-43 academic year in order to spare the MSCC a further deficit. However, when it came time the following summer to move the residents and school equipment to Dawson, where the former RCMP barracks had finally been made available, neither the government nor the church could finance the transfer.<sup>17</sup> Since the MSCC could not afford to maintain a

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., Grant to Secretary, Indian and Residential School Commission, 19 May 1942. Two American soldiers were court-martialled after an incident in Jaunaury, 1943.

<sup>16</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 4, Box 53, file 6, F. B. Roth, M.D., to J. E. Gibben, 30 September 1942. The epidemics referred to affected not only Carcross but also Champagne, Teslin and Whitehorse.

<sup>17</sup>For these events, see the correspondence in PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 2, especially Secretary, MSCC, to Indian Affairs, and Mr. R. A. Hoey's reply, 23 June and 25 June, 1943.

residential facility for only twenty pupils, Chooutla School was closed in June, 1943, until some other solution could be found.

At this point the MSCC, trusting that the federal government would eventually reimburse it for the outlay involved, obtained permission to erect a building on the old Chooutla site for use until the Indian Affairs Branch was again in a position to build a new permanent school.<sup>18</sup> By the summer of 1944, three second-hand barracks buildings, each 24 by 72 feet, had been assembled and joined to form a one-storey frame structure in the shape of an "H." In the months that followed, the necessary equipment and furnishings were gradually secured, mainly from the war surplus assets then being disposed of by the American army's Northwest Service Command in Whitehorse.<sup>19</sup> By the fall of that year, the building was ready for occupancy; it had cost the MSCC almost \$25,000 and was viewed by that Society as a temporary facility that would once more give Yukon Indian children access to a residential school education. Assisted as before by an annual per capita grant from the Indian Affairs Branch, it opened its doors in October with an increased pupilage of fifty children, again under the direction of the Reverend H. C. M. Grant.

#### Conditions at Chooutla, 1944-54

Conditions at this new school, although somewhat better than those in the Carcross cabins, were still far from adequate. The MSCC records indicate that, although the children appeared to be reasonably well cared for, the hastily constructed and poorly finished building soon became worn and dilapidated, as did the second-hand furnishings and equipment. Upon examination, the space per child was found to be only half the amount then prescribed for such institutions, while by 1947, according to the Indian agent, the classroom in particular was "extremely ramshackle with large holes in the walls and floor."<sup>20</sup> Mr.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., Vol. 6480, file 940-5, part 8, H. A. Alderwood to Indian Affairs, 9 November 1943.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., Part 9, Memorandum, 22 December 1944. Other items from the original school had been stored in Carcross.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., R. J. Meek to Indian Affairs, 20 November 1947. See also GSA, MSCC Records, 65 75-103, Series 2-15, Box 23, "Report of Visit to Carcross, 6-8 July, 1947."

Grant, tired and depressed, resigned and moved with his family to Whitehorse. That summer a new principal, the Reverend J. W. Ellis, and an entirely new and inexperienced staff took charge of the school to find themselves faced with a physical plant that was only three years old, yet already in dire need of extensive renovations. Canon Cook of the MSCC, following an inspection visit, termed the situation "most unsatisfactory" and urged the government, now that the war crisis had passed, to hasten the construction of its long promised new residential school. He noted that, although the government had approved a pupilage of sixty, only forty-five children could be accommodated and that the staff quarters were most inadequate, the principal and his family finding it necessary to live in "a built-over chicken house." In the winter months pupils and staff alike suffered from the cold in the drafty buildings, while the use of many wood stoves created a constant danger of fire.<sup>21</sup>

At his insistence, the federal authorities ordered an immediate assessment of the facilities; the detailed report submitted by a government architect strongly reinforced Canon Cook's appeal, leaving no doubt at all that a new school was indeed urgently needed.<sup>22</sup> At the same time (1948) the Indian Affairs Branch, faced with the threat of Mr. Ellis' resignation, moved quickly to build a modern house for the principal, authorized some repairs to the existing school buildings and seemed at last to be hastening the replacement of the structure that had been destroyed by fire almost a decade earlier. However, six more years were to pass before the new school became a reality; in the meantime children and staff carried on in substandard facilities that were barely adequate in spite of constant expenditure of time, effort and money.

What, one may ask, could have caused so long a delay? It seems that a number of interrelated factors were responsible, mainly at the federal level. In the first place, Chooutla School was only one of a number of residential schools that were scheduled to be built in var-

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<sup>21</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6480, file 940-5, part 9, Henry G. Cook to Colonel Neary, 1 May 1948.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., C. F. Dawson to C. G. Brault, 22 November 1948.

ious parts of Canada once the war ended. This backlog, added to a greatly expanded need for Indian day schools, placed heavy demands upon the government's understaffed engineering department. Then too, denominational competition for funding and lack of agreement upon building plans hindered passage of the necessary appropriations and created further delays. In the meantime, Mr. Ellis and his staff could only do their best to improve the situation while awaiting decisions from Ottawa.

Their hard work and ingenuity succeeded in "turning things around," at least to some degree, as Clara Tizya, a former worker recalls. Reports for this period<sup>23</sup> tell of the addition of a garage, as well as a new warehouse and two greenhouses, the latter providing "ripe tomatoes the first of June," a real treat for any northerner. Over the next few years, staff members repaired the schoolroom and extended the garden, while increased federal assistance replaced some worn-out equipment and provided other items that had long been needed, including (at last) a tractor for outside work. By 1949 Mr. Ellis and Jim Orman, the teacher, had instituted a longer school day that enabled the children to progress more rapidly in their studies; two years later a second teacher was added so that all pupils could spend at least four hours a day at their lessons. Guides and Brownies, Cubs and Scouts were organized; while movies, dances and games added variety and, together with outdoor sports, helped meet the children's recreational needs. The mobile TB X-ray unit visited the school regularly, professional nursing care was available and while the school did not totally escape outbreaks of influenza or the polio epidemic of 1953, the health of the pupils was carefully monitored. Although the allowable pupilage had been increased to sixty in October, 1945, Mr. Ellis found that this number was too great; despite conversion of one of the outbuildings to provide space for a number of older boys, the school could not accommodate more than fifty pupils in spite of increasing need.

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<sup>23</sup>GSA, MSCC Records, GS 75-103, Series 2-15, Box 23, Canon H. G. Cook, Visit Reports. Mrs. Clara Tizya has also confirmed many details.

Notwithstanding the limits imposed by inadequate facilities, some changes for the better did occur at Chooutla. About 1947 the MSCC abandoned the strictly centralized purchasing system that it had adopted in the early 1920s and empowered the principal to deal directly with wholesalers in Vancouver or Edmonton, a procedure that proved very satisfactory despite high freight charges. With closer control over the quantity and quality of all supplies, Mr. Ellis was able to ensure a more plentiful and varied diet for the residents and also more efficient management of the school's farm and gardens. Furthermore, wartime road construction in the area greatly reduced the isolation in which the school had so long existed, linking it more closely to the growing number of facilities in Whitehorse, which could now be reached in a few hours by car. Above all, Mr. Ellis--who had spent a summer at Champagne and three years in Old Crow before coming to Chooutla--showed himself to be a dedicated and energetic leader of a staff that included a number of Indian workers such as Clara and Peter Tizya and Norman Henry, all of whom contributed much to the stability of the school's operation. Despite its shortcomings, Chooutla School does not seem to have suffered to any great extent during these years from the low staff morale that Canon Cook reported as being prevalent at that time in other Anglican schools in western Canada. When Mr. Ellis left in 1952, his successor, the Reverend C. T. Stanger, found himself in charge of a school that was functioning reasonably smoothly in spite of many physical drawbacks.

#### Chooutla School Rebuilt (1954)

Work on the new building, finally scheduled to begin in the summer of 1950, was fated to suffer one more setback, caused by investigations into a possible hydroelectric development in the southern lakes area of the Yukon. Known as the "Dyea project," it would have raised the water levels at Carcross and flooded the surrounding region; consequently, plans for rebuilding the residential school had to be shelved while representatives of the MSCC and Indian Affairs spent that summer in search of another site. After agreeing to relocate the school on the Alaska Highway at Teslin,<sup>24</sup> they learned that

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., Box 26, Major C. A. F. Clark, "An Educational Survey with Reference to the Relocation of Carcross Indian Residential School," June 1950.

the hydro project was, after all, to be abandoned. The existing plans for construction at the Chooutla site were then reactivated, enabling work to begin in the summer of 1952. When the new school was completed in September, 1954, the MSCC buildings--finally purchased by the Indian Affairs Branch--were razed and the ground around them levelled. An imposing concrete and frame structure with accommodation for at least 120 pupils became the final home for the modest boarding school that Bishop Bompas had moved to Carcross from Fortymile fifty years previously.

### Denominational Changes

By this date Chooutla School was no longer the only residential facility serving the Indian children of the Territory: other religious bodies had entered the field. The Anglican church, which had for so long been the only denomination involved in their education, had for more than a decade been inadequately funded, desperately short of clergy and handicapped by lack of a strong diocesan administration under the guidance of a resident bishop. Bishop Geddes, weakened in health by his early strenuous life in the Arctic, had during his later years spent much time in Vancouver; following his death in 1947 the Most Reverend Walter Adams retired from his office as Bishop of Kootenay to assume charge of the Yukon in a "caretaker" capacity, travelling once or twice a year from his home in Vernon, B.C., to Dawson and such other mission stations as ill health and his advancing age would permit.<sup>25</sup> In 1952, responsibility for the diocese passed to the Reverend Tom Greenwood, who had previously served in Fort McPherson and was then rector at Yellowknife, N.W.T. Upon assuming office, Bishop Greenwood set up his headquarters in Whitehorse and began the laborious task of reconstruction.

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<sup>25</sup>Archbishop Adams had originally come from England as a young clergyman, serving for some years on the Canadian prairies. In 1925 he became the first Bishop of Cariboo and in 1953 was elected Bishop of Kootenay. He also served for a time as acting Primate of the Anglican Church in Canada. Already in his seventies, he volunteered in a time of crisis to be Bishop of Yukon, an office he held from 1948 to 1952. He died in Vancouver in 1957. British Columbia Provincial Synod Archives (BCPSA), RG 6, Box 1, the Rt. Rev. F. R. Beattie to the Clergy, 26 July 1957. Also Northern Lights, (new ed.), December, 1957, p. 4.

He found a diocese greatly changed from that of Bishop Stringer's day: while the Anglican presence had diminished, the building of the Alaska Highway had brought other Protestant denominations to the southwest Yukon, first as members of a joint ministry to military and civilian workers in the construction camps<sup>26</sup> and later as permanent congregations responding to community demands. In addition, the Roman Catholic church had established diocesan headquarters in Whitehorse, where a number of priests under the direction of Bishop J. L. Coudert were expanding that church's missionary activities.

#### Whitehorse Baptist Mission School

##### Response to a Need: A New School (1946-47)

In Whitehorse, a flourishing Indian day and boarding school came into being in the late 1940s under the auspices of a free Baptist group seeking to fill the void left by the decline of Anglican activity among the native people of that area. Its rapid development may to a great extent be attributed to the determination and charismatic personality of its founder, the Reverend Harold I. Lee, a former RCMP trainee and a graduate of the Aberhart Bible Institute at Three Hills, Alberta. A journey north on the newly opened "Alcan" highway brought him to Whitehorse in May, 1946. Disturbed by the many children of native ancestry whom he saw wandering the streets, he sensed a need to be filled and, on discovering that there was no day school for these children, he immediately undertook to provide one. For four hundred dollars he purchased a War Assets building which provided living quarters for his family, as well as sufficient space for "a decent classroom," a chapel and a kindergarten room where Mrs. Lee may for a time have conducted a preschool class for local army children.<sup>27</sup> His energy and enthusiasm rapidly won extensive community support for the proposed Indian school: the Canadian Army officials in Whitehorse

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<sup>26</sup>GSA, MSCC Records, GS 75-103, Series 3-3, Box 70, Rev. R. Ward to the Secretary, Interchurch Committee, "Missionary Work Done on the Alaska Highway and 'Canol' Project, 1942-44," 20 May 1944.

<sup>27</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6477, file 929-1, part 1, C. A. F. Clark, Report re Whitehorse Indian School, May, 1947; also R. J. Meek to R. A. Hoey, 5 September 1946 and Meek to Indian Affairs, 14 October 1946.



volunteered equipment and technical assistance while other contributions came from local groups such as the Kiwanis Club. By January, 1947, generous donations of money and supplies enabled Mr. Lee to begin day classes for fifteen Indian children, with Miss Ethel Doan, a qualified teacher from Alberta, in charge. Some Indian parents in the vicinity at once transferred their children from Chooutla to the new school so that they could live at home. From the beginning, this new venture was strongly favoured by the local Indian Affairs staff: Mr. R. J. Meek, the newly appointed full-time Indian agent for the Yukon, urged Ottawa to lend it recognition and support, while Miss M. Hackett, the Indian health nurse, expressed her delight at having a central location in the town where she could meet the native people, check their health problems and immunize their children.<sup>28</sup>

Enrolments grew so rapidly that Mr. Lee was almost at once forced to seek more suitable accommodation. In May of that year (1947) he obtained for \$2,000 a much larger structure located in an area near Fourth Avenue and Hanson Street. A former army installation consisting of a number of barrack-type buildings, each of which measured 20 by 120 feet, it seemed at the time incredibly well equipped by Whitehorse standards: included in the purchase price, according to Major Clark of the Indian Affairs Branch, were "a fancy [i.e., walk-in] cold storage plant, wash basins, toilet bowls, showers, single beds, mattresses and sheets for fifty persons," as well as ample space for several classrooms, a chapel and staff quarters. By that September, the school had an enrolment of sixty pupils, over forty of them boarders coming mainly from the Champagne area where the Anglican seasonal school no longer operated regularly. The presence of these out-of-town children necessitated the use of the dormitory facilities as well as the opening of a second classroom and the employment of another teacher. With such an increase in numbers, the operating costs began to rise alarmingly and Mr. Lee turned to Ottawa for assistance.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Meek to Welfare and Training, Indian Affairs Branch, 15 January 1947; M. Hackett to P. E. Moore, 24 January 1947.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., Meek to Indian Affairs, 23 March 1948.

## Sources of Support

The federal authorities, having ascertained that there was little likelihood that the Anglican Indian school in Whitehorse would reopen, had already agreed to recognize Mr. Lee's day classes to the extent of paying the teacher's salary, providing school supplies and making a small contribution to the cost of utilities. They were, however, unwilling to accept his project as an official Indian residential school since it was not sponsored by one of the four national churches participating in Indian education but by an independent group whose permanence in Whitehorse was, they felt, unpredictable. Furthermore, the federal government by 1947 was engaged in preliminary plans for constructing a large new residential school at Teslin to serve Catholic Indian children from northern British Columbia and the Yukon and was also facing the necessity of replacing Chooutla School.<sup>30</sup> By June, 1948, escalating fuel and maintenance costs and the need to employ a larger staff brought renewed appeals from Mr. Meek for greater federal assistance to Mr. Lee's school on the grounds that it had proved to be "a remarkable success" and obviously could no longer be maintained at the expense of Mr. Lee and his workers, aided by private donations and such community efforts as bazaars and bake sales.<sup>31</sup>

At this point, a move by the Yukon Territorial Council helped to bring about a change in the federal government's attitude. At its August, 1948, session the Council agreed to pay a per diem allowance of \$1.10 each for "the upkeep of half-breed children and orphans of white or doubtful status, being maintained by the Reverend H. I. Lee and attending [his] Indian Day School."<sup>32</sup> This decision inspired the Indian Affairs Branch to make an equal per capita grant available for the Indian children living at Mr. Lee's school and led to an agreement

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., Bernard F. Neary to Meek, 23 October 1947 and 5 April 1948.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., Meek to Indian Affairs, 30 June 1948.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 11 August 1948.

whereby the federal government, while not recognizing this establishment or assuming any other responsibility for it, undertook to pay the salaries and northern living allowances for a maximum of three teachers, to provide school books and supplies, to allow a small monthly grant for school lunches in the winter months and, finally, to pay ninety-five cents a day for each child of Indian status boarding at the school, providing federal approval had been obtained prior to the child's admission.<sup>33</sup>

### Facilities and Organization

These formal arrangements enabled the Whitehorse Baptist Mission School, as it was currently known, to operate on a more secure basis. The total number of children at this time (1948-49) seems to have varied from eighty to well over a hundred, most of them being boarders, some of whom went home when their parents returned from hunting or trapping. No status distinctions prevented a child from attending and since it was not an official Indian Affairs establishment, no denominational priorities applied, although most of the workers were adherents of the local Baptist church. The dormitories were, as Major Clark reported, "plain but acceptable," the buildings clean and functional and the dining room and kitchen certainly much better equipped than those at Chooutla at that time. Its efficient management he attributed to the fact that most of the staff came from Alberta and were consequently familiar with the dormitories operated in some rural divisions of that province in connection with its consolidated high schools. The classrooms, furnished with benches and tables, were not equipped with standard desks until 1949; in addition, they suffered from the same deficiencies as those in the Dowell area public school building, the windows being poorly placed and ill-fitted, and the many stoves a potential fire hazard. Since most of the pupils had little or no previous schooling, the majority of them were in the primary grades. A 1949 report indicates that the principal's

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., "Proposed Agreement between Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources and the Reverend H. I. Lee of Whitehorse," n.d.; also Bernard F. Neary to Meek, 25 September 1948. The remaining fifteen cents per day in the per capita grant represents each pupil's share of a teacher's salary.

brother, Mr. Earl Lee, had only fourteen children in grades four to seven, while Miss Patterson taught forty pupils in grades two and three and Mrs. Sophie Wiegand, who had replaced Miss Doan, was faced with a total enrolment of forty-six pupils, almost all of whom were overage beginners.<sup>34</sup> Under these circumstances, it was fortunate that the teachers were well qualified and that the actual daily attendance was less than these figures imply.

While the curriculum was basically the same as that in the corresponding public school classes, the presence of so many older pupils at the primary level created special needs. Recognizing these, the staff and teachers seem to have made efforts to introduce other activities that would be interesting and useful; by the spring of 1950 it appears that the Indian Affairs Branch, going a step beyond the terms of the 1948 agreement, was undertaking to pay the salary and provide supplies for Miss Lilius Farley, then employed for three afternoons a week as the school's art and handicraft instructor. At about the same time manual training--which up to that point had been taught by a local carpenter for two evenings a week on a volunteer basis--was formally introduced through a joint arrangement between the Territorial government and the Indian Affairs Branch. As a result, boys from both the public and the Indian schools benefited for a time from woodworking classes conducted in school hours by the high school manual training teacher in premises provided in the mission building.<sup>35</sup> Finally, athletic activities were encouraged as far as facilities would permit. Since the mission school was located in an unsurveyed downtown area favoured by "squatters," it lacked playground space; the children did, however, have an outdoor rink for winter use and it appears that once a week volunteers coached indoor sports in a hall made available for the purpose by the army.

By 1950, Mr. Lee had begun to grow uneasy about the future of the project that he had so daringly begun. In February of that year,

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., C. A. F. Clark, Report on Whitehorse School, 11 November 1949.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., Vol. 6478, file 929-11, part 1, Philip Phelan to R. J. Meek, 14 September 1949; Meek to Indian Affairs, 17 October 1949; C. A. F. Clark to Superintendent of Indian Education, 22 June 1950.

he wrote to Mr. Aubrey Simmons, M.P., to ask his support in presenting to Ottawa the need for a new building to replace the temporary structure in which the school was housed. In addition to the expense that major renovations would entail, Mr. Lee was faced with the probable need to relocate the school once the land on which it stood reverted to its original owner, the British Yukon Navigation Company. Unwilling to invest more money under such conditions, yet determined "to see this thing go forward for the betterment of the Indians in and around this locality, and elsewhere where we find it possible to help the Indians," he hoped that additional federal funding would become available.<sup>36</sup> Since they were by then committed to building two large residential schools in the southern Yukon area, the Indian Affairs authorities once again declined to increase their participation in his project. Not easily discouraged, Mr. Lee continued to pursue the matter but on March 2, 1952, before any further developments had taken place, he was killed in a highway accident some miles south of Teslin. At his funeral three hundred persons crowded into a theatre in downtown Whitehorse to pay their last respects to a man who had worked so hard among the native people of the area.<sup>37</sup> The school that he had founded only five years previously did not close, but continued under the direction of his brother Earl, who assumed the principalship. By 1953 it had a total of 171 pupils, most of them boarders, with four teachers, three of whom were provided by the Indian Affairs Branch, the additional teacher being refused on the grounds that twenty-eight of the children were not of Indian status and were therefore not the responsibility of the federal government.<sup>38</sup>

The entry of this independent Baptist group into a traditionally Anglican sphere of Indian education inevitably created problems. Mr. Meek had to adjust his procedures with respect to the family allowance payments for children transferring from Chooutla to the mis-

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., Vol. 6477, file 925-5, part 1, Harold Lee to Mr. J. A. Simmons, 14 February 1950; D. M. MacKay to Simmons, 16 March 1950.

<sup>37</sup>Whitehorse Star, 7 March 1952.

<sup>38</sup>YA, YROF 10-29-1-11, Box 91, file 1, Memorandum, W. G. Brown to F. J. Cunningham, 13 March 1953.

sion school in Whitehorse;<sup>39</sup> Major Clark expressed concern about the potential tensions that could arise from interdenominational conflicts, and the Anglican clergy were saddened and frustrated by their church's inability to provide adequately for its native followers. Nevertheless, at the time the school certainly filled an unmet need and also no doubt served, as Mr. Meek suggested, to lessen the local demands upon Chooutla and thereby free some places there for children from more remote parts of the Territory. Finally, its ambiguous status in the eyes of the Indian Affairs Branch helped to strengthen the desire of the federal authorities to see the Yukon's Indian children integrated as soon as possible into the regular classrooms of the Territory in line, as they said, with trends elsewhere in Canada.<sup>40</sup>

#### Roman Catholic Schools

These years also witnessed the emergence of a number of Roman Catholic schools in the southwest part of the Yukon as missionaries of the Oblate order, who had long been ministering to the native people of northern British Columbia,<sup>41</sup> extended their activities across the B.C.-Yukon boundary. Somewhat earlier, in 1938, the Reverend Father A. Drean, OMI, had come from Lower Post, B.C., to strengthen his church's ties with the Catholic Indians who migrated to Teslin Lake each summer and to assess the suitability of that district as a site for a future residential school.<sup>42</sup> The subsequent construction of the Alaska Highway enabled Bishop Coudert to establish missions and day schools in a number of other Indian villages which had until that time been only rarely visited by Anglican missionaries.

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<sup>39</sup>PAC, RG 10, Vol. 6477, file 929-1, part 1, R. J. Meek to Family Allowances, Indian Affairs Branch, 15 January 1947.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., Vol. 6478, file 929-11, part 1, B. F. Neary to R. J. Meek, 18 November 1949; Meek to Indian Affairs, 24 November 1949.

<sup>41</sup>Kay Cronin, Cross in the Wilderness, (Toronto: Mission Press, 1960), pp. 127-29; p. 240.

<sup>42</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6482, file 942-1, part 1, J. O. Plourde, OMI, to Dr. Harold McGill, 10 February 1940.

## Teslin Lake Roman Catholic Indian Day School

Having obtained a plot of land near the Taylor and Drury post in Teslin, Father Drean set to work to erect his mission buildings. By 1941 the school house was completed and he could begin to hold classes each day for eighteen Roman Catholic children and four older pupils.<sup>43</sup> Thereafter, this seasonal school became an ongoing feature in the settlement, recognized and supported by the Indian Affairs Branch in Ottawa. Throughout these years the Anglican church also carried on its summer school but, lacking adequate facilities and a permanent clergy presence, its enrolments diminished considerably. Furthermore, the nature of the community underwent a transformation: by the late 1940s Teslin was no longer an isolated Indian village but a highway settlement; the life-style of the native people had been disrupted by the influx of construction workers in 1942; epidemics had taken their toll and many families had begun to relinquish their traditional pursuits in favour of year-round work along the Alaska Highway and even in Whitehorse.<sup>44</sup> In 1948 the dwindling number of pupils at the Anglican school were, as previously noted, absorbed into Teslin Lake Joint School and then into the Teslin public school, although some parents still placed their children in Chooutla while they were away hunting or trapping. The Roman Catholic day school continued to maintain its separate identity as a summer operation until 1950; thereafter the parents either sent their children to the new Territorial school, or, if they preferred, to the Catholic residential school that opened at Lower Post in 1951.

## Lower Post Catholic Indian Residential School<sup>45</sup>

For a time, it had seemed that Teslin was to be the site of a large new residential school serving the Catholic Indian children of Bishop Coudert's huge diocese, which included the entire Yukon and

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., file 933-1, part 1, Father A. Drean to Mr. G. A. Jeckell, 25 October 1941.

<sup>44</sup>Diocese of Yukon, Journal of Proceedings of the Tenth Synod, August 18-20, 1953, p. 25.

<sup>45</sup>Although the Lower Post school was not, strictly speaking, a Yukon school, a brief outline of its development is included here owing to the fact that it served a good number of Yukon children.

that part of British Columbia that lay north of the 58th parallel. Although he had placed some children at the Lejac school, located on Fraser Lake in British Columbia, about 150 miles southwest of Fort St. James,<sup>46</sup> or at the Grouard school in northern Alberta, the Bishop wished to establish a boarding facility at a point that would be more readily accessible to his people. Surveys conducted in 1940 and 1944 indicated that numbers would justify such an undertaking, since they found more than nine hundred Catholic Indians in the area, including about three hundred in the Yukon, mainly at such places as Burwash, Pelly Banks, Frances Lake, Watson Lake and Teslin.<sup>47</sup> The latter point, located on the Alaska Highway, with a small airport, a well-established mission and a good water supply, seemed at first to be ideal for the purpose. By the end of 1947, Ottawa had given its approval to the project and had voted the necessary money.<sup>48</sup> Further deliberations, however, resulted in a decision to build the school at Lower Post, B.C., a small settlement on the Alaska Highway twelve miles south of Watson Lake--a move that may possibly have been taken to forestall any concern over establishing two large residential schools in the same jurisdiction. The new site also provided easier access for pupils coming from the Oblate missions in northern British Columbia and enjoyed good commercial air connections, a feature that was lacking at Teslin. Construction began at this new location in 1950; in September, 1951, Lower Post Catholic Indian Residential School was opened, with the Reverend Father A. Fleury, an experienced Indian school administrator from southern B.C., as its first principal.

According to Father Morisset, who was in charge of the school during its later years, this original building was a large square structure that housed classrooms, dormitories, and all other necessary facilities for about sixty children. Some years later, two additional separate buildings were added, each connected to the original one by a covered corridor as shelter from the weather; one housed a

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<sup>46</sup>ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 11, file 15, Colin Gibson to Archbishop Adams, 15 July 1949.

<sup>47</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6428, file 942-1, part 1, Bishop J. M. Coudert to R. A. Hoey, 27 June 1945.

<sup>48</sup>Details will be found in PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1469, file 630-212.



chapel and auditorium-gymnasium, the other provided a separate student residence that freed space in the main building for additional classrooms and increased the total capacity of the school to about 120 pupils. The teachers were Sisters of Saint Ann, additional lay instructors being added to the staff as time passed and enrolments increased. In 1956 Father Fleury was killed in a car accident on the Cassiar road in northern British Columbia; he was succeeded as principal by Father Raymond Levaque and later by Father E. Morisset, who moved from Burwash Landing in the Yukon to take charge of Lower Post Indian Residential School until it closed in 1964.

#### Ross River Catholic Indian School

Following the departure of the Reverend John Martin from Ross River in 1934, the Anglican church lost contact with the Indian bands that frequented the area; a decade later, in 1943, its mission house was destroyed by fire.<sup>49</sup> During those years, no day school was held and, in view of its extreme isolation, it is doubtful whether any children from that region attended Chooutla. The situation changed in 1944 when the opening of the Canol road led Bishop Coudert to seek contact with the Catholic Indians who travelled to the Ross River country from the Mackenzie<sup>50</sup> and Liard River areas. In 1945 Oblate missionaries built a station at Ross River post and from 1946 on held classes for a few weeks each summer during the brief period that the Indian people were there. Baptist workers also made their way to that area, and persuaded some parents to place their children at Mr. Lee's boarding school in Whitehorse, while a few others seem to have favoured the Anglican school at Carcross. The Catholic seasonal

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<sup>49</sup>ACDYR, Series I-1.b, Box 10, file 6, C. P. Bouldin to District Engineer, U.S. Engineering Dep't., 27 February 1943.

<sup>50</sup>Most Indians of the northern and central Yukon were Anglicans. However, at the turn of the century some fifteen Catholic families from Fort Good Hope in the Northwest Territories established a village at Lansing Post on the upper Stewart River, where they received occasional visits from Dawson priests. Only a few survived the epidemics of 1918-1920; the village ceased to exist and a number of the survivors moved to the Mayo area. Other bands from Roman Catholic settlements along the Mackenzie River periodically crossed the mountains to hunt and trap in the southeastern Yukon. (From a document in the author's possession: "Notes on the Indian Village of Lansing," by Father E. Morisset, OMI, 28 February 1987.)

school was operated each summer until 1952; in 1953 no classes were held because of the polio epidemic. Thereafter, this school was not reopened and most families gradually came to send their children to the residential school at Lower Post.

#### Burwash Roman Catholic Indian School

Wartime highway construction also opened a vast new area to the west and north of Whitehorse extending beyond the Aishihik and Kluane districts to the Alaska-Yukon border. The Indian people who frequented the more remote parts of this region had over the years received only rare visits from the Anglican workers stationed at Champagne. As a result, most of the children from that area had received little or no schooling prior to the establishment in 1944 of a Roman Catholic mission at Burwash Landing,<sup>51</sup> a trading post and Indian gathering point at the northern extremity of Kluane Lake. American army authorities donated logs and other materials from abandoned construction camps at Duke River and other nearby highway points; with these Father Eusebe Morisset built a substantial church and rectory at Burwash. Screening off a portion of the church for use as a schoolroom and making portable desks that could be removed on Sundays, he began to hold classes in late December, 1944, for fourteen pupils. Since the Indians there were fortunate in having their permanent headquarters close to their hunting and trapping grounds, Father Morisset found that it was possible to teach for longer periods than was usual in other seasonal schools. In general, his classes met regularly for three months in the winter and at least two in the summer, enabling the children to make reasonably good progress in their lessons. As he recalls, there were no boarding pupils at the mission, but some children from the Kloo Lake area along the Haines road visited his classroom occasionally when their parents came to trade at the Burwash post. Recognized and supported by the Indian Affairs Branch, this seasonal school continued to operate for some years until it finally became possible for the children to attend

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<sup>51</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 934-1, part 1, J. L. Coudert to Mr. Phelan, 17 March 1945; Father Eusebe Morisset to Mr. Gibben, 3 April 1945.

school somewhere else, either at Lower Post (1951) or at the Territorial school that opened later at Haines Junction.

#### Snag Village Seasonal School

In 1947, Father Morisset's assistant, Father Pierre Rigaud, OMI, opened a small seasonal school at the Indian village of Snag, a point some sixteen miles off the Alaska Highway in the White River area, where the government had in 1942 established an air strip and weather station. Whenever there were sufficient children at the village, Father Rigaud held classes for them, but in view of the uncertain nature of this operation, no federal assistance was requested. With the opening of the school at Lower Post in 1951, these seasonal classes were discontinued, the children being encouraged instead to attend the residential school.<sup>52</sup>

#### Anglican Mission Schools

These new Indian schools that developed in the 1940s in the southern and western Yukon tended to be better built and equipped than those operated by the Anglican missions, all of which were by now showing the effects of age. Although some of the latter were closed at times during the war years, most of them eventually reopened as workers became available and continued to operate until changing times rendered them no longer necessary. Each has its own story, depending upon its location and the circumstances affecting the Indian people concerned.

#### Champagne Landing Seasonal School

Although student missionaries had maintained the Anglican mission schools at Champagne and Klukshu consistently from 1922 onward, aided by an occasional visit from an ordained clergyman or the bishop, the brief duration of these school sessions and their intermittent nature resulted in only very minimal literacy; for anything more, some years

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<sup>52</sup>From information supplied by Father E. Morisset, Whitehorse, 15 February 1987.

of residence at Chooutla were required. In the 1940s, when the Anglican church was no longer able to staff these posts on a regular basis every summer and Chooutla could not meet the demands upon it, the Indian people of the area turned to other teachers who had arrived on the scene. Denominational allegiances became blurred as many families availed themselves of the opportunity to place their children in other residential or mission schools or in summer classes offered by itinerant evangelists at a number of highway points.<sup>53</sup> The Anglican school was not reopened after 1951.

#### Selkirk Indian Day School

At Fort Selkirk the school situation remained throughout the 1940s very similar to that in Mr. Canham's day; the Indians there spent little time in the community and infrequent and irregular attendance continued to be the main obstacle to pupil progress. Nevertheless, the Indian Affairs Branch maintained the school's status as a year-round day school, even though only a handful of children attended at any one time. The Reverend Randall Stringer's report for the autumn quarter of 1942 is typical: of the twenty-two pupils then enrolled, only three attended for more than thirty days and two of those were from the same family.<sup>54</sup> When he left for Dawson in 1946, Mrs. Cowaret resumed teaching, with twenty-four children on the roll but an average daily attendance of fewer than four. Since by that date the old school building was no longer serviceable, she held classes in her own home where she also looked after the community's post office. Mr. Meek and Major Clark, the Indian Affairs Education Officer, were apparently not too happy with this informal arrangement, nor with the slow progress the pupils were making--partly due, as Mrs. Cowaret pointed out, to the fact that very few of them spoke any English. Under the circumstances, Major Clark conceded that her influence with the people and her ability to speak their language out-

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<sup>53</sup>ACDYR, Series 1-1.b, Box 8, file 6, Anthony W. Gascoyne to Archbishop Adams, 31 October 1949.

<sup>54</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6477, file 928-2, part 1.

weighed the fact that her teaching qualifications and methods were generally outdated.<sup>55</sup>

Although the Indian agent and the Bishop considered making some repairs to the building, the lack of pupils and the uncertain future of the settlement led to the withdrawal in 1948 of federal support for this school. For a few years more, Mrs. Cowaret continued to hold classes on her own whenever a sufficient number of Indian children made their appearance. By 1951, however, most of the white residents had gone, leaving Fort Selkirk to become a ghost town as new roads eliminated the need for river travel. In 1953, she and her husband followed the Indian people to a new home at Minto, a tiny settlement on the Yukon River about forty miles below Carmacks, near the Whitehorse-Dawson Highway that had ended Fort Selkirk's importance forever. Until her death in 1958, Mrs. Cowaret looked after the McCabe Creek post office, gave out medicine on behalf of the Indian Affairs Branch, and conducted church services for the Indian people, who continued their nomadic ways, travelling back and forth between their fish camps and traplines in the region. The Anglican day school became a thing of the past; it did not reopen at Minto or at Pelly Crossing, a point some twenty-six miles away on the Whitehorse-Dawson road where the band finally made a permanent home.<sup>56</sup> Residential school remained the only alternative, since the children had to wait until the mid-1960s for a Territorial school to be established there.

#### Carmacks Indian School

Apart from the Reverend R. C. Ward's two-month visit in the winter of 1939, no Indian school seems to have been held at Carmacks from 1936 until 1944. At that date Mrs. Cowaret spent some time there, returning again in 1945 and 1946 whenever the Indian families gathered at their village. A more consistent pattern began in 1948 with the appointment of Mr. W. J. Brownlee as the resident "welfare

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., file 928-1, part 1, Agent's Report, January 1948; Inspector's Report, 24 May 1947; Quarterly School Return, 31 December 1947.

<sup>56</sup>Five Pioneer Women, pp. 30-31.

teacher," a category established by the Indian Affairs Branch whereby, in addition to classroom instruction, the teacher performed other tasks such as "the registration of births and deaths, payment of Family Allowances, dispensing of medicines and the organization of various community activities," for which he was paid a higher salary.<sup>57</sup>

Since the Carmacks schoolhouse had burned down in 1947 and was not rebuilt until 1950, Mr. Brownlee held classes in his own home during those years, moving at times to a logging camp in the area or to the nearby coal mine in order to teach the children and attend to the needs of the Indians periodically employed there. A lay church worker who had previously spent some time at Champagne and Chooutla, he seems--despite his good intentions--to have proved unequal to the stresses of the work in such an isolated situation. As access to the various boarding schools became available, attendance at his day classes began to drop sharply and in 1955, when only two pupils appeared, Bishop Greenwood and the Indian agent decided to close the Carmacks mission school in favour of the eventual integration of the children into a Territorial public school in that community.<sup>58</sup>

#### Mayo Indian Day School

As postwar mining developments increased the demand for long-shore labour at Mayo, the native people of that area began to abandon their wandering lifestyle in favour of more regular employment. In May, 1947, a visiting group of Indian Affairs officials found that there were about thirty school-age children in the village who would be able to attend classes for at least six months each year. Since the Mayo public school was overcrowded and the parents afraid of tuberculosis, a joint Territorial-Indian Affairs school was out of the question; the authorities accordingly decided to reopen the one at

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<sup>57</sup>Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Indian Affairs Branch, Indian Education, The Indian in Transition Series, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1964), p. 10.

<sup>58</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 6, file 25, Rev. H. J. Taylor to Archbishop Adams, 21 November 1951; Box 3, file 30, R. F. Davey to Bishop Greenwood, 25 May 1955.

the Indian village, unused since 1938,<sup>59</sup> and to appoint Miss Sarah Ann Dougall of Whitehorse to be the resident welfare teacher. Her status as a qualified teacher entitled her to a salary of \$175 a month, plus a northern cost-of-living allowance; the Anglican diocese received thirty dollars a month as rent for the former Indian church and rectory, which were converted into a school house and teacherage.<sup>60</sup>

Since highway connections had not as yet been established, some of the teaching materials ordered in May failed to reach Mayo before the river froze in October; as a result Miss Dougall had to manage for a time without blackboards and pre-primers, while her pupils huddled at locally made benches and tables until the furniture factory in Quebec caught up with its wartime backlog of school orders, a full year later. Such inconveniences were offset by the more liberal policies then being instituted by the federal authorities. Records indicate, for example, that she received a wide variety of handicraft materials for general school purposes, as well as a sewing machine for use by a women's group and an eighteen-foot canoe and an outboard motor to facilitate access to the town of Mayo, plus an allotment of one hundred pounds of vitaminized biscuits to be distributed to her pupils at daily recess.<sup>61</sup>

When Sadie Dougall left Mayo in 1950, the children were attending class regularly and making good progress; by then there were twenty-six pupils on the roll: eight in grade one, eleven in grade two and seven altogether in grades three, four and six. She was succeeded by Miss Lillian Connor, an Irish girl who had received deaconess training in Toronto. For a time the Indian Affairs Branch, wishing to enforce

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<sup>59</sup>Reference has been found to a brief attempt by a local Indian, Charlie Jimmy, to hold classes for some weeks in the winter of 1945-46. Ibid., Box 2, file 13, W. R. Stringer to the Rt. Rev. W. A. Geddes, 25 February 1946.

<sup>60</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 935-1, part 1, Telegram, C. A. F. Clark to B. F. Neary, 21 May 1947.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., Memorandum, Clark to R. J. Meek, 19 November 1947. In the interests of pupil health, the Yukon Indian agency received eight hundred pounds of these biscuits for distribution to the Indian schools. "Ten pounds should usually suffice one pupil for sixteen weeks," suggested Mr. Clark, who also proposed that the Indian health nurse should allocate some to the Selkirk and Carmacks schools "as inducement for better attendance."

its policy of employing only certificated teachers in its schools, refused to approve her appointment;<sup>62</sup> as a result Archbishop Adams, who had insisted that she be employed, had to appeal to the national Anglican church women for her stipend. Her services, however, proved entirely satisfactory and the Branch eventually reconsidered its stand.<sup>63</sup> Early in 1952 she fell ill and had to move from the Yukon, leaving her classes to be taught for a brief period by Mr. Brownlee from Carmacks.

For some time it had been obvious that the school building on the Mayo Indian reserve was overcrowded and inadequate. Although plans for its replacement had been in preparation since the summer of 1948, no action had been taken owing to the inability of the band members to decide whether or not to relocate on the other side of the river at Mayo itself. These discussions were still in progress when Miss Hilda Hellaby arrived from Dawson in September, 1952, to replace Miss Connor as teacher and to look after the welfare of the people. She carried on the day school in the village for the next few years, remaining until 1956, when all the Indian families had moved from the reserve into Mayo and the children had made the transition into the Territorial school there.<sup>64</sup>

#### Moosehide Indian Day School

The pattern of life at Moosehide remained relatively unchanged until the mid-1940s, when clergy replacements for such outposts became hard to find. Consequently, when the Reverend B. Dixon left at the end of June, 1944, regular classes lapsed for a time except for a six-month period in 1945 when Jimmy Wood undertook to hold school as a temporary measure--being paid half the usual salary, as was then the federal policy with respect to Indian teachers.<sup>65</sup> In the summer

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<sup>62</sup>ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 1, file 1, Bernard F. Neary to Archbishop Adams, 11 September 1950 and 17 January 1951.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., J. C. B. Williamson to Adams, 8 July 1951.

<sup>64</sup>Northern Lights, (new ed.), Number 11, December 1956.

<sup>65</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6477, file 927-3, part 1, Salary Record re J. J. Wood, January 1945.



of 1946 Bishop Geddes appointed Captain Harold Edward Bridge, an American who had completed theological studies in Vancouver, to fill the vacancy at the Moosehide Indian mission.

On his arrival at his new post on October the first, 1946, Captain Bridge found a diminished population, dilapidated buildings and few teaching materials on hand. For a time his energy and enthusiasm, directed towards attracting the Indian people back to Moosehide, produced remarkable results. Within two months there were seventeen pupils attending school, aged from six to twenty, and he had already begun to build up a collection of equipment that must have amazed them, since records show that he ordered and received gramophone records, a football, two dozen lacrosse sticks and archery supplies, as well as materials for shellcraft, leatherwork, clay modelling and macrame.<sup>66</sup> As the months passed, he trained a choir, built a greenhouse and in the summer of 1948, with the aid of generous donations from the residents of Dawson,<sup>67</sup> completed the enlargement of the old school building to form a community hall, to which he added a new 20 by 30 foot classroom and an electric light plant. To the opening of this building, which coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Moosehide, he invited the leading citizens of Dawson; addresses were given by the Indian agent, Mr. R. J. Meek, as well as Controller J. E. Gibben, Archbishop Adams and Jimmy Wood, the chief of the Moosehide band. This "fete," as the Dawson newspaper termed it,<sup>68</sup> marked the high point of his time there.

Thereafter, as the months passed, the monotonous and often discouraging aspects of his work seem to have sapped his drive and enthusiasm; during the next few years he is reported as becoming increasingly despondent and dissatisfied, confused in his handling of accounts and erratic and impatient in his dealings with the Indian

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., file 927-5, part 1, copies of bills and correspondence re purchases for Moosehide School, 1947-48.

<sup>67</sup>For example, see ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 1, file 1, H. Edward Bridge to Educational Secretary, I.O.D.E., 24 March 1948.

<sup>68</sup>Dawson Weekly News, 23 September and 7 October 1948.

people.<sup>69</sup> His attempts to improve the living conditions and recreational facilities at Moosehide could not offset the attractions of nearby Dawson and many Indian families gradually drifted away from the village to seek employment in the larger centre. His mental decline continued and problems increased; in February, 1952, he left Moosehide, his place being filled by clergy from Dawson who maintained the mission as best they could for the remainder of the term.

That summer, Bishop Greenwood appointed a young teacher, Mr. A. L. Pesklevits, to take charge of classes there for the 1952-53 school year. Finally, after another year had elapsed, Mrs. Mabel Gosbee, a certificated teacher with considerable experience in Indian schools in the Hudson's Bay area, responded to the Bishop's appeal for help.<sup>70</sup> She arrived from Manitoba at the beginning of September, 1954, to be the last welfare teacher appointed to an Indian school in the Yukon. Described as an "individualist," capable of working on her own under difficult conditions, she looked after the community's health and taught the few remaining children until Moosehide mission was closed three years later and all the children were integrated into Dawson Public School.

#### Old Crow Indian Day School

Miss Mildred McCabe, who had pioneered the role of welfare teacher in the Territory, left Old Crow in the summer of 1940. Since this posting had proved so arduous for a single woman, the Indian Affairs Branch welcomed Bishop Geddes' appointment in 1941 of a married clergyman, the Reverend J. W. Ellis, who arrived that September as missionary-teacher, while his wife--a graduate nurse--cared for the community's health needs.<sup>71</sup> For the next three years he carried on classes systematically and with good success, since most children attended regularly except for the times when they left the village with

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<sup>69</sup>IA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.b, Box 9, file 12, H. E. Bridge to Archbishop Adams, 11 April 1949; Bernard F. Neary to Adams, 6 July 1949.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., Series 1-1.a, Box 3, file 28, Mrs. M. Gosbee to the Rt. Rev. T. Greenwood, 6 April 1954.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., Series 1-1.c, Box 13, file 17, Bishop (Geddes) to R. A. Hoey, 5 February 1943.

their families for the hunting or trapping grounds. Unfortunately, Bishop Geddes was unable to find replacements for the Ellises when their term expired and, although the mission church work was entrusted to the Reverend Julius Kendi and his wife, the regular day school had to be discontinued since they could not teach in English as was required by Indian Affairs. Consequently, the Old Crow people had no choice except to send their children to Chooutla for long periods of time--a step that few were willing to take, since memories of the epidemics and deaths of the 1920s still lingered. Unhappy with the situation, they joined together in August, 1945, to petition the Indian agent for the establishment of a residential school in their community so that the children could have the benefits of an education near home yet uninterrupted by their parents' seasonal expeditions. Some families even considered moving to Aklavik to secure schooling of this type, but most were reluctant to face the loss of their traplines and the other changes that such a move would entail.<sup>72</sup>

Although concerned about the problem, the Indian Affairs authorities could do little under wartime conditions except to urge the MSCC to reopen the mission school; however, Bishop Geddes' illness and death, along with the extreme shortage of qualified workers, left the church equally unable to resolve the difficulty. Under these circumstances, many parents did in fact seek some way to ensure their children's education: by the fall of 1947 a total of twenty-one children from Old Crow were reported to have been placed in the Carcross or Aklavik schools, or in St. Paul's Hostel in Dawson, while eight others had moved with their parents to be near a school. Since about nine were said to have died that year, presumably of tuberculosis, it appears that only fifteen school-age children were by then left in the community.<sup>73</sup> As all efforts to reopen the school proved unavailing, the village had to forego the services of a teacher until the summer of 1950.

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<sup>72</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 6478, file 932-1, part 1, "Petition to the Indian Agent," 28 August 1945.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., file 932-2, part 1, Telegram, C. A. F. Clark to Bernard Neary, 26 May 1947; Corporal H. A. Kirk, RCMP, to Officer Commanding, Whitehorse Subdivision, 13 November 1947.

At that point, Archbishop Adams was happy to announce that Mrs. Lillian Lucey, R.N., had offered to come to Old Crow as a welfare teacher and mission worker.<sup>74</sup> A trained nurse from England, Mrs. Lucey had spent some years in British Columbia working with the Columbia Coast Mission and the T.B. Preventorium at Alert Bay. Although she had no teaching qualifications, she had gained some classroom experience in her various postings. From her memoirs, we gather that she was fond of the Old Crow children, although decidedly authoritarian and old-fashioned in her approach to them. Most of her pupils were beginners, some of them fifteen or sixteen years old; she apparently taught them to recite English nursery rhymes, to read from the "Dick and Jane" textbooks then prescribed for many Canadian schools, to write, to do simple arithmetic, and to mind their manners. Dedicated mainly to improving the community's health, she saw to it that her pupils received their daily snack of cocoa and vitaminized biscuits, as well as the necessary inoculations and a thorough grounding in matters of general hygiene.<sup>75</sup> Her systematic care helped to bring the school back to life and when she left in 1953 its operation passed to the new resident missionary, the Reverend R. F. Wheeler. An unmarried clergyman with some medical training and field hospital experience, he maintained the school at Old Crow during his three-year term there, enabling the children to progress steadily through the lower elementary grades with no further interruption in their schooling.

### Postwar Trends

#### Increased Federal Funding

From these accounts it is evident that the Yukon shared to a considerable degree in the nation-wide expansion of Indian education that followed World War II. The 1946-48 investigations had revealed

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<sup>74</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.a, Box 4, file 25, Lillian Lucey to Archbishop of Yukon, 21 February 1950; GSA, Lucey Papers, M 68-4, Archbishop W. R. Adams to Lucey, 25 May 1950.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., M 68-1, Lillian Lucey, R.N., "A Story of Old Crow, Yukon Territory, 1950-53."

the extent of the federal government's previous neglect of its northern peoples; the subsequent changes in policy and increases in financial support enlarged the Yukon's Indian agency staff and brought about rapid developments in health care and education. In addition to new school buildings, Ottawa's more generous allocation of instructional materials and its attempts to obtain more highly qualified teachers brought undoubted educational benefits. However, with integration as the national goal, emphasis in the classroom was directed towards the provision of a standard Canadian education intended to fit the children for eventual entrance into public schools and the wage-earning white man's world; such areas as Indian language, history, folklore and traditional skills were overlooked at this juncture and had to await provincial or territorial initiatives that developed much later from organized demands on the part of the Indian people themselves.

#### Rising Enrolments

As a result of this new federal emphasis and growing local interest, the Yukon began to see a steady and marked increase in the number of Indian children at school. In the early 1940s, enrolments had been at a low ebb, with no more than forty pupils at Chooutla and far fewer in regular attendance at the three day schools then operating.<sup>76</sup> By 1950, however, the numbers had risen considerably, partly because of the opening of Mr. Lee's school in Whitehorse and partly because of the increase in the number of local day or seasonal schools operated by various missions in the Territory. Possibly of even greater importance was the fact that more Indian parents were being made aware of the provision of the federal Family Allowance Act that required them to send their children to school if one was available. Consequently, it appears that by that date a to-

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<sup>76</sup>Indian Affairs statistics should be approached with caution as they appear at times to reflect federal funding procedures rather than the actual school situation. For example, the Branch annual reports indicate that prior to 1943 there were two residential schools in the Yukon; in that case, one must have been St. Paul's Hostel, which was not a school nor did it accept status Indian children. In later years, it appears that the Whitehorse Baptist Mission school was included as a day school even though most children there were boarders, presumably because it was not an official residential school.

tal of some 160 pupils were enrolled at the Carcross and Whitehorse Indian schools, with perhaps another seventy or eighty attending classes of a more or less seasonal nature at the various missions.

This trend to increased enrolments continued throughout the 1950s and was accompanied by a major shift in the number and type of Indian schools in the Territory. Whereas by 1955 the number of local mission schools had fallen from nine to three, the opening of the Catholic school at Lower Post and the new enlarged facilities at Chootla had brought a sharp rise in the number of pupils attending residential schools, which for some years thereafter became the main channel for education of the Yukon's Indian children. By the mid-1950s it is probable that well over three hundred pupils were enrolled in the boarding institutions at Carcross, Lower Post and Whitehorse, with perhaps an additional fifty or sixty attending the three remaining Indian day schools at the Mayo, Moosehide and Old Crow missions. That integration was also gradually and quietly taking place is indicated by a comment in a memorandum dated March 13, 1953, in which Commissioner Brown notes that forty-two Indian children were then being educated in Territorial public schools.<sup>77</sup> Although he does not name the schools, it seems safe to assume that, in addition to Teslin, the communities of Dawson and perhaps Carcross were by then coming to accept status Indian children in their classrooms. All records agree, however, that most Yukon Indian pupils at this time were in the primary grades, with very few enrolled above grade six and none in high school.

#### Focus on Integration

Attendance at these large residential schools was widely perceived by officials of the day to be a positive and necessary step on the road to integration, one that would bring greater numbers of Indian children into school for longer periods than had previously been possible and thereby prepare them socially and academically for their ultimate transfer to a Territorial public school. However, such

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<sup>77</sup>YA, YROF 10-29-1-11, file 1, W. G. Brown to F. J. G. Cunningham, 13 March 1953.

a transfer could only come about as the Yukon public school system in its turn became able to meet the growing demands of its expanding population. Even by 1955 it was becoming possible to foresee the administrative difficulties that would attend the final transition: since more parties had become involved in Indian schooling, denominational and other interests would have to be safeguarded; sufficient financial support would be required and procedures to facilitate the transfer of pupils from the residential to the Territorial schools would have to be put in place. Consequently, while the move to integration gathered strength through the 1950s, the process would not be fully completed for another decade and in the meantime the education of the Territory's native children remained largely in the hands of the federal department of Indian Affairs and its church-directed residential and day schools.

#### Métis Children: St. Paul's Hostel

No review of education in the Yukon during the postwar period would be complete without reference to St. Paul's Hostel, the residence established in 1920 by Bishop Stringer to enable children of mixed parentage living in isolated areas to have access to Dawson Public School. Since it did not serve status Indians, it did not share in the postwar benefits that accompanied the federal programs and eventually fell victim to economic strictures and changing conditions within the Territory itself.

Having weathered the depression years, St. Paul's faced a major setback in March, 1943, when the Indian Affairs Branch withdrew its annual grant on the grounds that--especially in wartime--it was under no legal obligation to contribute to the maintenance of non-status Indian children.<sup>78</sup> This loss of income was to some extent replaced by assistance from the Yukon Council, which voted at its March, 1943, session a sum of \$5,500 for the care of an unspecified number of "indigent half-breed and white children" at St. Paul's Hostel, on the un-

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<sup>78</sup>PAC, IA, RG 10, Vol. 5481, file 941-1, part 1, R. A. Gibson to Mr. Jeckell, 19 March 1942; Memorandum to Deputy Minister, 3 February 1945.

derstanding that their admission would be under the control of Mr. Jeckell.<sup>79</sup> Later changed to a per diem grant of \$1.10 for each child placed in the hostel on government authority, this Territorial support proved to be a mixed blessing. As time passed, the hostel was forced to play a dual role, that of a detention centre for young offenders who could be placed there by order of the court and that of a home where children from more remote areas could live while attending school. It was expected that the latter children would continue to be fully supported by their parents and that any additional costs would be borne by the church.

With this agreement in place, and staff turnover reduced by the appointment of Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Derrrom as principal and matron, some years of relatively stable operation ensued. Well-experienced in work of this type, the Derrroms provided economical and careful management, assisted for a time by Mrs. Clara Tizya (one of the Hostel's first residents) and Miss Doris Muir, a trained church worker. Under Mr. Derrrom's direction the garden flourished, while his wife saw to it that a good supply of local salmon was preserved for winter use as well as several hundred pounds of wild cranberries and blueberries.<sup>80</sup> In addition, the Controller continued to supply the hostel with moose meat at prices far lower than those charged for beef in Dawson's butcher stores. Although the children shared the chores and were not allowed to wander the streets, a homelike atmosphere prevailed. Those who had no families to return to in the summer months went to camp at Rock Creek for three weeks every July; the rest of the vacation they spent their spare time at the local swimming pool or else chopped wood and sold berries to make a little pocket money.<sup>81</sup> To keep families together, some pre-school children were accepted; many stayed until they reached sixteen, although eventually the leaving age was raised to eighteen to encourage the older ones to attend high school. Most of them made good progress in their studies and a num-

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<sup>79</sup>Yukon Territorial Council, Votes and Proceedings, April, 1943.

<sup>80</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series III-3.c, Box 47, file 2, W. A. Geddes to Mr. Derrrom, 8 September 1944.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., Mrs. Derrrom to Mrs. J. Murray, 18 October 1949.



ber excelled at athletics. At this period, as one former resident recalls, "The hostel gave me the best home possible if I had to grow up without my mother."<sup>82</sup>

Skillful management could not offset the steady rise in the cost of goods and services and, while the children continued to be well fed and cared for, necessary repairs to the building--which dated from the goldrush days--had to be postponed owing to the expense involved. By 1947, the hostel was relying for financial support upon the Territorial per capita grant for the government wards, along with funds from the national church Women's Auxiliary, who paid the salaries of the women workers, and whatever the Bishop could spare from the annual MSCC grant to his diocese for missionary purposes. The share of the funding paid by the parents began to decline sharply; some, by no means indigent, fell months behind in their maintenance payments while others, affected by the drastic drop in the price of furs, could pay very little towards their children's keep at the hostel.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, although all parents were encouraged to turn over their family allowance cheques for children boarding at St. Paul's, it appears that not all of them could do so.<sup>84</sup>

On his first visit to Dawson in 1948, Archbishop Adams attempted to improve matters by setting up a local board of management to direct the hostel's affairs. By then, however, the situation was already rapidly deteriorating. Even when, at the board's request, the rate for each Territorial ward was raised from \$1.10 to \$1.90 a day,<sup>85</sup> the operating deficit continued to mount. This problem was intensified by the fact that the government had begun to place its wards from the Whitehorse district in Mr. Lee's school there, a move which reduced the income upon which St. Paul's budget was based. In

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<sup>82</sup>Margaret (Taylor) Lennox, now of Calgary, Alberta, a resident of St. Paul's Hostel from 1941 to 1948.

<sup>83</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series I-1.c, Box 17, file 3, A. W. Derrom to Archbishop Adams, 24 July 1947.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., Series III-3.c, Box 47, file 2, W. F. Hendershot to Principal, St. Paul's Hostel, 18 November 1949.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., Series I-1.c, Box 17, file 3, "Petition to the Commissioner and Council from the Executive Board of St. Paul's Hostel, Dawson," n.d.

addition, the reopening of the day school at Old Crow in 1950 and the general growth of the public school system caused a drop in the number of paying boarders.<sup>86</sup> By then too, instances of theft and vandalism attributed to some of the hostel residents had begun to draw community criticism, placing additional strain upon the Derroms, who left Dawson for health reasons.

The hostel's few remaining years brought a succession of staff changes. The Reverend and Mrs. N. Tannar took temporary charge until they were in turn replaced in the summer of 1951 by Miss Hilda Hellaby, one of the Yukon's best known and most effective church workers.<sup>87</sup> Her first year there with insufficient staff and inadequate funding was a severe trial of her skill and long experience; by the spring of 1952 both she and the hostel board had reached the conclusion that St. Paul's "could not and ought not to continue under its present circumstances."<sup>88</sup> Faced with the prospect of only ten children to come the following September, along with ever-increasing overhead costs in an aging and substandard building, she recommended a move to smaller quarters. Bishop Greenwood, in view of a somewhat larger number of children than expected, extended the operation for one more year before taking the inevitable step. In June, 1953, he closed St. Paul's Hostel and transferred the nine remaining residents and their supervisors to Chooutla, which at that point was still a church-owned institution and as such could accept metis children.<sup>89</sup> When the new federal residential school opened in September, 1954, some of the homeless lads were legally adopted by one of the staff members, who moved with them to Aklavik, while the others left to seek employment.

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<sup>86</sup>Ibid., Series III-3.c, Box 47, file 2, J. C. B. Williamson to Commissioner A. H. Gibson, 18 October 1950.

<sup>87</sup>The first woman graduate of the Anglican Theological College in Vancouver, Deaconess Hilda Hellaby (1898-1983) had worked for many years among the Chinese people of that city before moving to the Yukon in 1951 in response to an urgent appeal for help at St. Paul's Hostel. She spent the rest of her life in the Territory, serving in a number of communities, and is especially well remembered for her efforts to help native people in trouble with the law. "A Saint of the Yukon Works Small Miracles," The Toronto Star, 29 October 1975; Yukon News, 10 December 1976.

<sup>88</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series I-1.c, Box 17, file 2, Minutes of St. Paul's Hostel Board Meeting, 21 February 1952.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., file 4, T. Greenwood to W. G. Brown, 14 January 1953; Greenwood to Mr. W. Cameron, 21 December 1953.

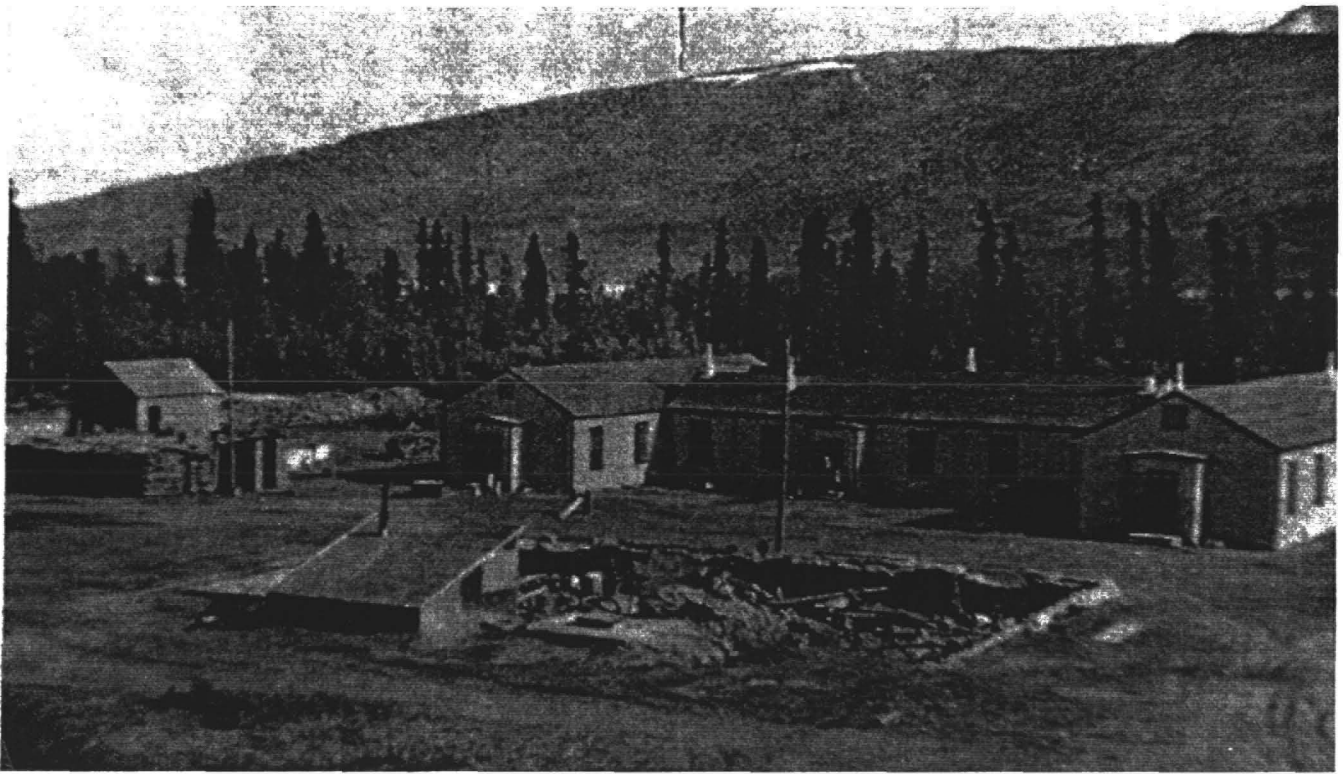
As might be expected in a sparsely settled area, St. Paul's Hostel was by no means the last institution of its type to operate in the Yukon. Although the need for such a facility in Dawson had passed, the shift of population to the Whitehorse district, along with that centre's accessibility, brought a demand for student accommodation there for both white and Indian children from the outlying areas and led to the opening of a small Anglican residence in that community as early as 1952. By 1955, the provision of student hostels held a high priority on the list of duties facing the new Superintendent of Schools as he assumed office that year.



66. *Fire destroys Chooutla School,  
April, 1939.  
Fortunately, no lives were lost.*



67. *The School carries on in cabins at Carcross.  
Picture shows staff house, storage house, laundry, schoolroom.*



68. *MSCC temporary school facility on original Chooutla site, c. 1945.  
"The new Carcross School stands in a pleasant valley near the  
ruins of the old school . . ."* (newspaper caption).



69. *Chooutla School, Carcross, fall 1950.  
Principal's house built in 1948 is at the right.*



70. *Chooutla School pupils, c. 1953.*  
*Rear centre: Principal C.T. Stanger*  
*Rear left: Bishop T. Greenwood*  
*Front left: Mrs. Clara Tizya*



71. *Catholic Church/Schoolhouse, Burwash Landing, c. 1945.  
(Rectory at the left)*



72. *Father E. Morisset and pupils at Burwash Catholic Indian Seasonal School, n.d.  
Classes were held in the church, desks being removed for services.*



73. *Father Morisset and pupils, Burwash, n.d. Visitors are Mrs. P. Choquette and son Pierre.*





74. *St. Paul's Hostel, Dawson City, c. 1930.  
Bishop Stringer purchased the former  
Good Samaritan Hospital building in 1923 to  
provide larger quarters for St. Paul's Hostel.*

75. *Hilda Hellaby  
Miss Hellaby came to the Yukon in 1951  
to take charge of St. Paul's Hostel.*





Aug 17, 1946.

76. Children at St. Paul's Hostel with prize-winning entries at Dawson's agricultural fair, August 17, 1946.

## CHAPTER XII

### TOWARDS A MODERN SCHOOL SYSTEM (1955-1961)

By 1955, the economic promise of Canada's North had led the federal government to abandon its former laissez-faire attitude to the Yukon and embark upon a systematic program to encourage its development. The effects of this change of policy soon became visible in the Whitehorse area, where massive projects were initiated to provide the residents with amenities similar to those enjoyed in southern communities. During this period federal loans made possible the installation of a two-million dollar water and sewer system, followed by some street paving in the downtown areas. Federal aid also brought into being four new schools, a new hospital and a hydro-electric dam as well as the Riverdale subdivision on the east bank of the river, linked to the main townsite by a concrete bridge. Spurred by this activity, the settlement continued to outgrow its earlier boundaries, spilling over into satellite suburbs and acquiring many of the features common to other Canadian towns. Appropriately enough, its largest and most conspicuous structure was the Federal Building; erected in 1953 as headquarters for the ever-increasing number of government offices, it stood as a symbol of Ottawa's involvement with the new North of which Canada was finally becoming aware.

Since local revenues could not even begin to meet the cost of such major developments, all these projects--including the schools--were funded through a series of five-year Federal-Territorial financial agreements or through special arrangements with various departments in Ottawa. Although the final authority in Territorial matters still resided with the Commissioner, none of these undertakings would have been possible without the cooperation of the Councillors, whose support was essential for the passage of all legislation, especially money bills.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, as plans went forward to build new

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<sup>1</sup>Rea, *Political Economy of the Canadian North*, pp. 26-28 and 46-55. The Yukon government was still at this time representative but not responsible. Some change occurred in 1960, when the Council was enlarged from five to seven members and given a measure of control over the Commissioner's handling of the Territory's finances and the public service.

schools and establish a modern, comprehensive education system, this small and relatively inexperienced legislative body was called upon to make far-reaching decisions in these matters.

#### New Developments: Federal Guidelines

Lest there be any continuation of the "inefficient and wasteful" short-term planning which had, in Ottawa's opinion, characterized school construction in Whitehorse since 1950,<sup>2</sup> the federal authorities undertook to monitor closely all proposed projects of this nature. In 1955, to strengthen the liaison between the two governments, they appointed a new Commissioner, Colonel F. H. Collins, a former Treasury Board officer who was well versed in federal administrative and financial procedures. In his role as advisor to the Commissioner, the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources listed for Mr. Collins' guidance three major objectives which Ottawa viewed as essential to future educational development in the territory. These included the decentralization of elementary schooling within the city of Whitehorse itself by the construction of a number of smaller schools outside the downtown area, the provision of vocational training facilities that would be available to all Yukon residents, and the continued integration of Indian and non-Indian children in all schools of the Territory. As a first step to the realization of these objectives, he asked Mr. Collins to undertake an immediate assessment of the Yukon's educational requirements, keeping in mind these three areas and taking into account the estimated population growth up to 1961.<sup>3</sup>

Since prompt action was desired, it was fortunate that Mr. Thompson, the newly appointed Superintendent of Schools, had already become familiar with the educational needs of the Territory during his

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<sup>2</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1259, file 535-135-1, Memorandum, F. J. G. Cunningham to the Deputy Minister, 24 February 1956.

<sup>3</sup>YA, YROF 10-29-1-B, R. G. Robertson to Mr. F. H. Collins, 23 March 1956.

year as assistant to Mr. Hulland.<sup>4</sup> Well aware of Yukon conditions, he saw that the three concerns outlined by the Deputy Minister were interrelated and that some years of complex and difficult planning lay ahead. At first both he and Commissioner Collins approached these problems cautiously,<sup>5</sup> but once assured that the federal authorities were prepared to assume the necessary financial support and that the military presence in Whitehorse was likely to remain indefinitely,<sup>6</sup> they embarked upon the required research and began to prepare the way for a number of new projects in line with the priorities outlined by the Deputy Minister.

#### Whitehorse: Decentralization of Education

In 1955, the shortage of classroom space in Whitehorse was still acute. Despite its recent ten-room addition, Whitehorse Elementary-High School remained seriously overcrowded as the town continued to expand beyond the confines of the river valley. While the Department of National Defence employees remained concentrated in the Camp Takhini and RCAF bases some two miles from the town centre, those attached to other federal departments were being encouraged to settle in the new suburb across the river and other newcomers were establishing homes along the highway north and south of the main settlement. As most of the families were young, preschool surveys indicated that demand for school accommodation would continue to increase; Mr. Thompson, seeing that at least two new elementary schools would soon be required, began at once to plan accordingly.

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<sup>4</sup>An honours graduate of the University of British Columbia (1945) with subsequent postgraduate studies there and at the University of Alberta, Harry Thompson had spent some years as a teacher in Prince George, B.C., before being appointed to the temporary position of Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the Yukon (in 1954). During his years as Superintendent, his broad vision and practical approach brought into being the present Yukon Department of Education. He resigned in 1967 to return to British Columbia as a school principal in Powell River, where he still resides.

<sup>5</sup>YA, YROF 10-29-1-B, Harry Thompson to Colonel F. H. Collins, 9 August 1956; Collins to R. G. Robertson, 10 August 1956.

<sup>6</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1507, file 600-1-3, part 6, B. G. Sivertz, Memorandum for the Deputy Minister, 29 August 1956.

### Selkirk Street Elementary School

Since the Indian Affairs Branch was about to build a hostel for Indian children in the Riverdale subdivision, some thought had already been given to the possibility of constructing an elementary school to serve both white and native children in that area.<sup>7</sup> Upon Mr. Thompson's recommendation and with Ottawa's approval, the Commissioner and Council agreed to proceed with plans to build an eight-room elementary school with an attached auditorium-gymnasium in the new suburb. In this undertaking the Territorial government was assisted by a fifty percent capital contribution of \$149,370 from the Indian Affairs Branch based upon a projected eventual attendance of 120 Indian children, with the promise of an ongoing per capita grant on their behalf to the school's operating costs.<sup>8</sup> By the beginning of September, 1959, Selkirk Street Elementary School was ready for occupancy, with space for 240 pupils in eight grades and Mr. Paul Namatenko, a Whitehorse teacher, as its first principal. However, its opening did little to alleviate conditions at the downtown school, since only in its first year (1959-60) was it able to accommodate any children from that area; after September, 1960, all classrooms were needed for the growing number of Riverdale children and the Indian pupils coming from the newly opened Protestant hostel.

### Takhini Elementary School

By 1959, conditions at the enlarged Whitehorse Elementary-High School had become desperate. That spring, Mr. Thompson reported that forty "instructional areas" were packed into a building designed for no more than twenty-eight, with over a thousand pupils occupying a school intended for seven hundred and fifty. To accomplish such a feat, it had been necessary to convert all possible available space into classrooms by foregoing lunchrooms, playrooms and industrial arts facilities and storing janitorial necessities and paper supplies in the

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., Vol. 1241, file 311/700-6, part 3, W. G. Brown to F. J. G. Cunningham, 2 June 1955.

<sup>8</sup>YA, YRDF 10-29-1-11, Memorandum of Agreement, 27 February 1959.

staff washrooms.<sup>9</sup> As the only way to remedy this situation, he urged that an early start be made on construction of a twelve-room elementary school in or near Camp Takhini to serve the army, airforce and other federal dependents in Upper Whitehorse, along with the children of families living along the Alaska Highway in the McRae and Mile 920 areas.<sup>10</sup> His proposal gained immediate approval and plans went forward to build a school in the Camp Takhini area, financed on a cost-sharing basis with the Department of National Defence bearing a major portion of the capital expense. Two years later, on September 15, 1961, Takhini Elementary School was officially opened. As a result, by June, 1962, it was finally possible to phase out the old three-room Lambert Street School building which had been reopened in 1956 to serve as a primary annex to the downtown elementary school.

### Whitehorse Elementary-High School

Although construction of these neighbourhood schools eventually relieved the overcrowding at Whitehorse Elementary-High School, certain difficulties inherent in the nature of its operation proved impossible to overcome. Of major concern to the Superintendent was the school's inability to offer an adequate range of optional subjects to the high school students selecting the "general" or "non-academic" program. While some instruction in home economics was available, suitable facilities could not be provided for industrial arts classes and lack of space hindered expansion of the art, music and commercial education courses. In addition, the shared facilities created problems of administration and supervision and severely restricted the physical education activities that could be provided for the growing number of high school students.<sup>11</sup> In September, 1959, Mr. Thompson succeeded in improving the situation somewhat by dividing the administrative responsibilities into two principalships. The high school, which at

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., file 1-B, Harry Thompson to Mr. F. H. Collins, 17 April 1959.

<sup>10</sup>According to Mr. Thompson, about forty-three percent of the pupils attending Whitehorse Elementary High School in November, 1958, were federal dependents.

<sup>11</sup>Mr. Thompson's request to have the school grounds extended northward as far as Cook Street when the army buildings were removed from that area in 1959 was not acted upon.

that time contained about 180 students in grades nine to twelve, was assigned to the north wing of the school with offices in an adjoining area, while some eight hundred elementary pupils occupied the rest of the building, administered from offices at the east end of the south wing.<sup>12</sup>

Such administrative adjustments were helpful, but only on an interim basis; the real remedy lay, Mr. Thompson insisted, in the construction of a separate high school building, preferably in the downtown area. The costs of such an undertaking could, he suggested, be divided four ways, with the Departments of Northern Affairs and National Defence, the Indian Affairs Branch and the Territorial government each bearing a proportionate share of the estimated \$500,000 required for a ten-room school. His firm conviction that both the existing building itself and its location were unsuitable for secondary school purposes helped overcome Ottawa's desire to see it become a high school facility only. As for the local government's concern about the expense of erecting and equipping a new structure, Mr. Thompson pointed out that the overall cost of education in the Territory was far from excessive, since the Yukon had "no university, no teacher training school and no vocational school" and did not even offer Senior Matriculation courses. "In all of the provinces," he noted, "these various organs for improving the potentialities and productive capacities of the people exist. As such, education is one branch of government concerned with creating greater wealth and not with preserving the status quo."<sup>13</sup> Fortunately, the Council heeded his advice and by 1961 plans were well under way for the construction of a new and well-equipped secondary school, though upon a different site than the one Thompson had originally proposed. When this school, named after Commissioner Collins, opened in Riverdale in January, 1963, the elementary classes gained full possession of the downtown building. That same month also saw the opening of a four-room elementary school in Porter Creek, bringing to completion the process of decentralization that had begun in 1955.

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<sup>12</sup>YA, YROF 10-29-1-B, Harry Thompson, Memorandum to Colonel F. H. Collins, 12 January 1959.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., Thompson to Collins, 17 April 1959.



## Vocational Education and Training

Apart from the commercial programs offered at St. Mary's School in Dawson from 1914 to 1922, or those taught by Gordon McIntyre at Mayo in the early 1930s, vocational instruction in the Yukon up to this point had been limited to an occasional night class in typing or bookkeeping held in the larger communities.<sup>14</sup> Since the mining companies tended to import experienced workers from other parts of Canada, young persons leaving the Yukon schools and not proceeding to further training "outside" simply took whatever employment they could find in the Territory, picking up the necessary skills as they worked. A few were able to put to use the knowledge they had gained from high school typing or woodworking classes introduced after adoption of the B.C. program of studies in 1934; a few others took advantage of the technical courses offered by the International Correspondence School. Until the postwar years, however, the Yukon's stagnant economy and small population precluded any need to establish a pool of locally trained workers.

Shortly before Mr. Collins' appointment as Commissioner in 1955, the federal Department of Labour had shown some interest in extending its vocational training assistance to the Yukon if the need existed.<sup>15</sup> No definite response appears to have been forthcoming at the time, although the Territorial Council went on record that year as favouring the eventual establishment of such a program.<sup>16</sup> Some

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<sup>14</sup>The first vocational classes in the Territory were undoubtedly those offered by Mrs. Stringer in the 1890s to whalers ice-bound on Herschel Island. According to reports, a number of her shorthand students later abandoned whaling for employment as reporters. Five Pioneer Women, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup>In 1953 a program for trades training in cooperation with local industry had been started in the Northwest Territories to prepare a number of Indian and Eskimo residents for employment. The 1942 Vocational Training Coordination Act enabled the Department of Labour to share the cost of a variety of provincially operated programs of a vocational or technical nature. YA, YRDF 1-4-0-9-8, Don Dickson, "Address to Yukon Territorial Council," 28 March 1961. An account of federal involvement generally in programs of this type may be found in Johnson, A Brief History of Canadian Education, pp. 120-22.

<sup>16</sup>Votes and Proceedings, First Session, 1955.

months later Mr. Collins, in accordance with his mandate from Ottawa, reopened the question.

By the following summer (1956), after further investigations and a visit from a Department of Labour official, some preliminary guidelines had been agreed upon. In general, opinion favoured the construction of a small vocational school in Whitehorse where training would be available in a few basic trades, together with the establishment of an apprenticeship system that could be started in a modest way by sending a few selected students "outside" for the necessary courses.<sup>17</sup> However, with so many other projects demanding their attention, Yukon officials could do little to follow up these suggestions; consequently, when the Territory was accepted in March, 1957, as a participant in the new federal Vocational Training Coordination Act, the only courses that could qualify for assistance were the typing classes at the high school, which received six hundred dollars towards the cost of new machines.

Planning for an expanded vocational program was then begun in earnest and by the fall of 1958 Mr. Thompson was able to provide Commissioner Collins with some specific proposals. Since a new hospital was under construction, he suggested that its old site might be suitable for a vocational school with a separate dormitory to accommodate staff and students coming from out of town. This facility should, he thought, be open to all Yukon residents, white or Indian, particularly to those who had withdrawn from the regular school system, and should provide training in occupations for which employment opportunities were available locally, such as those connected with the automotive and building trades, road construction and commercial enterprises. Such a school would, he noted, be a valuable factor in assisting the Indian people "to integrate into occupations and work habits which would help preserve their social and economic status."<sup>18</sup> These proposals were found to be generally acceptable, although the

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<sup>17</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1507, file 600-1-3, part 6, B. G. Sivertz, Memorandum for the Acting Deputy Minister, 29 August 1956.

<sup>18</sup>YA, YRDF 10-29-1-B, Harry Thompson to Colonel F. H. Collins, 15 October 1958.

site that Mr. Thompson had recommended was considered too restricted to permit further expansion, and a location adjoining the new hospital road on the east bank of the river was selected instead. Construction plans went forward through the following year but were brought to a halt when the architects' preliminary drawings were found to be far too elaborate for the needs of so small a jurisdiction as the Yukon. Hastily called consultations reduced the project to more realistic proportions,<sup>19</sup> much of the cost being trimmed by limiting the size of the residence to thirty students and curtailing the number of courses offered. In October, 1959, the less grandiose design that resulted received the approval of the consultant supplied by the Department of Labour, who also advised that a principal be hired to oversee the many details of a technical nature that were bound to arise.<sup>20</sup>

At this juncture, work on the school was again delayed when a number of newly elected councillors expressed their doubts about the Yukon's ongoing ability to support a program of this nature. Although Mr. Collins made it clear that he endorsed the project,<sup>21</sup> their hesitation persisted. In the end, their fears were somewhat allayed by Ottawa's assurance that the passage of Bill C-19, replacing the Vocational Training Coordination Act, would in fact increase the Department of Labour's contributions to the support of the new school, raising them to seventy-five percent of the capital costs and fifty percent of the ongoing operating and maintenance expenses.<sup>22</sup> At the spring session of 1961, after a persuasive address from a Department of Labour official, the Councillors somewhat reluctantly consented to the necessary expenditures on the understanding that their approval would be sought in decisions affecting such matters as the school's entrance standards and enrolments and its place in the Territory's

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., Thompson to Collins, 21 October 1959.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., C. R. Ford to Thompson, 23 October 1959.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., file 1-4-0-9-B, F. H. Collins to each member of Yukon Council, 17 December 1959.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., C. R. Ford to Harry Thompson, 14 December 1960.

administrative system.<sup>23</sup> The project, submitted to the Department of Labour for financial assistance at an estimated cost of \$755,000, was approved by Ottawa in July, 1961,<sup>24</sup> and tenders were called for its construction in October of that year.

During this same period, preliminary plans were drawn up for F. H. Collins Secondary School, located near the vocational institution in the hope that students would be able to share the facilities and take advantage of courses offered at either location.<sup>25</sup> In the end, however, two separate and completely independent institutions developed, with Whitehorse Vocational Training School, the forerunner of the present Yukon College, welcoming its first students in June, 1963.

### The Separate School Debate

Towards the end of November, 1958, the Territorial government's careful plans for educational expansion in the Whitehorse area were interrupted by an unforeseen and intense debate concerning the precise status of the Yukon's separate schools, a long dormant issue that had never been completely clarified. This dispute arose when a request for financial assistance for a proposed extension to Christ the King School brought to light certain ambiguities in the School Ordinance and revealed the inadequacies of some earlier ad hoc decisions regarding the Catholic schools in the Territory.

Soon after its opening in the winter of 1946-47, Christ the King School in Whitehorse had begun to teach all grades from one to eight, as did St. Mary's School in Dawson. In 1953, grade nine was added and in 1956, when the original buildings were replaced by a new modern structure, students were allowed to remain through grade ten owing to the overcrowding at the public school.<sup>26</sup> At that time, the Com-

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., YROF 1-4-0-9-8, A. J. Reeve, Memorandum for the Commissioner, 17 March 1961.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid, YROF 10-29-1, C. R. Ford to F. H. Collins, 13 July 1961.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., Memorandum for the Director, Whitehorse Vocational and High Schools, July (?) 1961.

<sup>26</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1507, file 600-1-3, part 6, F. H. Collins to Mr. Robertson, 8 August 1956.

missioner and the Superintendent were satisfied that an amicable agreement had been reached with the church authorities: Bishop Coudert expressed no intention of teaching beyond grade ten, and the Commissioner agreed to see that the customary per capita grant was extended to that grade level. By 1958, however, the Indian Affairs Branch had instituted plans to construct a hostel in the Riverdale subdivision for Catholic Indian pupils from the upper grades of the residential school at Lower Post, B.C. Since these additional children could not be accommodated in the downtown Catholic school building and since a plot of land adjoining the proposed hostel had already been set aside for the use of the Catholic Episcopal Corporation of Whitehorse, Christ the King Parent Teachers' Association in November, 1958, presented a petition asking the Territorial government and the Indian Affairs Branch to grant free title to the land and to provide a "substantial grant" towards the cost of constructing a separate high school for Catholic students in grades nine to twelve.<sup>27</sup> As no precedent for such action existed, Territorial Council faced an entirely new problem.

#### Christ the King School Expansion: Conflicting Views

At the Commissioner's request, the Superintendent outlined the effects, as he saw them, of establishing a complete separate school system in the Territory. From the historical point of view, Mr. Thompson felt that the existing implementation of grades nine and ten in Christ the King School had resulted purely through force of circumstances, since previous government policy seemed to indicate that the Whitehorse Catholic school had been intended to perform the same function as St. Mary's in Dawson, teaching grades one to eight only, with pupils going to the public high school thereafter. From a philosophical point of view, he felt that a separate high school would be a segregating rather than an integrating factor in a small community like Whitehorse. Furthermore, he considered it to be pedagogically and financially unsound to operate a small secondary school when it could be avoided: such a school could not offer the necessary diver-

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<sup>27</sup>YA, YROF 1-4-6-9, Petition, 24 November 1958.

sification of courses, the required range of teacher specialization could not be obtained, and the expensive library and laboratory facilities that must be provided would be under-used. He concluded by urging the Commissioner and Council to direct their efforts towards providing a new, up-to-date public high school to serve all the children of the community.<sup>28</sup>

The parents' petition and the Superintendent's recommendations were in due course reviewed by the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs in Ottawa, who advised Mr. Collins to lay before the Council the simple financial question of whether or not it would be in favour of granting public funds towards the cost of a new building to be used as a Roman Catholic separate high school.<sup>29</sup> Since in his view it would be "impossible to justify two high schools in Whitehorse," the Deputy Minister also advised Mr. Collins to "hold out no hope" to the petitioners of receiving any federal grants, or of any fees being available for separate schooling beyond grade nine. This information, conveyed to Bishop Coudert by the Commissioner in late April, 1959, brought an immediate and decisive reaction. Dismissing the arguments that Mr. Collins had advanced, the Bishop broke off all discussion on the grounds that minority educational rights were being denied, adding that the only alternative left him would be "to appeal to the highest authority in the land for a redress."<sup>30</sup>

From that point on, a heated debate raged as the Territorial authorities and the local Roman Catholic petitioners sought to establish their respective views. Ottawa was soon drawn into the controversy as the church representatives tried to gain federal support for their cause while the Commissioner, on the other hand, turned for advice to his superiors there. Since the Yukon School Ordinance, while perfectly clear about the right of minorities to establish separate schools in the Territory, failed to specify grade levels and was

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., Harry Thompson to Colonel F. H. Collins, 1 December 1958.

<sup>29</sup>PAC, RG 95, Vol. 1225, file 630/200-3, part 4, Int. #49, R. G. Robertson to Collins, 25 February 1959.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., Collins to the Most Reverend J. L. Coudert and Coudert to Collins, 28 and 30 April 1959; YA, YROF 1-4-6-9, R. G. Robertson to Colonel Laval Fortier, 23 May 1959.

also open to interpretation as to the exact nature and extent of the financial support to which they were entitled, both sides sought legal counsel on the issue.<sup>31</sup> As their lawyers' findings differed considerably, the Minister suggested that the matter might be resolved if the Bishop were to submit a new petition to the Council once the proposed Catholic school was actually "in being," as the Ordinance expressed it, a procedure that had been followed in the case of the Yukon's two existing separate schools. In addition, he emphasized the fact that this matter could not be settled by Ottawa, since there was no question of minority rights being infringed; it was instead, he suggested, a matter of financial assistance which varied from province to province (or territory) and as such was a matter for decision at that level only.<sup>32</sup>

To Commissioner Collins, federal advice took another turn. He was notified that the Catholic hostel in Riverdale would be ready for occupancy in September, 1960, for eighty to one hundred Indian children from grades seven to twelve, thereby adding to the overcrowding of the existing Catholic school in Whitehorse. It was suggested that the Council should consider the best policy to follow under these circumstances and decide accordingly whether to build one large public high school or two smaller ones, one of which would be for children of the Catholic faith.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, Bishop Coudert and his parishioners had decided to proceed with the construction of a new school near the Catholic Indian hostel at an estimated cost of \$275,000, proposing to ask the Indian Affairs Branch to pay forty percent of this amount, while the Yukon government and the trustees for the Christ the King School would share equally in the balance. A proposal to this effect was, accordingly, laid before Council at its November, 1959, session.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>The federal views are set forth in PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1225, file 630/200-3, part 4, R. G. Robertson to Collins, 15 May 1959.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., part 5, Alvin Hamilton to the Most Reverend J. L. Coudert, 13 October 1959.

<sup>33</sup>YA, YROF 1-4-6-9, B. G. Sivertz to F. H. Collins, 14 October 1959.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., Bishop J. L. Coudert to Mr. John Livesay, 12 November 1959.

### A Third Opinion: An External Committee

That session was to be a memorable one. By this time, partisan feelings had been aroused and the Council members had to face delegations of citizens from both sides, each with strong views to present. Confronted with this problem as well as with an unprecedented number of other costly demands pertaining to a whole range of educational matters, the Councillors decided to buy time by seeking impartial professional advice from outside the Territory. Postponing all decisions, they voted to set up a Committee on Education to study the entire Yukon school system and submit a report and recommendations for future action. This Committee was formally appointed in April, 1960; its report, completed in August of that year, recommended that separate schools should receive the same financial support as the public schools. In return they were to observe "all statutory regulations" and "be subject to the same regulation in regard to organization, administration, supervision, staffing and curriculum."<sup>35</sup>

Meanwhile, the local Roman Catholics had pressed ahead with the first phase of the construction of their new high school in Riverdale, consisting of four classrooms, a home economics room, an auditorium and offices. In September, 1960, when their Indian hostel opened, the upper grades of the downtown Catholic school were transferred to this new building, which had ample accommodation for them as fewer Indian pupils arrived than anticipated. By the following September (1961), the addition of four more classrooms, a library and a science room enabled Christ the King High School to enroll two classes each of grades seven and eight and one each of grades nine and ten. The two vacant rooms would, the Catholic authorities believed, be required for grades eleven and twelve in 1962 and 1963.<sup>36</sup> As for financial support, the agreement entered into on April 30, 1962, between the

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<sup>35</sup>Report of the Committee on Education for the Yukon Territory, 1960, p. 43. A more detailed review of the Committee's work will be found in Chapter XIII.

<sup>36</sup>YA, YRDF 1-14-9-1, Vol. 2, Unsigned typescript addressed to Colonel Jones, Indian Affairs, n.d. See also F. H. Collins to Jones, 30 August 1961.



Commissioner and the Catholic Episcopal Corporation<sup>37</sup> embodied the principles set forth in the report of the Committee on Education and in fact went far beyond the requests of the original petitioners.

### The Final Agreement

Under the terms of this agreement, the Whitehorse Catholic schools were to be purchased by the Territorial government, which also agreed to provide furnished teacherages comparable to those available for public school teachers at comparable rates. Salaries and costs of general school supplies were to be paid from government funds and separate school pupils were to be eligible for the per capita grants received from the various federal departments on behalf of their dependents. In addition, the Territorial government agreed to pay an annual amount for all other children equivalent to the average per pupil costs of education in the public schools--thereby meeting a long standing request from Bishop Coudert for revision of the operating grants paid to his schools. The Episcopal Corporation retained the right to recruit its own teachers, subject to the approval of the Territorial authorities, to instruct and train its pupils in matters of religion and morality at times specified by the Ordinance, providing whatever instructional materials were required, and to have some voice in the choice of future separate school sites. In all other respects, both parties agreed that the separate schools would be operated and maintained in accordance with all the laws and regulations that governed public education. As a result, by 1962 these Catholic schools had been integrated into the general system and clearer guidelines had been laid down for the establishment and operation of such schools in the foreseeable future.

### The Integration Process: Indian Schools and Hostels

By the mid-1950s integration of Indian children into the public school system was already taking place slowly and quietly. Accelerated

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., YROF 10-29-1-4. See also Yukon Council, Votes and Proceedings, Sessional Paper No. 24, 3rd Session, 1961.

tion of the process demanded little of Yukon officials beyond willingness to cooperate in plans that were essentially devised and directed by Ottawa in conjunction with the churches involved. Demands upon the Territorial budget were minimal, since the Indian Affairs Branch not only shared the capital costs of any additional classrooms that were required but also paid a per capita grant for all children of Indian status attending any of the public schools. By 1961, more of these young people than ever before were receiving systematic schooling and although the majority still spent some years in a residential institution, the trend to integration was firmly established.

#### Chooutla School: New Facilities

From a purely practical point of view, the move (1954) to the spacious new building at Chooutla was an immense boon to the school's residents. Such conveniences as an oil-fuelled central heating system and modern electrical equipment ensured safe and comfortable surroundings and eliminated the heavy chores of previous years. Now that space was available, enrolments grew rapidly, rising from seventy in 1954-55 to 120 the following year and reaching 150 or more by the fall of 1958. Since emphasis was by this time directed toward the teaching of academic rather than practical or vocational skills, all the children spent a full school day at their lessons and began to advance more rapidly through the grades. As a result, by the end of the decade an increasing number of Chooutla pupils were reaching the upper elementary level and some were preparing to continue beyond grade eight.

This gradual improvement in educational effectiveness was partly due to the federal government's assumption of responsibility for the teaching personnel in its Indian schools. By offering a higher salary and better working conditions than the churches had been able to, the Indian Affairs Branch attracted a greater number of qualified teachers into work of this type.<sup>30</sup> Classroom supervision also im-

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<sup>30</sup>After 1951 the federal government, in order to raise the calibre of the teaching personnel in the Indian schools, classified the teachers as civil servants, paid directly from Ottawa in accordance with a salary schedule comparable to those prevailing in provincial school districts. YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 14, file 10, Henry G. Cook, "Residential School Classrooms," 10 February 1954. This change was instituted at Chooutla School in 1954.

proved: both the Indian Affairs education officer in Vancouver and the Territorial Superintendent of Schools paid periodic visits to the Carcross Indian school, while the latter also encouraged the teachers to attend the annual professional gatherings of their Yukon colleagues. Before long, however, these positive developments at Chooutla were offset by a serious breakdown in staff unity that remained unresolved for some years, threatening the harmony of the entire operation and undoubtedly affecting the atmosphere surrounding the children.

#### Chooutla School: Operational Changes

The unrest seems to have begun following the departure in 1956 of the Reverend C. T. Stanger, a capable administrator who had guided the school through its transition to new quarters. Much of the dissatisfaction may be attributed to the changed status of the teachers which now set them apart from the majority of the school's employees. Classified as federal civil servants, they were responsible for classroom duties only; in addition, they enjoyed shorter working hours, longer holidays and a more attractive salary schedule than the dozen or more church-appointed maintenance and supervisory staff members.<sup>39</sup> The discontent at Chooutla caused by these inequities was heightened by acute inter-personal tensions arising from disparities in age, temperament and background; furthermore, since staff vacancies could not always be filled by practising Anglicans, no unifying philosophical commitment existed. Such a situation, exacerbated by the relatively isolated location of the school, inevitably made great demands upon the leadership skills of Mr. Stanger's immediate successors, who proved unable to resolve the problems that arose.

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<sup>39</sup>Although the federal grants to the MSCC increased throughout this period, the salaries paid by the Society to its employees remained well below those received by the teachers. Adjustment of working hours was difficult owing to the twenty-four hour nature of the operation and the comparatively small size of the staff. For some idea of the MSCC salary schedules see Canon Cook's report entitled "Comments re the Recommendations of the General Synod," 3 January 1956. (Ibid.)

In fairness to all concerned, it should be noted that during this period the principal's duties had become increasingly burdensome. For example, he now had to obtain the direct approval of the federal authorities before a new pupil was enrolled, presumably to ensure that the child was being placed in strict accordance with Section 117 of the 1951 Indian Act, which dealt with matters of church affiliation.<sup>40</sup> Even the new federal willingness to assume the cost of sending the children home for the school holidays added to his administrative load, since all details had to be checked with the local Indian agency which was responsible for transportation arrangements.<sup>41</sup> But above all, the complex financial and administrative procedures instituted by Ottawa following the introduction of a new funding system in 1957 reduced the principal's flexibility of choice and vastly increased the amount of paper-work requiring his attention. A 1959 brief from the MSCC to the Minister of Indian Affairs states the problem clearly:<sup>42</sup>

. . . the old spirit of co-operation of Church and Government working together for the good of the Indians [sic] children has been lost. True, consultations and conferences still take place but, more and more, Indian Affairs Branch is beginning to control a greater amount of detail in school operations, with the result that our Principals are tending to become servants of the Government, most concerned and worried about keeping within budgets and allotments and having less time to care for their pupils with their different problems.

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<sup>40</sup>Section 117 reads as follows: "Every child who is required to attend school shall attend such school as the Minister may designate, but no child whose parent is a Protestant shall be assigned to a school conducted under Roman Catholic auspices and no child whose parent is a Roman Catholic shall be assigned to a school conducted under Protestant auspices, except by written consent of the parent." Allegations that a child had been admitted to Chooutla or to the Catholic school at Lower Post in contravention of this section of the Act led to prolonged investigations that often entailed such correspondence.

<sup>41</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series I-1.c, Box 14, file 10, Circular No. 4/54 re Residential School Classrooms, 10 February 1954; GSA, MSCC Briefs and Memoranda re Policy, GS 75-103, Series 2-15, Box 26, H. M. Jones, Directive from I.A. Branch, 17 December 1957.

<sup>42</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series III.2.e, Box 46, file 8, November 1959.

While it is true that the clergymen generally placed in charge of the MSCC-operated schools had little experience as accountants, it is also true that a major source of their problems lay in the fact that the government had for over a decade been gradually assuming a greater share of the costs of Indian education. For example, in 1959 the MSCC's contribution towards the operation of all its Indian schools and hostels, including the value of WA clothing, was only \$88,000 while the federal portion had risen to \$1,712,000 exclusive of teachers' salaries. The resulting dominance of the Indian Affairs Branch was merely proof, as Canon Cook pointed out, that "the person paying the piper calls the tune."<sup>43</sup> Although the Anglican authorities had long been urging the government to take a greater share of the responsibility for Indian education and were gratified at the educational gains resulting from Ottawa's postwar change of policy, they were by 1961 being forced to come to terms with their own diminishing role in the process.

#### Chooutla School: Final Reorganization (1960)

In 1960, in conjunction with the opening of the Protestant hostel in Whitehorse, a major reorganization took place at Chooutla. From that time on it became a primary school in which children from grades one to four could improve their English, adjust to school routines and prepare for the transfer in grade five to the Protestant hostel where they could attend a public school and pursue their studies to leaving age or beyond. This removal of the upper grades did not greatly affect the enrollments at the residential school, which remained at about 120 pupils for some years more.<sup>44</sup> As Canon Cook

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<sup>43</sup>GSA, MSCC Briefs and Memoranda, GS 75-103, Series 2-15, Box 26, Henry G. Cook, "The Church and Native Residential School Education," 10 May 1960. For comparison, he notes that in 1950 federal grants to the Anglican-operated schools amounted to \$501,000 with the church contribution, including WA clothing, being \$104,633. The federal grants at that time included teachers' salaries.

<sup>44</sup>By the mid-1960s enrolments at Chooutla began to drop markedly as more Indian children were admitted to Territorial schools near their homes. Eventually, its classrooms were opened to children from Carcross Public School, many of whom were Indian or metis. Carcross Indian Residential School ceased operation in 1969.

noted, the younger children missed the presence of their older brothers and sisters and felt the change keenly. The new arrangement, however, may have been scholastically beneficial in that it permitted single-grade classrooms at Chooutla and freed one of the five schoolrooms there for use by special groups. Among these were the total beginners, who could then be taught separately in order to ease their adjustment to life in an unfamiliar setting.

Pupils attending Chooutla after the 1954 move undoubtedly found life in the larger building much more institutionalized than it had been in the school's earlier years. Although the children were better fed, more warmly housed, and more attractively clad than previously, the transition from close family life in their isolated villages to the regulated and relatively impersonal environment of a large boarding school proved to be a traumatic experience for many. As recent studies have shown, their resulting sense of alienation proved to be part of the hidden price of the government's determined efforts to provide schooling for every Indian child.<sup>45</sup>

#### Government Hostels

Once Chooutla School was established in its new quarters (1954), Indian Affairs officials together with Commissioner Brown and his superiors in Ottawa turned their attention to the need to replace the aging Baptist Mission School buildings in Whitehorse. Instead of a boarding school, they decided to erect a student residence in Riverdale that would be large enough to hold "Lee's children and others." They hoped in this way to hasten the integration process, since the children could attend the Territorial school planned for that area.<sup>46</sup> By 1956 plans were under way for construction of a hostel for up to

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<sup>45</sup>For the government philosophy at this time, see Douglas Leechman, "The Meeting of the Ways: Learning for Earning," *The Indian in Transition Series* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1961), p.10.

<sup>46</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 712, file 630/200-1-1, W. G. Brown to R. G. Robertson, Memorandum for the Deputy Minister, 4 September 1954; F. J. G. Cunningham to the Deputy Minister, 24 March 1955. A suggestion advanced by Mr. Thompson that the hostel also serve older students attending high or vocational schools in Whitehorse was set aside as impracticable. *Ibid.*, Vol 1241, file 311/700-8, part 3, Harry Thompson, Report to Mr. W. G. Brown re Dormitory Accommodation for Yukon School Children", 27 May 1955.

120 Protestant Indian children in the intermediate or upper elementary grades along with an elementary school in the same vicinity.<sup>47</sup> Later that year, federal officials acceded to Bishop Coudert's request for a similar hostel in the same area to house Catholic Indian children transferring from Lower Post Residential school to the upper grades at Christ the King School.<sup>48</sup> Actual construction work began in 1958 and both residences were ready for occupancy when the fall term began in September, 1960.

#### Whitehorse Protestant Indian Hostel

When the time arrived to appoint an administrator for the Protestant hostel, the Indian Affairs officials encountered an unforeseen problem. Since the Indian Act did not distinguish between the various Protestant bodies and since this new hostel had been viewed by Ottawa merely as a replacement for the boarding and day school operated by the Baptist mission for children of all religious affiliations, they assumed that Mr. Earl Lee, the principal, would take charge of the new residence. An announcement to this effect drew strong protests from the MSCC and Bishop Greenwood, who had not been consulted in the matter and who felt that Mr. Lee's appointment was both unwise and unjustified, especially as the great majority of Indian families concerned were Anglicans.<sup>49</sup> Admitting the delicate nature of the situation and noting that experience elsewhere had shown that Indian parents "not infrequently" claimed affiliation with a denomination "in order to secure the admission of their children to a particular school,"<sup>50</sup> the federal minister resolved the issue by ap-

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<sup>47</sup>YA, YROF 1-4-8-1, Laval Fortier to Robertson, 10 August 1956; C. W. Jackson to F. H. Collins, 24 August 1956.

<sup>48</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1259, file 535-135-1, Memorandum for the Deputy Minister, 28 November 1956.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., RG 10, Vol. 8761, file 906/25-1, part 2, Int. #31, Ellen L. Fairclough to Erik Nielsen, M.P., 23 November 1959. She notes that "the 1954 census reported that only 84 Indians of all ages out of a population of 1,568 in the Yukon claimed Baptist affiliation." Bishop Greenwood had stated that only thirteen children at the Mission School were known to be Baptists. The Yukon Baptist Mission Society had been equally disturbed when, in accordance with federal placement procedures, the local Indian agency had transferred pupils from its Whitehorse mission school to Chooutla or Lower Post. Ibid., Rev. H. C. Montgomery to Fairclough, 1 December 1959.

<sup>50</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series III.2.e, Box 46, file 8, Fairclough to Bishop Greenwood, 1 March 1960.

pointing a neutral administrator in the person of Mr. Findlay Barnes, an Indian Affairs Branch officer from the Ottawa office, with instructions to engage "a high proportion" of Anglicans. Although Mr. Barnes did not himself take up year-round residence in Whitehorse, the resulting staff, cautioned as federal employees against proselytism, seem to have worked fairly well together once the hostel was in actual operation; Mr. Lee became the assistant administrator, with Miss Frances Howard, a widely experienced Anglican worker, as the matron. Since Mr. Barnes did not wish to move to the Yukon, Ottawa replaced him a year later by Mr. Ivan Robson, who held the position for some time thereafter.

Integration of the hostel children into Selkirk Street School did not proceed as smoothly as had been hoped. Since fewer families had settled in Riverdale than expected, the Indian children in grades five to eight far outnumbered their white classmates.<sup>21</sup> While no classroom problems were reported, the fact that these children were older and physically more mature than the others led to allegations that the Indian pupils were ill-treating the younger ones on the playground and "possibly contributing to the lowering of the white children's moral standards." Following a conference of teachers, parents and Indian Affairs officials, the school authorities took steps to remedy the imbalance. Beginning in September, 1961, the children from the Protestant Hostel were placed in both Selkirk and Whitehorse Elementary schools with a view to establishing a more equitable distribution of Indian and white pupils in grades five to eight. Such an adjustment necessitated the inauguration of a school bus service, the cost of which was shared by the Territorial government and the Indian Affairs Branch.

As time passed and the educational gap between the two groups narrowed, this age difference diminished; nevertheless, after this first year's experience, the distribution of white and Indian children

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<sup>21</sup>A federal memorandum entitled "The Integration Problem at the Selkirk Street School," dated December 22, 1960, notes that in these four grades enrolments totalled thirty-six white and eighty Indian pupils. PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1375, file 630/200-1-1, part 2, Int. #23.



in the elementary grades in these schools continued to be carefully monitored. Furthermore, this first large step to integration had shown that conscious efforts would have to be directed towards overcoming prejudices and altering long-standing attitudes.<sup>52</sup> As to conditions within the hostel itself during its first year of operation, a major criticism that has come to light is one from Canon Cook deploring the high number of runaways<sup>53</sup>--surely an indication of the unsettling effect upon many of the children of a second move to a large institution in an unfamiliar locality.

Transfer of its older students to the Protestant hostel and strong government pressure to place all the younger children in the Anglican school at Chooutla led the Yukon Baptist Mission Society to consider other alternatives. As the wartime barracks buildings which had been the school's headquarters for some fifteen years were to be demolished, the Society decided to build a new residence in the outlying suburb of Porter Creek. Opened in 1961, the Ridgeway Children's Home for the next decade provided accommodation for some twenty Indian, white and metis children between the ages of five and sixteen years. Many were neglected or orphaned children placed there as wards of the court, while others came from out-of-town families with no public school in their locality. In its role as a "group home" this new venture played a part in the trend to integration then taking place in the Territory.

#### Catholic Indian Hostel of Whitehorse ("Coudert Hall")

When Bishop Coudert approached the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in 1956 with a request for the construction of a hostel at Whitehorse for Indian children of the Roman Catholic faith, he was

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<sup>52</sup>The memorandum noted above mentions a plan to foster greater understanding by means of a party at the Protestant hostel where the Indian children would be hosts to their white classmates.

<sup>53</sup>GSA, 6S 75-103, Series 2-15, Box 24, NSCC Visit Reports, "Superintendent's Visit to the Federal Hostel," 30 September 1960; also "Visit to Chooutla School," 20 and 21 April 1961, p. 3. Since formal research into the conflicts and problems faced by northern native children in educational institutions of this type was still in its infancy, insights such as those presented in a report by Charles K. Ray et al., Alaskan Native Secondary School Dropouts (University of Alaska, 1962) were only just beginning to emerge.

seeking some means of retaining these young people for a year or two in further educational activity, especially if a vocational training program should be instituted as an alternative to purely academic studies. Since plans for a vocational school had not yet been formulated and the Council at that point was not particularly sympathetic to the expenditures that such a project would involve, the federal authorities preferred to support his request mainly on the grounds that Catholic Indian children should have the same access to the upper elementary and high school grades as their Protestant counterparts.<sup>54</sup> It was on these terms that Bishop Coudert, with Ottawa's encouragement, proceeded to apply for an appropriate site in Riverdale for an Indian student hostel.

From its beginning, this residence was intended to house children in grades eight to twelve rather than those above grade four, as was the case at the nearby Protestant hostel.<sup>55</sup> At its opening in September, 1960, it enrolled forty-three Indian students, mostly from Lower Post Indian Residential School; the following year the number increased to more than fifty. The hostel's first administrator, nominated by Bishop Coudert and appointed by the Indian Affairs Branch, was the Reverend Eugene A. Cullinane, a member of the Catholic Institute of Madonna House. This organization, although primarily dedicated to the service of the poor and needy, had since 1954 been providing accommodation at its Maryhouse headquarters in downtown Whitehorse for a dozen or so Indian pupils attending the higher grades of Christ the King School. When the Riverdale hostel opened, a number of lay workers from Maryhouse joined the hostel staff to work with Father Cullinane.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>AC, RG 85, Vol. 1259, file 535-135-1, F. J. G. Cunningham, "Memorandum for the Deputy Minister re Indian Hostel for Catholic Indian Students in Whitehorse," 28 November 1956.

<sup>55</sup>Father Morisset points out that as an actual fact during most of its existence it provided accommodation for children in grades seven to ten attending Christ the King High School, or those above that level going on to grades eleven and twelve at F. H. Collins High School.

<sup>56</sup>"Father Gene," a member of the Basilian Fathers, held an MA degree from the University of Western Ontario. After further studies in economics and political science he taught at various Basilian colleges until 1955, when he joined the Madonna House Apostolate of Cobermere, Ontario. He came to Whitehorse as chaplain to the Maryhouse staff in 1956 and served also as chaplain to the Catholic army personnel in Camp Takhini. He left Whitehorse in 1964 to return to Cobermere. (Information supplied by the Reverend E. A. Cullinane, 6 October 1987.)

The children coming to the Catholic hostel from the Lower Post residential school in 1960 were enrolled in grade eight classes at the nearby Christ the King High School, the new separate school whose construction had given rise to so much controversy. This move to an integrated classroom situation proved difficult for some, who found themselves unable to compete academically with the other pupils. After consultation with the school authorities and the local Indian Affairs superintendent, a third of these children were transferred to grade seven in the Catholic elementary School in downtown Whitehorse.<sup>57</sup> In the following years, as the children from the residential school gained more skill and confidence in their studies, this problem of academic adjustment lessened considerably.

#### St. Agnes Hostel

A less formal step towards integration had occurred in 1952 with the establishment of a small Anglican residence for children coming from camps and lodges along the Alaska Highway to attend high school in Whitehorse.<sup>58</sup> The need for such a hostel had arisen from conditions not unlike those that had led to the opening of St. Paul's Hostel in Dawson in 1920, and had been drawn to Bishop Greenwood's attention by Miss Eva Hasell, a pioneer mission worker among families along the Alaska Highway.<sup>59</sup> That September (1952), Bishop Greenwood sought and obtained use of the old army barracks building that had been serving since 1947 as an annex to Lambert Street School and

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<sup>57</sup>YA, YROF 1-4-19-1, Vol. 2, "Memorandum addressed to Colonel Jones, Indian Affairs, re Number of Children at the Roman Catholic Schools in Whitehorse," 1960 (?).

<sup>58</sup>GSA, NSCC Papers, 6575-103, Series 2-3, Box 70, Tom Greenwood to the Rev. Canon L. A. Dixon, 7 October 1952.

<sup>59</sup>Frances Eva Hasell (1886-1974) was a well-to-do Englishwoman who as founder of the Canadian Caravan Mission devoted more than fifty years to carrying out a program of Christian education for the children of settlers in the frontier regions of western Canada. She extended her work to the Yukon in 1949 following a request from Brigadier Connelly for someone to visit the women and children in the maintenance camps along the Alaska Highway. She and her colleague, Iris Sayle, became a familiar sight in Yukon settlements, travelling up and down the highway from June to October every year for more than a decade. Vera Fast, Missionary on Wheels: Eva Hasell and the Sunday School Caravan Mission (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1979).

which was now to be abandoned with completion of the new Whitehorse Elementary-High School. The Bishop hastily organized a support committee and, thanks to the energetic efforts of Miss Hasell and the local church ladies, was by mid-October able to open a small residence for nine high school students from white families residing at various highway points.<sup>60</sup>

The following summer, Bishop Greenwood had this building moved across the street onto church property, where it was converted into a modest but adequate facility that could house two or three staff members and a maximum of twenty-six boarders. In September of that year (1953) a number of Indian and metis students joined the others and for the next decade St. Agnes Hostel maintained a full quota of residents, boys and girls, ranging in age from six to twenty-one years. Some stayed only a few weeks while their parents were away from the Territory on holidays; others returned year after year. Most were high school students in their teens,<sup>61</sup> and about half of them were of Indian status.

To support this undertaking, the Bishop received financial assistance from various church groups across Canada, including the MSCC and the Women's Auxiliary; the latter also paid the salaries of the hostel's two women workers. In addition, the parents paid a monthly fee for their children's maintenance, while the Indian Affairs Branch gave a per capita grant for the Indian students boarding there. In 1960, the Bishop expressed concern lest these children be transferred to the newly opened Protestant hostel; however, in July of that year Indian Affairs agreed to let them remain at St. Agnes hostel and to place a minimum of fifteen high school students there in future years,<sup>62</sup> a decision influenced by the belief that young persons of that age would be much happier in the freer and more homelike atmosphere of a smaller residence.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Northern Lights (new ed.), November 1952, p. 6.

<sup>61</sup>The six-year old boy was the exception in that he made the hostel his permanent home for an extended period.

<sup>62</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 16, folder 14, Henry G. Cook to Bishop Greenwood, 4 July 1960.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, Series III.2.b, Box 46, file 2, Hilda Hellaby, "Notes re the Continuance of St. Agnes Hostel," (1960?). In its later years, St. Agnes Hostel had to cope with problems similar to those that affected

### Integration in Territorial Schools

The integration process continued slowly in the smaller communities throughout the 1950s. With more accommodation available at the residential schools and increased pressure upon native families to see that their children received an education, many Indian parents chose to send their children away for schooling. Others, more permanently settled in or near a white community, availed themselves of the local public school if one existed. By the end of the decade, the only remaining Indian day school in the Yukon was the one at Old Crow, and responsibility for its administration had passed to agencies in the Northwest Territories.

While some white parents were unhappy to see Indian children admitted to public school classrooms, their objections were usually based on fear of infection. By 1960, this fear was passing as improved health services<sup>64</sup> raised standards of personal cleanliness and greatly lessened the prevalence of communicable diseases. Of more concern to Mr. Thompson was the educational challenge created by the presence of these children in the public schools. Since Indian homes provided little or no preparation for "book-learning" and kindergarten classes had not yet been established within the school system, he found their background to be "very meagre." He was also disturbed by the parents' apparent lack of interest in seeing that the children attended classes regularly, since their frequent absences were a major

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(continued)

the Dawson hostel prior to its closing. Other accommodation became available for out-of-town students and their places were taken by government wards placed there by the courts. In 1966 the hostel board decided to close the residence permanently as it no longer met the fire marshal's regulations and the building was too old to be worth the expense of renovation. Ibid., Minutes of St. Agnes Hostel Board Meeting, 4 July 1966.

<sup>64</sup>For details concerning establishment of the Northern Health Services, a federal program to provide the Yukon with a unified health care system, see Janet Moodie Michael, The Administrative Development of the Yukon Government, 1948-79 (Whitehorse: Yukon Archives, June 1987), pp. 28-31.

hindrance to their progress.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, as Mr. Hulland had commented earlier with respect to Dawson School, their enrolment was fully justified and, as their learning needs and difficulties began to be identified, efforts could be directed towards remedial action.

#### The Last Mission School: Old Crow

Old Crow by the late 1950s was still a self-contained Indian settlement, geographically isolated from contact with the white communities farther south. From June, 1953, until September, 1957, the day school there was in charge of the resident clergyman, the Reverend Robert Wheeler, who conducted classes regularly during the periods that the families were in the village. An unsigned report dated March, 1957, gives some information concerning the school gleaned from an RCMP constable who had been stationed there for the previous three years. Its writer notes that the school building, of old log construction, was in a rundown condition, that the teacher had no certificate and that no school superintendent had visited Old Crow for three years. It was, as he reported, an "unprofitable set-up" for the forty-five school-age children of the community and one which, he suggested, would be improved if the Old Crow school were placed under the supervision of the school superintendent for the Mackenzie District.<sup>66</sup>

Reports such as this led to an administrative reorganization of the agencies concerned. Since the people of the Porcupine-Peel River area across the northern Yukon are closely related to those living in the lower Mackenzie region, Old Crow was placed under the direction of the newly formed Aklavik Indian agency; in April, 1958, the school became the responsibility of the Education Division of the federal Northern Administration and Lands Branch.<sup>67</sup> This arrangement proved

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<sup>65</sup>Harry Thompson, Report for 1956-57.

<sup>66</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1259, file 535-93, "Memorandum for the Director re Inspection Trip March 7-21," 27 March 1957.

<sup>67</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.b, Box 10, file 1, B. G. Sivertz to the Right Reverend T. Greenwood, 25 March 1958; Greenwood to the Reverend Canon H. G. Cook, 9 November 1957.

beneficial, since supervision of this Indian school could be more easily handled at that time from Fort Smith than from Whitehorse or Vancouver, as had been the case previously.

At that point classes there were being taught by the Reverend George Hamilton, who had succeeded Mr. Wheeler in the summer of 1957. Examination of the registers indicates that he held school regularly with good attendance throughout his four years there. However, after the takeover only pupils in the first three grades were educated at Old Crow; those in grades four and above attended federal residential schools at Fort McPherson or Inuvik. Before Mr. Hamilton left in June, 1961, the federal authorities through their education office in Fort Smith had constructed a new school and a teacherage, greatly improving the conditions under which both pupils and teachers had worked for so many years.<sup>68</sup> In fact, these buildings, provided with hot water heat, were reported as being much too warm for comfort! In addition, the federal Northern Health Service had announced its intention of building a nursing station at Old Crow and sending someone there to staff it. As a result, by the early 1960s direct responsibility for the education of the children and the health of that community had begun to pass from the resident Anglican missionary to other agencies.<sup>69</sup>

Rapidly improving communications with the southern Yukon hastened the process of change. On July 1, 1963, at the request of the Old Crow people--who wanted their children at home--the school was taken over by the Yukon government and incorporated into the Territory's public school system. A third classroom was added to permit instruction from grades one to nine inclusive; in addition, permission was given for the school year there to start on July 2 and continue until the end of the first week in April when the long "summer" holidays began, allowing the children to go trapping with

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<sup>68</sup>YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.b, Box 10, file 1, George Hamilton to Bishop Greenwood, January (?) 1961.

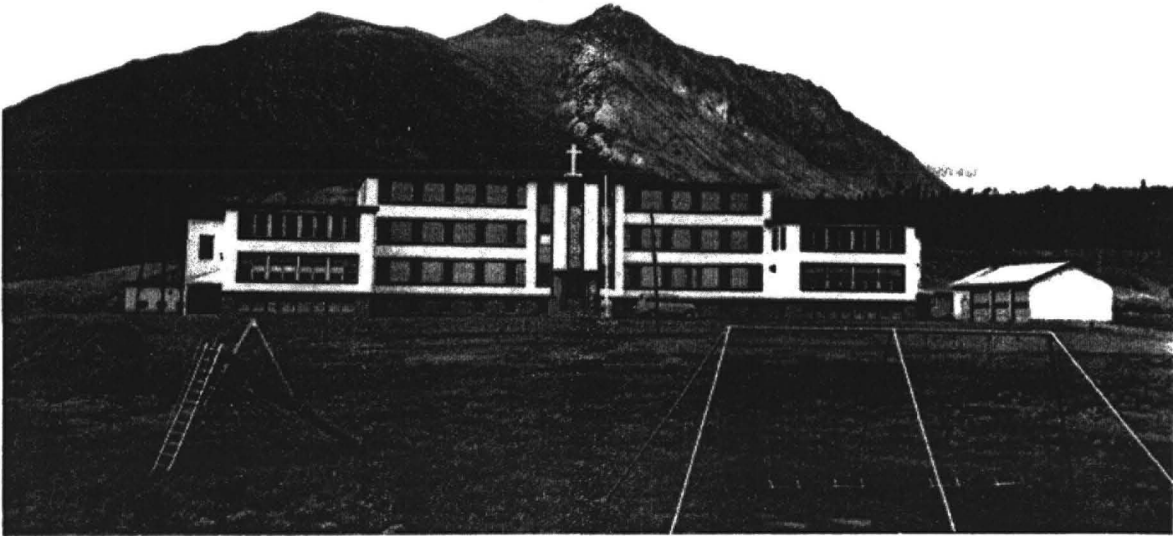
<sup>69</sup>Mrs. Hamilton, a graduate nurse, looked after the health needs of the Old Crow people during her four years there.

their parents at that period. The era of the little mission schools in Yukon's isolated Indian settlements had come to an end.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup>YA, 354.719 106 Yuk., H. Thompson, Interim Report, Department of Education, September 1, 1963-March 31, 1964.

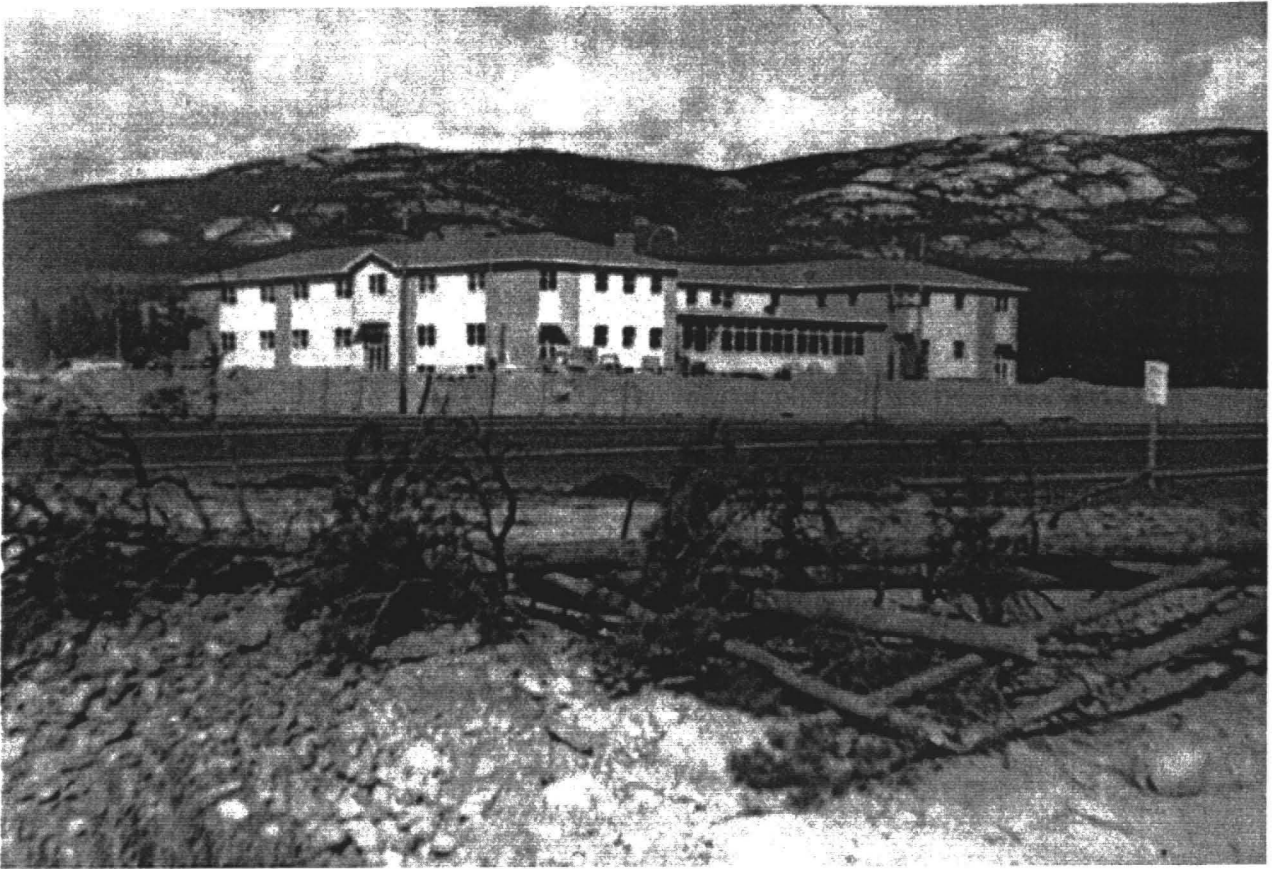




77. *Carcross Indian Residential School (Chooutla), 1954. It closed in 1969, when all Indian children had been integrated into Territorial schools.*



78. *"A dozen girls from Chooutla outdoors", n.d.*



79. *"Coudert Hall," Catholic Indian Student Residence, Whitehorse, nearing completion, 1960.*



80. *"St. Agnes Hostel, Whitehorse, c. 1956.*

## CHAPTER XIII

### TOWARDS A MODERN SCHOOL SYSTEM (continued) (1955-1961)

Upon his appointment as Superintendent of Schools in 1955, Mr. Thompson was faced with the necessity of creating an education system better suited to the Territory's growing needs. Within the next five or six years, he encouraged the construction of a number of new schools and set in motion plans for the replacement or upgrading of others; at the same time he greatly expanded the range of educational services available to the residents of the Territory. As an evaluation of the progress that he had made up to that point and a guide for future developments, he welcomed the findings of the external committee appointed in the spring of 1960 to review all facets of education in the Territory.

#### Committee on Education for the Yukon Territory, 1960

Those of us who have lived through the later decades of this century are well aware of the fact that commissions (royal and otherwise) have for many years been a popular and valuable tool for examining educational matters in various parts of the country.<sup>1</sup> During the 1950s each of the four western provinces conducted major enquiries of this type; the Yukon was therefore following a well established procedure when the Councillors early in 1960 requested that a study be made "by competent and disinterested persons" of the separate school issue and "other aspects of education" in the Territory. Placing responsibility for arranging this study in the hands of Commissioner Collins and two of their colleagues, they stipulated that all three members of the committee should be westerners, that one should have special knowledge of Indian education and that another should be experienced in separate school matters.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Johnson, Brief History of Canadian Education, pp. 168 ff.

<sup>2</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 637, file 510-2, part 10, Memorandum for the Deputy minister re the Yukon Commission on Education, 17 February 1960.

By mid-April a committee that met the required criteria had been selected. Chaired by Mr. G. G. Brown of Burnaby, B.C., who had recently headed a nation-wide investigation into matters pertaining to Indian education, it included Mr. J. J. Miller, Superintendent for the Catholic schools of Regina, and Dr. J. C. Jonason, Inspector of High Schools in Edmonton, Alberta. They began their investigations in early May, guided by terms of reference that took them to all schools in the Yukon except the one at Old Crow. Since their conclusions were required within an exceptionally short time--a mere one hundred days as compared with two years in the case of the western provincial studies--the sudden death of Mr. Brown on June 20 was a serious setback. Final delivery of their report was nevertheless delayed by only two weeks: Dr. Jonason replaced Mr. Brown as chairman and the B.C. Department of Education responded to the emergency by freeing Mr. F. T. Levirs from his regular duties to serve as the third committee member.<sup>3</sup>

In late August they submitted their report, outlining for Council's consideration the educational principles underlying their recommendations and at the same time pointing out specific details that they felt should be noted in planning any future changes. In addition to the current issues respecting Indian, vocational and separate school education, it dealt with a wide variety of financial, administrative and instructional matters and also took into account the public desire for a greater voice in the operation of local schools and for increased access to adult classes of all types. Although somewhat disappointed that the timing of the Yukon study had prevented any discussion of the British Columbia Chant Commission's findings, which were not yet available, the Yukon authorities found the Committee's report extremely valuable.<sup>4</sup> Many of the 163 recommendations of this landmark document were taken into account in planning educational developments for the 1960s and some were incorporated into the

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<sup>3</sup>Report of the Committee on Education for the Yukon Territory, 1960, pp. v-ix. For the terms of reference, see VA, YTA Files, Acc. #77/18, Box 1, folder 6.

<sup>4</sup>Votes and Proceedings, Third Session, 1960, pp. 56-57.

1962 revision to the School Ordinance, thereby providing the basis for future policy decisions.

### Territorial Schools

In the late 1950s, increased economic activity continued to attract more families to the Yukon's established settlements or to the small transportation and service centres along the Territory's principal highways. Consequently, as the major construction projects outlined in the previous chapter went forward in Whitehorse, a general upgrading and expansion of school facilities was taking place in other localities. By 1961, Mr. Thompson could look forward to the early completion of an extensive building program which would, as he said, provide "the physical basis for a modern elementary and secondary school system able to meet the needs of most of the students of the Territory."<sup>5</sup>

#### Dawson Elementary-High School

Despite periodic costly repairs, Dawson Public School was by this time beginning to show the effects of age. In the spring of 1957, Mr. Thompson urged that it be replaced since it had in his opinion outlived its usefulness: the roof leaked, the wiring was faulty and the chimneys corroded; in addition, classroom lighting was unsatisfactory, pillars obstructed the children's vision and there was no auditorium or play space.<sup>6</sup> Only a few months later, before any official action could be taken, fate intervened. In the early morning hours of June 21, 1957, a fire of unknown origin totally destroyed the fifty-six year old building and all its contents. Although all records were lost, the disaster had little effect upon the education of the children since their teachers had already determined which students would be promoted and the B.C. departmental examinations were safely stored at the home of the supervisor.

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<sup>5</sup>YA, YROF 1-66-5, H. Thompson, Interim Report for 1960-61.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 1-62-8, Thompson, Interim Report, 1 September 1956 to 31 March 1957.

That September, the 150 pupils resumed classes on the top floor of the former government administration building where, above such local facilities as the radio station and the post office, space was available for a staff room, an office and seven classrooms. The use of this venerable wood-frame structure, tinder-dry and saturated with coal dust, caused considerable anxiety; special fire escapes had to be installed and a careful watch maintained to guard against a second and perhaps more costly disaster. The children, less aware of the hazards, apparently accepted the novelty of the school's new location and the younger ones spent many happy hours clambering up and down the emergency chutes provided for their safety.<sup>7</sup>

In December, 1958, a new seven-room school with an attached auditorium-gymnasium opened near the original site; it had cost some \$350,000, a portion of the capital amount being borne by the federal government on behalf of the Indian children then enrolled.<sup>8</sup> Although the Committee on Education considered this school to be one of the best in the Territory, the new building was already overcrowded and Mr. Thompson had begun to press for the early construction of additional classrooms. However, despite the upheaval caused by the fire and the subsequent space limitations, classes operated smoothly throughout this period with no recurrence of the unsettling conditions that had prevailed in 1954. Under the capable direction of Miss Mary Gartside, a former staff member who had returned to Dawson in 1955 to take over the principalship, staff morale was sustained and community relations greatly improved.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 1-4-9, Thompson to F. H. Collins, 24 June 1957; Collins to Mr. Robertson, 26 June 1957. Conditions at the old administration building are graphically described in letters from Elmer Gaundroue to K. J. Baker, 24 June 1957 and Baker to Collins, 26 June 1957. Additional information supplied by Alan Nordling of Whitehorse.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 10-29-1-11, Memorandum of Agreement, 19 August 1958. A per capita operating grant for each Indian pupil was also provided.

<sup>9</sup>Educated at the University of Saskatchewan and the Sorbonne, Miss Gartside is well remembered as a versatile and inspiring teacher and an effective administrator. She came to the Yukon in 1949 to teach at Brook's Brook. After two years there, she taught French, Social Studies and English in the Dawson and Whitehorse high schools, returning to Dawson as principal-teacher in 1955.

The main challenge throughout these years came from the steady increase in the proportion of Indian pupils attending the public school. In an attempt to meet their needs, the teachers gave them special aid with their studies to help them catch up with their classmates, and also paid special attention to their general health. Although communicable diseases were less of a threat than formerly, many of the children were undernourished and it was consequently found advisable to supply all pupils in the primary grades with a daily vitamin supplement and a mid-morning glass of milk.<sup>10</sup>

#### St. Mary's Catholic School

In March, 1960, St. Mary's School celebrated its diamond jubilee marking the completion of sixty years of service to a total of some eight hundred Dawson children.<sup>11</sup> At this date two Sisters of St. Ann were holding classes for about thirty-five pupils in grades one to eight. During their visit that summer, the members of the Committee on Education found the classrooms in the combined church-school building small and not up to modern standards but certainly adequate for the numbers enrolled; in their report they suggested only that St. Mary's remain a two-room school and that no attempt be made to extend instruction to the secondary level.

Although the government paid the teachers' salaries, Bishop Coudert continued to appeal for more equitable support for this school. The yearly operating grant had been increased in October, 1954, from \$150 to \$160 per pupil; subsequent increases followed, and in 1959 the Council agreed to raise its grant from \$225 to \$250 per pupil in view of the constant rise in operating costs brought about by inflation and other factors<sup>12</sup>. However, the actual status of this institution remained unclear: although generally viewed as a separate

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<sup>10</sup>The cost of this program was shared by the Indian Affairs Branch and the Dawson City Council. By 1960, the Territorial Council was considering offering a similar service to other schools. (Votes and Proceedings, First Session, 1960, p. 28.)

<sup>11</sup>Athol Retallack, "Former Days Recalled in Dawson," Whitehorse Star, 24 March 1960.

<sup>12</sup>Votes and Proceedings, 1959, First Session, 20 April 1959.

school, it did not in fact receive that standing as defined in the School Ordinance despite the 1960 Committee's recommendation that it be so classified. It was not included in the agreement drawn up in 1962 between the Territorial government and the Catholic authorities and for the remaining few years of its existence it continued to be, in Mr. Thompson's words, "a quasi-private school receiving grants from the Territory."<sup>13</sup>

#### Mayo Elementary-High School

The 1954 upgrading of the school facilities in Mayo soon proved to be only a temporary solution for the needs of that community. Although the total enrolments did not fluctuate too greatly, increasing numbers in the upper elementary and high school grades placed a heavy load upon a staff of only three teachers. Furthermore, the new Panabode building was prone to heating problems and lacked appropriate facilities for the high school classes, while the old frame structure housing the primary class encroached upon much-needed playground space. In March, 1959, Mr. Thompson urged the Commissioner to build a modern elementary-high school with four classrooms, a science room, an activity room and the necessary storage and office areas.<sup>14</sup> With the approval of the Territorial Council, work began that summer and continued through the fall and winter months. That September, an additional teacher joined the staff, who carried on their classes in the old facilities until the new building was ready for occupancy the following January (1960). The old primary room was then demolished, the Panabode structure was entirely converted into apartments, and Mayo pupils were at last provided with an adequate and up-to-date school.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Notes and Proceedings, 1966, First Session, Appendix A, Sessional Paper No. 15. When the Sisters of St. Ann withdrew from Dawson in the early 1960s, suitable teachers for St. Mary's proved difficult to obtain. In 1966, with only twelve pupils enrolled of whom six were non-Catholics, it finally became necessary to close this historic school.

<sup>14</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1469, file 630-204, H. Thompson, Memorandum to F. H. Collins, 5 March 1959.

<sup>15</sup>Information supplied by Miss Helen Weigel of Whitehorse, who joined the Mayo school staff in 1959 as primary teacher. Mr. Donald Machan, who had been principal from 1953 to 1955, returned to this position in 1958, replacing Mr. B. Scrambler. He moved from the Territory in 1961.



### Keno Public School

In 1955, Mr. Thompson expressed grave concern about the unsatisfactory conditions at the Keno school, where Anna Zawalsky was coping with sixteen children in grades one to nine, with an additional student in grade twelve. That summer a new Panabode structure containing a standard classroom and a teacher's apartment was provided to replace the former cramped and poorly arranged classroom located in a company warehouse.<sup>16</sup> Five years later, completion of a new road linking Keno to the mining camp at Elsa enabled Mr. Thompson to consolidate the two schools. The twenty or so children at Keno were then taken by bus to Elsa, some ten miles away--a move which was noted as resulting in a better educational situation for them and a considerable saving to the Territorial budget.<sup>17</sup>

### Elsa Public School

By 1956 the silver-lead mine at Elsa was giving every indication of continuing as a long-term operation. As the company planned to build additional housing for its growing number of married employees, the mine manager brought the need for a new and larger school to the attention of the federal authorities.<sup>18</sup> Although Commissioner Collins did not favour the allocation of capital funds for the construction of buildings in mining communities, federal encouragement and the healthy state of the Territorial finances induced him to include the necessary amount in his 1958-59 estimates.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, that year saw the construction at Elsa of a four-room Territorial school with attached teachers' apartments. Since enrolments grew less rapidly than expected, only two classrooms were needed for a time; a third teacher was added in September, 1961, to accommodate the pupils coming from

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<sup>16</sup>YA, YROF 1-65-3, Harry Thompson, Interim Report, 1 September 1955 to 31 March 1956.

<sup>17</sup>Commissioner's Annual Report, 1962-63.

<sup>18</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1469, file 630-215, R.G.R., Memorandum for Mr. Cunningham, 20 April 1956.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., F. H. Collins to C. E. White, 21 October 1957.

Keno, and a fourth class was established a few years later as the population of Elsa continued to rise.

#### Watson Lake Schools

The two small schools in the Watson Lake district continued to operate independently until the late 1950s. The major turnover of pupils that accompanied the transfer of the airport in March, 1957, from the RCAF to the federal Department of Transport had little effect upon the total enrolments at the airport school. On the other hand, in September, 1958, a second classroom had to be added to the school at the "Y" in order to accommodate the growing number of families settling along the highway. As a result, Mr. Thompson decided that the time had come to consolidate both schools into one administrative unit serving a total of some seventy pupils, with grades one and two being taught at the airport school and grades three to ten at the "Y."<sup>20</sup> A year later, in 1959, as enrolments approached one hundred and the demand for high school classes increased, the "Y" school was further enlarged by the addition of a third classroom and an office; shortly thereafter plans were initiated to erect a more adequate facility nearby that would contain four classrooms, a science room, a library and a gymnasium.<sup>21</sup> Upon its completion in January, 1962, the primary classes were moved to the Panabode building at the "Y," an area which then became the school centre for the entire Watson Lake district with a total of 135 pupils and a staff of six teachers.

#### Teslin Public School

Attendance records show a considerable fluctuation in enrolments at the Teslin School between 1955 and the end of the decade and also indicate that, while pupil punctuality and attendance gradually improved, this school suffered from a particularly high rate of teacher turnover. The reason is not clear, although Ethel Stewart, who

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<sup>20</sup>YA, YRDF 1-66-4, Harry Thompson, Report for 1958-59.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Thompson, Interim Report, 1 September 1959 to 31 March 1960.

taught there in 1955-56, remembers finding that Teslin was a lonely place for a single person.<sup>22</sup> The members of the Committee on Education were, however, greatly impressed by the degree of integration they found there, noting that of the thirty children enrolled at the time of their visit fifteen were native Indians, nine were metis and six were white. "This is an example," they commented, "of the type of integration that this Committee recommends. Here all children live at home and come under the influence of both school and family."<sup>23</sup> To assist the children in the primary classes, special help was obtained when necessary through the employment of a qualified local resident as a part-time helping teacher. In 1960, increasing enrolment encouraged the Territorial government, assisted by the Indian Affairs Branch, to add a second classroom to this school; by then it was also becoming obvious that further expansion would be required should other Teslin children attending the residential schools at Lower Post or Carcross return home to live with their parents.<sup>24</sup>

#### Carcross Public School

Little change occurred at the Carcross school during this period. Enrolments did not increase sufficiently to justify the addition of a second classroom and the facilities remained entirely adequate for the community's needs. By 1961, however, it seemed likely that in time, as the enrolments at Chooutla declined, arrangements might be made between the Territorial and federal authorities for all children from the Carcross district to make use of the facilities at the Indian school.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Miss Stewart, now resident in Ottawa, had previously taught for four years at Fort McPherson, where she developed a deep interest in the Loucheux people. Before coming to Teslin, she had also spent a year at a Maori school in New Zealand.

<sup>23</sup>Committee on Education, Report, pp. 116-17.

<sup>24</sup>YA, YROF 1-66-4, Harry Thompson, Interim Report, 1 September 1959 to 31 May 1960.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 1-4-19-1, Vol. 2, F. H. Collins to Colonel H. M. Jones, 7 September 1961.

## Alaska Highway Maintenance Camp Schools

The five small highway schools created to meet the needs of the early postwar years were by the mid-1950s in urgent need of upgrading or replacement. Located in whatever space a particular camp could provide, they are best described as barely adequate: the classrooms were usually small, some lacked washroom facilities, and most had insufficient playground space or equipment. Nevertheless, they served their purpose and, whatever their physical disadvantages, reports indicate that the children made reasonably good progress in their studies.

### Haines Junction School

The largest of these maintenance camp schools was the one at Haines Junction. By 1957, conditions there had become so crowded that the senior class had to be accommodated in the recreation hall used by the camp employees for movies, dances and other social events--a situation that Mr. Thompson found to be "educationally unsound."<sup>26</sup> As only eleven of the thirty-three pupils were dependents of highway maintenance families, the Territorial authorities yielded to residents' requests and in 1958 erected a two-room school and teacherage in the adjacent community. According to the report of the Committee on Education, this building was attractively designed but not too well planned, an indication that those responsible for its construction were not aware of the standards required for school buildings in the provinces. It was, however, a welcome improvement over the former facilities and in 1961, as the population of the area continued to grow, a third classroom was added.

### Kluane Lake and Beaver Creek Schools

Farther north, at the Destruction Bay and Beaver Creek maintenance camps, a similar need had developed. Early in 1959, the Commander of the Northwest Highway System had joined with the Super-

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 1-62-8, Thompson, Interim Report, 1 September 1956 to 31 March 1957.

intendent of Schools to notify Commissioner Collins that Kluane Lake School at Destruction Bay was no longer fit for use. It was housed in an old army building described as "ugly, a fire trap, poorly lighted and heated, with very inadequate accommodation for one teacher, let alone two," and was certainly far too small for the twenty-five pupils enrolled. Since more families were expected to arrive that summer, the Commissioner forwarded this description to Ottawa and asked that a cost-sharing agreement be drawn up for the construction of a two-room school with a basement activity area and teachers' quarters, at an estimated cost of about \$70,000.<sup>27</sup> The new building opened in the fall of 1961, with the Department of National Defence and the Territorial government sharing the major portion of the cost, while the Department of Northern Affairs assumed the amount required for a few children from families employed by the Canadian National Telegraphs and the United States Pipeline.<sup>28</sup>

The school at Beaver Creek, with more than twenty pupils in grades one to nine, was also far from satisfactory: the classroom was reported to be dingy, cramped, and poorly lit, while the teacher's apartment attached to the camp recreation hall was noisy and unsuitable.<sup>29</sup> These substandard quarters were replaced at the same time as those at Destruction Bay by a new building similar to the Kluane Lake School and presumably financed under similar cost-sharing arrangements.

#### Brook's Brook and Swift River Schools

Since few families settled near either of these maintenance camps, these two schools on the highway south of Whitehorse were not

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<sup>27</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1507, file 600-1-3, part 6, F. H. Collins to B. G. Sivertz, 26 August 1959; R. G. Robertson to David M. Watters, 10 November 1959.

<sup>28</sup>The Canadian National Telegraphs were in charge of telephone services along the Alaska Highway. In 1954, the U.S. Army constructed a pipeline to move petroleum products from the port of Haines, near Skagway, to Fairbanks. Four pumping stations were built in B.C. and the Yukon, bringing pipeline employees to Haines Junction and Beaver Creek. The station near Destruction Bay was added later when the capacity of the pipeline was expanded. The project ceased to operate in 1971. (Whitehorse Star, 11 February 1981.)

<sup>29</sup>YA, YROF 10-29-1, file 1-B, Harry Thompson to F. H. Collins, 15 October 1959.

replaced by Territorial buildings, but remained in quarters provided by the Northwest Highway Command. At Brook's Brook, a dozen or so pupils were crowded into a tiny room barely large enough to accommodate them until the camp authorities undertook to enlarge and renovate the school in the summer of 1961. At Swift River, conditions improved greatly when the six or eight pupils and their teacher were moved to larger quarters in the former camp foreman's residence. As time passed, enrolments dwindled; the Brook's Brook school ceased to exist when that maintenance camp closed in 1966, the few children living in the vicinity being eventually taken by bus to Teslin, while classes at Swift River had to be discontinued a few years later owing to lack of pupils.

### New Territorial Schools

#### Carmacks and Pelly Crossing

Before 1959 there had not been enough non-Indian children of school age at Carmacks to justify the establishment of a Territorial school. By that date, however, the construction of major highway bridges at the Yukon and Pelly River crossings along with increased mining activity in the area had begun to attract more families to the settlement. In response to their request for a public school, the government agreed to adapt one of its existing buildings at Carmacks for temporary use as a schoolroom and teacherage pending indications of continuing need.<sup>30</sup> That fall, classes were begun for seven or eight children and a year later, in 1960, it became necessary to enlarge the classroom to accommodate more pupils. That same summer, the Committee on Education received a brief from Carmacks residents headed by Mrs. Vera Lidden, urging that the Indian children of that community be given the opportunity to be educated at home rather than at one of the residential schools. This appeal was endorsed by the Committee members, who recommended that the government construct a two-room school within the coming year, keeping in mind the fact

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<sup>30</sup>Votes and Proceedings, First Session, April 1959.

that an extension might be needed before long.<sup>31</sup> When this matter came before the Council at its 1961 fall session, Mr. Thompson suggested that the members might at the same time look into the feasibility of establishing a Territorial school in the Indian village of Pelly Crossing so that those children too would no longer have to leave home for their elementary education.

#### Granville School

Meanwhile, another little school had opened in a small mining settlement at Granville, some fifty miles from Dawson in the old Klondike "creeks" area, where the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation had begun to operate a dredge. Here, in a situation reminiscent of the assisted schools of earlier times, a few families employed by the company obtained a teacher for half a dozen pupils in grades one to three. Classes met from September, 1959, until the end of the following June when Mr. Thompson reported that he had closed the school owing to insufficient enrolment. It was, however, to reopen in September of 1962 and continue in operation for some years thereafter.

#### Educational Policies and Practices (1955-61)

The vigorous school construction program of this period was accompanied by a corresponding expansion of educational services and the introduction of policies designed to bring the Territory's school system more closely into line with provincial trends. From the beginning of his superintendency, Mr. Thompson made every effort to enlist and retain a body of competent and well-qualified teachers; he also sought to improve the quality of classroom instruction and to expand and as far as possible equalize, the educational opportunities available to students in all Yukon communities.

#### Teacher Recruitment and Retention

While the lure of the North was undoubtedly a major factor in attracting teachers to the Yukon, the authorities there had long

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<sup>31</sup>Committee on Education, Report, pp. 123-24.

realized that the prospect of better-than-average salaries would be a more reliable means of recruitment. Over the years, however, salaries in the Territory had fallen behind those offered elsewhere until the Yukon found itself no longer able to compete with the provinces for the limited number of teachers available. The improved salary schedule introduced in 1954 at Mr. Hullah's instigation eased the situation only temporarily; further salary increases were urgently needed if Yukon classrooms were to be adequately staffed. In his 1956-57 report Mr. Thompson outlined the extreme difficulty that he had encountered in this respect: of the seventy-one teachers in the Territory that year, thirty-seven were new, and of these some were superannuated from the provinces, some had taken a large salary reduction to come to the Yukon, six had no professional certification at all, and by March, 1957, two positions were still being filled on a temporary basis. His report was accompanied by proposals for a new salary schedule and for an employment contract intended in part to penalize teachers who resigned in July or August without prior notification.<sup>32</sup> The new schedule adopted that September enabled him thereafter to fill elementary vacancies "with relative ease," but despite further revisions aimed at increasing the benefits for teachers with higher certification, the difficulty in obtaining well-qualified high school personnel continued to cause concern.<sup>33</sup>

Along with increased salary benefits, other inducements continued to be offered to encourage those already on staff to remain more than a year or two. In September, 1958, teachers with two full years of service in the Yukon were admitted to participation in the government's annuity plan.<sup>34</sup> Relatively few seem to have availed themselves of this opportunity, which apparently had little effect upon teacher retention. Of more importance was the provision of sub-

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<sup>32</sup>Thompson, Interim Report, 1 September 1956 to 31 March 1957.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., YROF 1-66-5, Interim Report, 1 September 1960 to 31 March 1961.

<sup>34</sup>The Annuity Plan Ordinance of 1950, originally established for the benefit of Territorial civil servants, had later been extended to include school principals. This ordinance had to be amended before teachers as a group could be admitted to the plan. YA, YTA Files, Acc. #77/18, Box 1, folder 21, F. H. Collins to H. Thompson, 15 January 1958.



sidized housing in the various communities where, as a result of the upgrading of teacherages, modern furnished quarters were by this time generally available. By 1960, some needs remained to be met: in Dawson, for example, single male teachers had to live in one of the local hotels, and in Whitehorse, where the Lambert Street apartments (1955) provided accommodation for a dozen single men, additional housing for married teachers was seen as a necessity to reduce the high turnover at the secondary level.<sup>35</sup> Of more doubtful value in encouraging staff retention were the travel benefits whereby newly hired teachers had their expenses paid from Edmonton or Vancouver to their destination in the Yukon, while those with two years' service became eligible for their return fare to those points--a definite inducement to those wishing to come to the North, but also a decided encouragement to leave when the two years were up. This whole problem was carefully examined by the Committee on Education, who concluded that the Yukon's "phenomenally low" retentive power for teachers<sup>36</sup> was due to a combination of factors, the most important being the lack of "professional security" to be found there--a situation which had in fact already become a major concern of the newly formed teachers' association.

#### A Professional Organization: The Yukon Teachers' Association (YTA)

The teachers of the Territory had been granted the right to form a professional organization by the School Ordinance of 1902.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>For teacher accommodation at Dawson, see Thompson's interim report for September 1959 to March 1960. Whitehorse conditions are described in his report for September 1960 to March 1961. His request for six houses for married staff was later met through the construction of a twelve-unit apartment block on Sixth Avenue for that purpose.

<sup>36</sup>Committee on Education, Report, pp. 50-52. The report states: "In 1959-60, 46% of the Yukon teaching staff was in its first year in the Territory while only 24% had been in the area for four years or more. Under such a handicap it is very difficult to build either unity or continuity or effectiveness in a school system. The turnover of 45.6% in the Yukon was matched only by Newfoundland (as reported in 1957)."

<sup>37</sup>Section 103 reads: "Any number of teachers may organize themselves into an Association, and subject to the regulations of the Department, may hold conventions and institutes for the purpose of receiving instruction and discussing educational matters."

In May of that year, they met in Dawson, formed an association known as the "Yukon Teachers' Convention," presented papers on the teaching of various subjects, and heard addresses from "a number of prominent citizens interested in Educational Work."<sup>38</sup> As no further references to gatherings of this nature have come to light, it would appear that as time passed the dwindling number of teachers, the lack of money and the difficulties of transportation made such meetings impracticable.

A half-century later, in the early 1950s, attempts of the Whitehorse teachers to organize a similar Territory-wide federation met with little response. However, the arbitrary dismissal of Mr. Hurland in 1954 caused alarm and emphasized their need for professional unity.<sup>39</sup> That October, they formed themselves into a local Whitehorse association and began to urge their colleagues in other communities to affiliate with them either as groups or as individual members.<sup>40</sup> Mr. Thompson, who at that point was seeking their support for a Yukon-wide in-service training institute to be held in Whitehorse in the fall of 1955, suggested that this event would give all the teachers an opportunity to discuss matters of professional interest. As a result, at a general meeting held during this first institute the Yukon Teachers' Association (YTA) came into being with Mrs. Alice Homewood as president.

From the beginning, its efforts were directed towards promoting the welfare of the teachers and improving education generally throughout the Territory. Since the Association's executive and the majority of its members were from the Whitehorse district, teachers

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<sup>38</sup>YA, YRG 1, file 505, G. P. Mackenzie to Acting Commissioner, 2 May 1902.

<sup>39</sup>To quote Mr. Hayes, Speaker of the Yukon Council, in reply to a query from the Whitehorse teachers: "You ask about security of tenure. You have none whatsoever as long as the Administration of the Yukon is placed in the hands of appointed individuals who are unable to rise above the pettiness of their present inclinations and limited mentalities." This cutting remark no doubt refers to Commissioners Fraser and Brown, both of whom had arbitrarily dismissed teachers, as was their right at that time. Ibid., YTA Files, Acc. 77/18, Box 2, folder 46, unsigned letter to "Dear Fellow Teacher," 22 April 1954.

<sup>40</sup>From information supplied by Miss Mary Gartside, the Association's vice-president, now of Richmond, B.C. See also correspondence in Ibid., folder 47, 18 October 1954 and 19 February 1955.

in the Mayo and Dawson areas were encouraged to participate in a northern branch set up to help offset the isolation of their situation. Although constitutional restrictions prevented the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) from accepting Territorial affiliates, the national body was very supportive of the new northern Association, as was the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), and both organizations helped guide it through its early stages.

By June, 1958, the YTA had already brought about a number of benefits: it had helped to negotiate two salary raises, encouraged the extension of the Territorial annuity plan to all teachers, arranged for their participation in certain hospital and medical plans, established a lending library of professional books and set up a lesson-aids service to assist teachers in the smaller schools.<sup>41</sup> In general, its proposals were well received until, near the end of the decade, the Association was caught up in a dispute with the Commissioner.

The controversy stemmed from the YTA's efforts to establish itself as the official bargaining agent for all teachers. As a first step in this direction, it sought to have membership in the Association made a condition of teacher employment. In 1958, the Commissioner and Council reluctantly agreed to insert a clause to this effect (Clause 17) in their contracts,<sup>42</sup> a step viewed by some Councillors as undemocratic and by the Commissioner as a potential move towards unionization. When, two years later, the teachers accused the government of failing to comply with salary limits previously agreed upon, Mr. Collins withdrew this clause from their contracts on the grounds that it was "an infringement of personal liberty and not in the best interest of either the teacher or the Territory."<sup>43</sup> In response, the YTA announced that the teachers were prepared to resign en masse at the end of June if the clause in question were

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., Box 1, folder 17, John E. Maunsell to all teachers, June 1958. For a general review of the aims of the Association, see YROF 1-4-0-9-0, Maunsell to the Commissioner, 4 November 1957.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., F. H. Collins to Harry Thompson, 17 April 1958.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., John Maunsell to Commissioner, 4 November 1957; Collins to Thompson, 12 April 1960.

not reinstated.<sup>44</sup> Although Mr. Collins bowed to their demand and replaced the disputed item in the contracts, he shortly thereafter summarily curtailed all funds for the 1961 institute and convention and insisted that such events in future be held at the teachers' expense and outside school hours.<sup>45</sup> Once again bitterness surfaced, exacerbated by reports that, contrary to the wishes of the YTA and the views of the Committee on Education, compulsory membership would not be included in the new School Ordinance then being prepared.

The issue was finally resolved through the efforts of Mr. Thompson, who advised the Commissioner to leave Clause 17 in place while he reviewed the position of teachers' organizations in other parts of Canada. Early in 1962, he reported that "without exception" membership in a teachers' association was mandatory in all provinces, and recommended that compulsory membership in the YTA be accepted and incorporated into the new ordinance with a "write-out" clause for teachers who did not wish to belong to the organization.<sup>46</sup> The Commissioner agreed to this proposal; the YTA had won its case, and both parties moved to re-establish more amicable relations. The Association was then free to turn its attention to other concerns such as the need for teachers to have a more adequate pension plan and guaranteed security of tenure.

#### Improvement of Classroom Instruction

Owing to the high rate of turnover, almost half of the teachers employed in the Yukon schools in 1955 were newcomers to the Territory and, since they were drawn from all parts of Canada, most of them were unfamiliar with the B.C. program of studies. Faced with this situation, Mr. Thompson brought all the teachers of public, sepa-

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., YTA Files, Acc. 477/18, Box 1, folder 4, Annual Report of the Salary Committee, October 1960.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., Report of the YTA Institute Committee, 22 October 1960.

<sup>46</sup>YROF 1-4-0-9-0, Harry Thompson, Memorandum to F. H. Collins, 17 January 1962. Mr. Collins still felt that the teachers wanted the best of both worlds and were "riding the fence" as contracted employees who also sought privileges as civil servants. (Collins to Thompson, 18 January 1962).

rate and Indian schools together that fall for a week of orientation and in-service training.<sup>47</sup>

An educational institute of this magnitude was an extraordinarily ambitious undertaking for a comparatively remote frontier area. Held in early October before ice forming in the rivers could prevent travel on the Dawson-Whitehorse road, it became the prototype for subsequent annual events of this nature. A number of speakers and consultants were brought from outside points, among them the B.C.-Yukon inspector of Indian schools, the superintendent of schools for the Northwest Territories and the gentleman who was past president of both the CTF and the BCTF.<sup>48</sup> Also in attendance were the primary consultant for the city of Vancouver and representatives of the National Film Board and the B.C. Junior Red Cross. Participants had access to a publishers' display of books and instructional materials as well as a number of locally prepared educational exhibits. Time was set aside for the teachers to hold a convention of their own, and community interest was promoted by means of a daily radio broadcast and an open public forum on education held during the week's proceedings.<sup>49</sup> Subsequent institutes were somewhat shorter but equally successful; in fact, a consultant at the 1958 gathering noted that of the many such events that she had attended during her career the one in the Yukon was, to her surprise, "the model."<sup>50</sup>

To supplement these annual in-service sessions, Mr. Thompson prepared a teachers' manual with information of an instructional and curricular nature, as well as a monthly departmental bulletin. In April, 1958, he held the first Yukon administrators' conference. As for supervision, he made every effort to visit the schools regularly, twice a year if possible, spending half a day with each classroom

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<sup>47</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1507, file 600-1-3, part 5, Thompson, Memorandum to Mr. W. G. Brown, 17 January 1955; also YROF 1-65-5, Thompson, Interim Report, 1 September 1955 to 31 March 1956, part D.

<sup>48</sup>Mr. John Prior, a well-known B.C. teacher.

<sup>49</sup>YA, YTA Files, Acc. #77/18, Box 1, folder 16, Report on Teachers' Institute, October (?) 1955; also PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1507, file 600-1-3, part 5, "Notes and Instructions on Institute Program."

<sup>50</sup>YA, YROF 1-66-2, Harry Thompson, Interim Report, 1 September 1958 to 31 March 1959.

teacher. Measures of this sort soon began to bear fruit in the form of improved pupil achievement at all grade levels.

### The School Program

Between 1955 and 1961, Mr. Thompson took steps to ensure that the teachers in his rapidly expanding school system were following the prescribed program of studies, developing appropriate classroom procedures and adhering to uniform testing and promotional policies. The B.C. school pattern could not be fully implemented, mainly because most Yukon schools were too small to permit any clear division between the elementary and the junior high school grades and because the range of options required by the two-stream (general/academic) secondary program was limited by the size of the schools and the prevailing shortage of qualified specialist teachers. Where possible, the necessary adjustments were made: in Whitehorse, for example, the high school's commercial offerings were expanded and a central library was established to serve pupils at all grade levels. As for program expansion, Mr. Thompson began in 1957 to consider extending the secondary school offerings to include grade thirteen once new facilities became available.

The 1960 report of the Committee on Education devotes an entire chapter to a review of the program of studies then being offered in the Yukon schools and its comments and recommendations furnish valuable insight into conditions at that time. Among the wide range of topics we find, for example, that many Yukon schools were spending too much time on English, but without producing markedly superior achievement to that obtained elsewhere. The proposed teaching of oral French at the elementary level is approached with some caution, with the suggestion that it be considered as an enrichment measure only, for pupils of average or superior ability. On the other hand, the Committee favoured homogeneous grouping and suggested that wherever possible special classes for slow learners should be established. It also recommended that teachers' curriculum committees be set up to adapt certain areas of the B.C. curriculum to suit Yukon needs. The standardized testing program that had been in effect for some years met with approval, and the Committee noted with interest the policy of using external tests in English and mathematics at the

end of grade eight to determine which high school stream the children should enter. However, the Yukon departmental examinations administered to all academic program students at the end of grade ten and used to channel the weaker ones into the general stream were viewed with some concern. While commending Mr. Thompson for instituting this extensive examination system, the Committee warned against the possible danger of reducing the general stream to "an inferior position." It should be noted, however, that the Superintendent's in-service institutes, supervisory techniques and examination policies had resulted in a marked improvement in the level of student performance, especially in the university entrance examinations set by the province of British Columbia.

#### Equalization of Educational Opportunities and Advantages

By 1955, almost all the smaller schools in the Yukon were providing instruction to the grade eight or nine level; beyond that, the old problems remained and parents in many outlying areas who wished their children to go further in their studies still had little choice other than to send them away from home to finish their education. Although Mr. Thompson's reports consistently stressed the need for dormitory accommodation for these students and Ottawa also was anxious to see this matter given priority,<sup>51</sup> no actual progress had been made in this respect by the end of the decade. In its review of the situation, the Committee on Education recommended that, unless arrangements could be made for white children to share the facilities of the Whitehorse Indian hostels, the Territorial government should establish a non-denominational residence of its own there for secondary school students from outside points.<sup>52</sup>

Since the transportation policy adopted by Council in 1956 provided parents living within driving distance of a school with a subsidy of up to ten dollars a month for each child, Mr. Thompson suggested that a similar amount be made available to assist those who had to

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<sup>51</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 443, file 630/200-1, F. H. Collins to Mr. Robertson, 23 April 1956.

<sup>52</sup>Report, p. 27.

pay room and board for children attending school in another community. However, once again no action was taken and it remained for the Education Committee to propose that a boarding allowance be made in such circumstances. Of course, parents could still place their children in the B.C. correspondence program--a solution favoured by the Committee members, who recommended that the government continue its current policy of paying the cost of this instruction and also provide for supervision whenever feasible.

To equalize the classroom situation throughout the Territory, care was required to ensure that the smaller schools were provided with as wide a range of instructional materials as possible. Among the duties assigned to Mr. Thompson upon his arrival in 1954 was the distribution of educational films. With the support of the newly formed Whitehorse Film Council and the help of Territorial government grants, he expanded this service until by 1960 the Department of Education was operating a film library of 430 films and 350 filmstrips, all of which were available for distribution not only to the schools but also to private individuals, clubs and hostels.<sup>53</sup> In addition, classes could obtain tapes and scripts of educational broadcasts and school libraries were much more generously equipped than formerly.

For those children whom we would now term "educationally disadvantaged," little was specifically available in the schools themselves. Since kindergartens had not yet become part of the regular program, those who were not well prepared on entering school merely spent longer in the primary grades. In Whitehorse, dependents of air-force or army employees did have access to kindergarten classes held in quarters supplied by the Department of National Defence; these were usually organized by the chaplain and taught by one of the mothers with appropriate qualifications and experience. Children from the general community could not attend these classes but had access to those offered at the Catholic convent or at one of the other churches, providing space was available and their parents could afford

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<sup>53</sup>H. Thompson, Interim Report, 1 September 1956 to 31 March 1957; also his report for 1959-60. In 1957, there were only sixty-five films in the collection.



the necessary fee. In the mid-1950s, a public health nurse in Whitehorse, realizing that Indian and métis children had little or no early contact with books or structured play, undertook to organize an experimental kindergarten class for a number of them. Held at the Anglican parish hall and conducted by two volunteer ladies,<sup>54</sup> this early attempt to fill an obvious gap developed into an ongoing pre-school activity at the Skookum Jim Indian Centre. As for the slow learners, only Whitehorse had a large enough school system to permit special class instruction for such children. Those who were severely handicapped were generally sent to a special school in one of the provinces.

#### Athletic Events

By this time vastly improved highway communications made it possible to introduce a regular program of inter-school sports meets and competitions. One such event was the annual high school curling bonspiel, first held in Mayo in 1954 at the suggestion of the Mayo Polar Bears, an active group of senior students at that school. In 1957 this competition took on an international dimension with participants coming from Fairbanks for the first time, while in 1956 track meets were begun for pupils in the small schools along the Alaska Highway. These events were followed a little later by inter-school basketball tournaments between teams from Whitehorse and Skagway, Alaska. Such events won the full support of the Superintendent, who recognized their value in developing physical skills and improving school morale.

#### Academic and other Awards

Although prizes and medals were awarded to Yukon students before 1955, no systematic record of either their donors or the recipients has come to light. After that date, however, names appear regularly in the Superintendent's reports.

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<sup>54</sup>Involvement in this project were Mrs. C. D. Taylor and the writer.

## The Governor-General's Medal for Proficiency

In 1952, the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources suggested that the Governor-General's bronze medal might be awarded yearly to the top Yukon student in grade nine.<sup>55</sup> The exact date when this medal was first awarded has not been determined; the earliest reference that has come to light occurs in a letter written by Commissioner Collins in July, 1955, indicating that the recipient was a Dawson student.<sup>56</sup> In June, 1959, the basis of the award was altered and for some years thereafter it was presented to the student receiving the highest standing in the Yukon departmental examinations administered at the end of grade ten to all those on the academic program. Since 1965, the medal has been won by the student attaining the highest average in the B.C. University entrance examinations at the end of grade twelve.

### Scholarships and Grants

According to the Superintendent's report for 1955, the only scholarship readily available in the Territory at that time was the Whitehorse Lions' Club award of \$250 for a student completing the academic grade twelve program at the high school there.<sup>57</sup> In 1956, the Territorial government decided to establish two scholarships of \$250 each, to be awarded annually to the boy and girl graduating from grade twelve with the highest standing in their university entrance examinations.<sup>58</sup> Two years later, in 1958, the Council approved funds for an additional science-mathematics scholarship of \$1,000 a year, renewable for four or five years. Following the government's lead,

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<sup>55</sup>PAC, RG 85, Vol. 1261, file 600-1-3, part 2, J. F. Delaute to Major-General H. A. Young, 30 September 1952.

<sup>56</sup>This was Betty Jean McCormack, a pupil at Dawson Elementary-High School. Her father had died suddenly, and the presentation was made at the Whitehorse airport while the family was enroute to Calgary. For a list of the medal recipients from 1955 to 1961, see the Appendix.

<sup>57</sup>For some years a scholarship offered by the Colorado School of Mines had been open to Yukon students, but it was discontinued in 1955. An IODE scholarship was also available, but students rarely qualified since this award was tied to the death or injury of a parent in war.

<sup>58</sup>Harry Thompson, Report for 1955-56, Appendix C.

other groups such as the Whitehorse Parent-Teachers' Association, the Business and Professional Women's Club, and the women of the Canadian Legion began to add scholarships and bursaries to those already available.

A more wide-reaching suggestion was put forward by the Committee on Education in connection with the proposed establishment of a grade thirteen class. Rather than offer such an expensive program for a very few students, it recommended that the government consider providing a grant for any Yukon student with a graduating average of sixty-five percent or higher who was going on to post-secondary studies at a Canadian university. Furthermore, the Committee advised the government to retain its existing scholarships and make them available in addition to any grants provided for graduating students.<sup>59</sup>

#### Student Travel Awards

While an expanding network of new highways enabled students and teachers to travel more easily within the Territory, improved air connections now made it possible for them to visit other parts of Canada. In 1960, a senior Whitehorse English student and her teacher attended the Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Ontario; the following year a student and teacher from Dawson High School made a similar journey. In both cases, the trip was part of a national program sponsored by the Canada Council. In 1961 also, a boy from Mayo visited the United Nations headquarters in New York through the generosity of the IOOF organization. Such opportunities, which would have been unimaginable a few years previously, greatly expanded the horizons of students in the Yukon schools.

#### Adult Education

Although adult evening classes had previously been offered from time to time in the Yukon's larger communities,<sup>60</sup> no systematic pro-

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<sup>59</sup>Report, pp. 94-95. Both the grade thirteen class and a generous post-secondary grant program were eventually instituted.

<sup>60</sup>See, for example, Mr. Bragg's report for 1912-13 and an item in the Dawson News for November 5, 1932.

gram emerged until the mid-1950s, when Mr. Thompson decided to explore the extent of public demand in Whitehorse for such a service. He began in 1955-56 by offering a four-month course in typing that attracted more than thirty students. Encouraged by this response, he broadened the program the following year to include introductory shorthand and bookkeeping, subjects which held special appeal for the army and airforce wives who made up a great part of the local work force at the time. Since no other formal opportunities existed in the Yukon to train women for employment, Councillor C. D. Taylor brought this need to the attention of his colleagues, reminding them that any future vocational school should include not only commercial training but also such courses as hairdressing, cooking and nursing, then considered traditional female occupations.<sup>61</sup> In the meantime, these night school commercial classes along with others in such subjects as oral French, mathematics and woodworking helped satisfy public desire for adult courses of a practical or recreational nature.

During this period, the need for another type of adult program also became evident. The postwar influx of workers coming to the Yukon included a number of refugees and displaced persons from various eastern European countries. Many had found employment at the mine at Elsa, where classes in English as a second language ("English for New Canadians") had begun as early as 1953, supported mainly by the federal Department of Citizenship and Immigration. As the need arose, similar classes were organized in Whitehorse to assist these newcomers in their adjustment to the language and culture of their new country.

By 1958, Whitehorse Elementary-High School, crowded in the daytime, had also become a lively centre of community activity in the evenings. In addition to the night school classes, residents could participate in weekly badminton and physical culture sessions, attend the Alaska Music Trail concerts, and enjoy the offerings of the local drama club and the choral and film societies, while shooting

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<sup>61</sup>A motion to this effect was placed before Council by C. D. Taylor and J. Smith. Notes and Proceedings, First Session, 1959.

enthusiasts profited from the indoor rifle range installed in space beneath the auditorium. The school had indeed, as the Whitehorse Star noted, "become part and parcel of community life."<sup>62</sup>

In 1960, the Committee on Education, noting that little had been done up to that date to provide adult classes of any type in other Yukon communities, suggested that the authorities take advantage of the "wealth of highly trained personnel" in various parts of the Territory who might be persuaded to offer courses during the long, dark winter evenings. The school principals could, the members thought, do much of the organizational work involved and the school buildings could easily be made available for such a purpose. In addition, they recommended that the government take steps to expand its network of community libraries, which up to this point were still being operated by the ladies of the IODE, aided by an annual Territorial grant. In some cases, they suggested, it might even be possible to pool school and community library resources.<sup>63</sup> These suggestions received careful consideration and laid the foundation for the present Yukon library system.

#### Public Participation in Education

Apart from the short-lived advisory committee appointed by Commissioner Fraser in 1952, Yukon residents had up to this time played no definite role in matters of public education. Interest, however, was not lacking. The postwar years saw the rise of organized parent-teacher groups in such communities as Dawson, Mayo, Whitehorse and Carcross. The members were active, concerned parents who supported school projects, raised money for special needs and when necessary pressured the politicians for improvements to local education facilities. According to the Commissioner's report for 1962, there

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<sup>62</sup>Whitehorse Star, Goldrush Jubilee Edition, Summer, 1958.

<sup>63</sup>Committee on Education, Report, Chapter X, pp. 127-29. See also Votes and Proceedings, 1959, Second Session, p. 20.

were by that date eight chartered parent-teacher associations in the Territory.<sup>64</sup>

Since the School Ordinance had ever since 1902 made provision for school districts administered by elected trustees, Ottawa suggested in 1958 that a type of school board similar to the one in Yellowknife might be established in Whitehorse to give the town's residents some control of education and greater financial responsibility for it. After consulting the Council, Mr. Collins expressed the opinion that until the Yukon had a "greater concentration of population density, plus a greater tax base, the present administration of education should remain."<sup>65</sup> Although most Yukoners conceded that Ottawa's suggestion was premature, the desire for a greater voice in the operation of local schools persisted. Consequently, as an interim measure, the Committee on Education recommended the establishment of local school advisory committees which would provide a channel whereby a community's residents and government authorities could share their views on educational matters.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, it suggested that a central advisory board be set up, composed of members from local school committees, "to advise at the policy-making level of Territorial school administration." Legislation to this effect was incorporated into the revised School Ordinance (1962), enabling these committees to come into being. Although requests continued to arise thereafter for the establishment of school boards, local input to education has remained at the advisory committee level.

#### Growth of the Department of Education

Ever since 1902 the Yukon Department of Education had been essentially a "one-man show," except for the year that Mr. Thompson

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<sup>64</sup>These groups formed a Yukon Council of Parent-Teacher Associations, and were part of the B.C. Parent-Teacher Federation; eventually the Yukon Council became a separate entity under the Canadian Home and School Federation.

<sup>65</sup>YA, YROF 10-29-1, file 1-B, F. H. Collins to R. G. Robertson, 17 November 1958. For the deputy minister's reply, see *Ibid.*, 28 December 1958.

<sup>66</sup>Report, Chapter II, pp. 12-13; also Chapter III, pp. 15-17.

spent as Mr. Hulland's assistant in 1954-55. Until 1955, when the Department acquired its own secretary and moved to independent quarters in the Federal Building, the Superintendent shared the office space and staff allotted to the principal of Whitehorse Elementary-High School. Although Mr. Thompson's request in 1957 for assistance resulted in his obtaining more clerical help, it was obvious that the growing number of pupils and classrooms was creating an excessively heavy workload for one person to carry. Finally, in October, 1959, he notified the Commissioner that in view of the increasing complexity of his duties, the appointment of an assistant superintendent had become a matter of extreme urgency.<sup>67</sup> At the same time he called attention to the fact that the Superintendent's salary had not kept pace with those offered the teachers, nor did he receive any of the benefits available to teachers such as a housing subsidy or a northern living allowance. As a result of his appeal the necessary adjustments were approved and his request for an assistant, supported by the Committee on Education, led to the establishment of a new position and the appointment in August, 1961, of Mr. John Froese as the first Deputy Superintendent of Schools.

#### Conclusion

What, then was the situation by 1961? Thanks to the increased funding provided by the federal government, residents of the Territory were beginning to enjoy the benefits of a greatly expanded school system that was still financed mainly from general Territorial revenues at a minimum cost to the local taxpayers. The contentious separate school issue had been laid to rest, and the accompanying debate had done much to arouse general public awareness of the importance of education in the lives of all residents. Indian pupils were being freely admitted to the public schools as space became available for them, while all Yukon teachers had begun to enjoy many of the benefits open to their colleagues in other jurisdictions. School facilities were being improved rapidly and Yukon children had

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<sup>67</sup>YA, YROF 10-29-1, file 1-B, H. Thompson, Memorandum to F. H. Collins: Proposals to Improve the Educational Services of the Territory, 15 October 1959.

begun to find that new opportunities were open to them, bringing them advantages similar to those available in other regions of Canada. Above all, after a decade of stress and rapid growth, a unified framework had emerged, with children from Catholic, Indian and military families all gathered into the one public education system.<sup>68</sup>

On the local front, the chief architect of this new system was undoubtedly Harry Thompson, whose dedicated efforts and professional insight helped bring about the necessary changes. As the Committee on Education commented in the closing paragraphs of its report, he had in a short space of time, "In spite of many difficulties and with very little professional assistance," achieved a good measure of success in organizing an effective and up-to-date school system for the Territory. In so doing, he proved himself a worthy successor to the superintendents who had shaped the earliest stages of the Yukon's public school system and all those who had carried on through the difficult years of retrenchment and neglect.

The task was, of course, far from complete. Many of the recommendations arising from the education study of 1960 would require further discussion before their implementation could be considered; other questions, especially those concerning the education of Indian children, had as yet scarcely begun to be formulated. Nevertheless, in retrospect it is evident that 1961 was a significant year: not only did it round out a century of schooling but it had brought all those concerned with education to a clearer perception of the changes that the Territory had undergone, especially in the period following World War II. With its more pressing needs satisfied and firm guidelines based on the Education Committee's report emerging to direct future action, the Yukon's young school system seemed to have reached the threshold of a more settled period of consolidation and relative calm.

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<sup>68</sup>Seen as the main achievement of these years by former Commissioner James Smith, who was a Councillor during the period under review. (Interview, 24 September 1987.)



APPENDIX I

Yukon Territory, Assisted Schools

Bonanza	1907-14; 1915-18
Carmacks	1925-26
Church of England (Carcross, Selkirk, Fortymile)	1906-09
Church of England (Selkirk)	1910-12
Carcross	1909-12; 1913-15; 1923-27; 1929-30
Conrad	1906-07
Gold Bottom	1909-18
Gold Run	1916-17
Granville	1911-13
Mayo	1913-22
9 Below Dominion	1906-07
Pueblo	1913-14
Quartz Creek	1906-11
Selkirk	1925-28
Stewart City	1924-26
Tagish	1929-31
Wernecke Camp	1932-33

SOURCE: Compiled from information in Yukon Territory, Public Accounts (1905-50).

NOTES:

1. These schools did not necessarily operate for a full school year during the period shown.
2. A school's non-appearance on this list for a period may indicate:
  - a. that the school was closed, or
  - b. that the school had gained sufficient pupils to be fully supported by the Territory.

APPENDIX II

Department of Education, Yukon Territory  
(Interim Report of the Yukon Schools,  
August 1934 to March 1935)

Pupils Attending from Outlying Points

	Name	Age	Grade	Parent's Name and Address	Remarks
<u>Attending Dawson Public School:</u>					
1.	Anthony, Tsul	15	VIII	G. H. Anthony, Old Crow	Hostel
2.	DeBastien, Agnes	15	X	W. DeBastien, Dawson	"
3.	DeBastien, Paul	10	V	"	"
4.	Dickson, Dick	13	VI	Tom Dickson, Kluane Lake	"
5.	Dickson, Ole	13	V	"	"
6.	Dickson, Edna	9	IV	"	"
7.	Flynn, May	17	V	F. Flynn, Bonanza (at present)	"
8.	Flynn, Belle	12	IV	"	"
9.	Flynn, Jack	11	IV	"	"
10.	Flynn, Ray	8	I	"	"
11.	Hayden, Charlie	12	IV	H. J. Hayden, Kluane Lake	"
12.	Hayden, May	8	III	"	"
13.	MacDonald, Annie	16	IV	N. MacDonald, Old Crow	"
14.	MacDonald, Fannie	14	IV	"	"
15.	Olsen, John	10	IV	J. Olsen, on the Yukon between Halfway House and Fortymile	"
16.	Olsen, Fred	9	I	"	"
17.	Rudolph, Charlie	10	I	H. Rudolph, Teslin (Atlin at present)	"
18.	Rudolph, Elizabeth	8	I	"	"
19.	Stevens, Alice	15	VIII	Geo. Stevens, Dawson	"
20.	Stevens, Ada	13	V	"	"

Attending Whitehorse Public School:

1.	Barrett, Rose	15	X	G. Barrett, Tagish
2.	Hayes, Tony	13	VIII	H. Hayes, Big Salmon
3.	Jacquot, Jean	8	II	Eugene Jacquot, Kluane Lake
4.	Zimmerlee, Meda	12	V	J. Zimmerlee, Selkirk
5.	Zimmerlee, Joseph	9	I	"

SOURCE: F. J. Patterson: Report of Yukon Schools, Part C. YA, YRG1, Series 1, File 84362, Vol. 59.

NOTE: The above gives a complete list of the pupils attending the Dawson School and residing at "The Hostel" [St. Paul's Hostel], Dawson. Those attending school in Whitehorse were boarded privately.

APPENDIX III

Superintendents of Education  
Yukon Territory  
1902-61

John T. Ross	1902-06
T. G. Bragg	1906-19
W. F. Dyde	1919-22
H. Mahon	1922-24
S. R. Tompkins	1924-28
P. L. F. Riches	1928-29
H. G. Menzies	1929-34
F. J. Patterson	1934-38
R. J. Hulland	1938-55
H. Thompson	1955-

APPENDIX IV

Total Expenditures on Education (1910-40)  
(dollars not adjusted for inflation)

1910-11	\$45,690
1911-12	42,431
1912-13	44,869
1913-14	47,786
1914-15	44,603
1915-16	50,139
1916-17	54,920
1917-18	50,376
1918-19	43,361
1919-20	41,695
1920-21	40,200
1921-22	36,646
1922-23	37,555
1923-24	40,756
1924-25	43,560
1925-26	46,341
1926-27	45,795
1927-28	46,638
1928-29	43,995
1929-30	45,078
1930-31	46,758
1931-32	45,857
1932-33	44,041
1933-34	36,304
1934-35	36,565
1935-36	36,628
1936-37	37,311
1937-38	37,956
1938-39	36,637
1939-40	39,814
1940-41	39,465

SOURCE: Information in Yukon Territory, Public Accounts, (1905-50).

APPENDIX V

Federal Per Capita Grants for Anglican  
Residential Schools  
(1946-56)

School	1946	1/4/48	1/10/50	Proposed 1/10/51	1/4/55	1/4/56
Aklavik	215	400	420	483	518	518
Carcross	265	495	519	597	568	576
Alert Bay	195	290	304	350	350	370
Wabasca	195	415	435	501	476	476
Blackfoot	180	275	288	332	315	350
Blood	180	280	294	338	321	340
Peigan	180	300	315	362	344	344
Prince Albert	215	286	300	345	328	375
Gordon's	185	275	288	332	315	350
Sioux Lookout	180	267	280	332	306	350
Shingwauk	175	265	278	314	304	350
Moose Fort	215	432	453	521	522	522
Fort George	215	516	541	623	592	592

SOURCE: YA, ACDYR, Series 1-1.c, Box 14, file 10. H. G. C., "Comments re Recommendations by General Synod," 3 January 1956.

NOTE: The reduction in the grant to the Carcross school in 1955 apparently represents an adjustment made when the federal government took over the paying of the classroom personnel. Nevertheless, it was always one of the more highly subsidized schools.

APPENDIX VI

Enrolment Statistics  
Yukon Schools  
1934-60

School Year	No. of Schools	No. of Classrooms	No. of Teachers	No. of Pupils	Daily Attendance
1934-35	5	9	10	177	140
1935-36	5	9	10	191	162
1936-37	5	9	10	162	135
1937-38	5	9	9	188	159
1938-39	6	10	10	215	200
1939-40	6	10	10	246	225
1940-41	6	10	10	288	248
1941-42	5	9	9	270	227
1942-43	5	10	10	268	197
1943-44	5	10	10	314	252
1944-45	6	14	14	441	319
1945-46	7	14	14	336	Not Available
1946-47	8	18	18	497	371
1947-48	13	20	20	500	448
1948-49	10	23	23	656	504
1949-50	11	29	31	759	601
1950-51	11	31	33	868	700
1951-52	12	34	36	1005	769
1952-53	13	43	45	1173	922
1953-54	15	48	52	1412	1113
1954-55	16	55	59	1554	1302
1955-56	16	60	65	1675	1413
1956-57	16	63	70	1790	1490
1957-58	16	69	76	1953	1688
1958-59	16	72	81	2029	1771
1959-60	18	85	96	2294	2017

SOURCE: H. Thompson, "Interim Report on Operation of Yukon Territorial Schools, September 1, 1960 to March 31, 1961." (YA, YRG 1-66, file 5.)

#### APPENDIX VII

#### Yukon Teachers' Association Presidents 1955-61

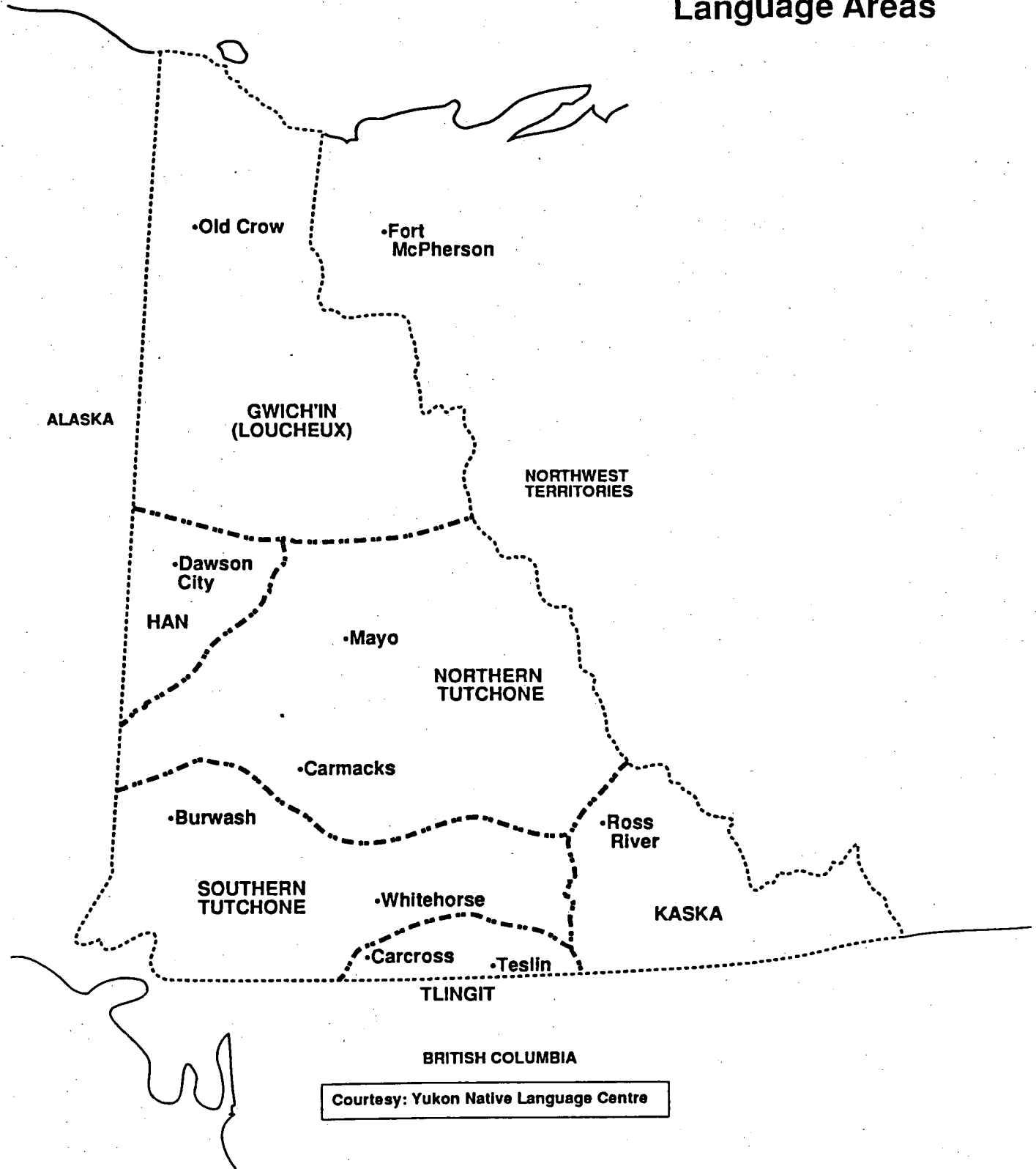
Alice Homewood	1955-56
John Maunsell	1956-57
Claude Campbell	1957-58
Henryk Bugara	1958-59
Doris McMurphy (Stenbraten)	1959-60
N. J. Moberg	1960-61

#### APPENDIX VIII

#### Recipients of the Governor-General's Medal for Scholastic Proficiency

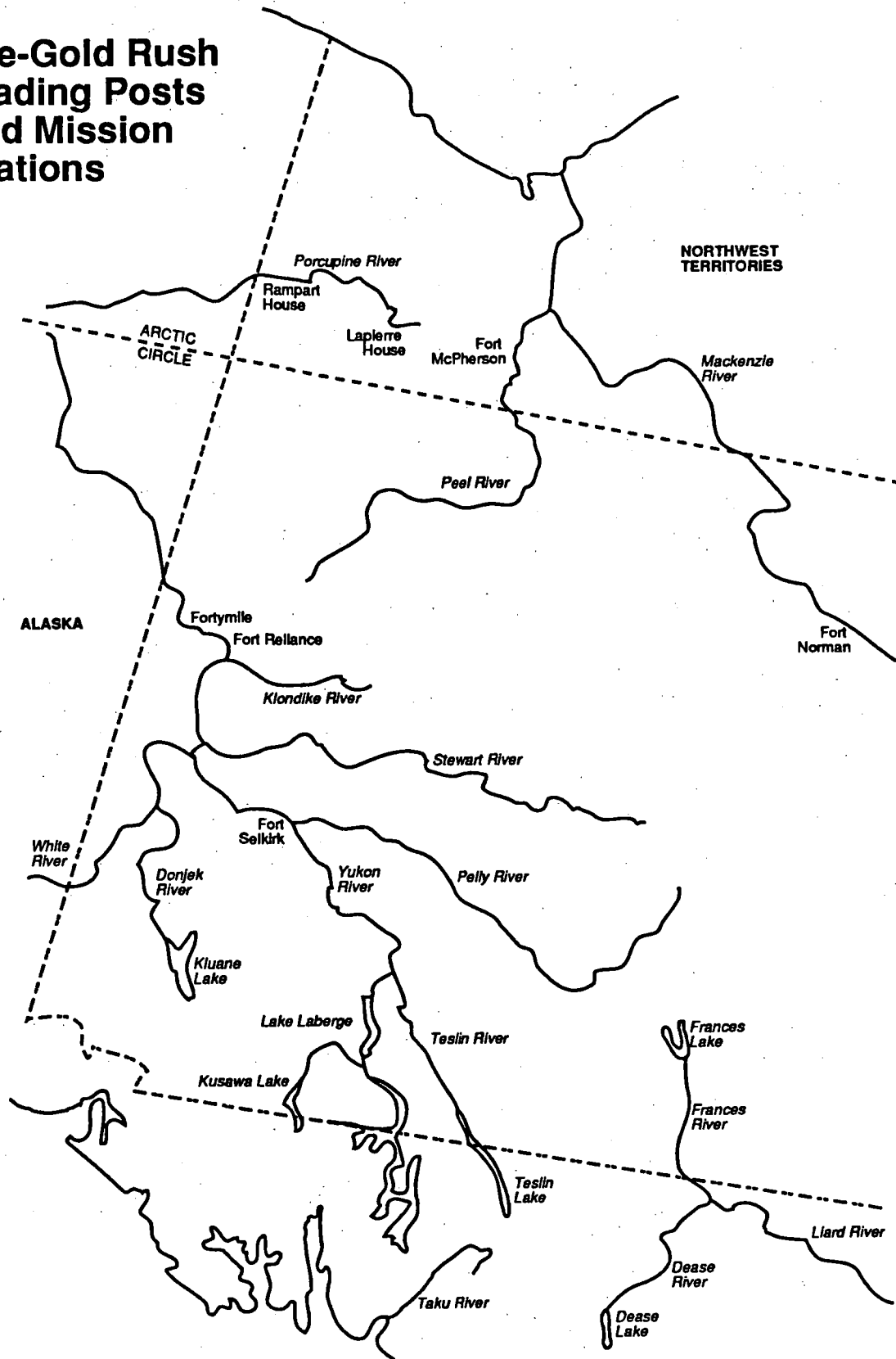
1955	Betty Jean McCormack	Dawson High School	Grade 9
1956	Russel Cort Smith	Christ the King School	Grade 9
1957	Kenneth Eyre	Whitehorse High School	Grade 9
1958	Linda Rotondo	Christ the King School	Grade 9
1959	Patricia Robertson	Whitehorse High School	Grade 10
1960	Shirley Hall	Whitehorse High School	Grade 10

# Language Areas

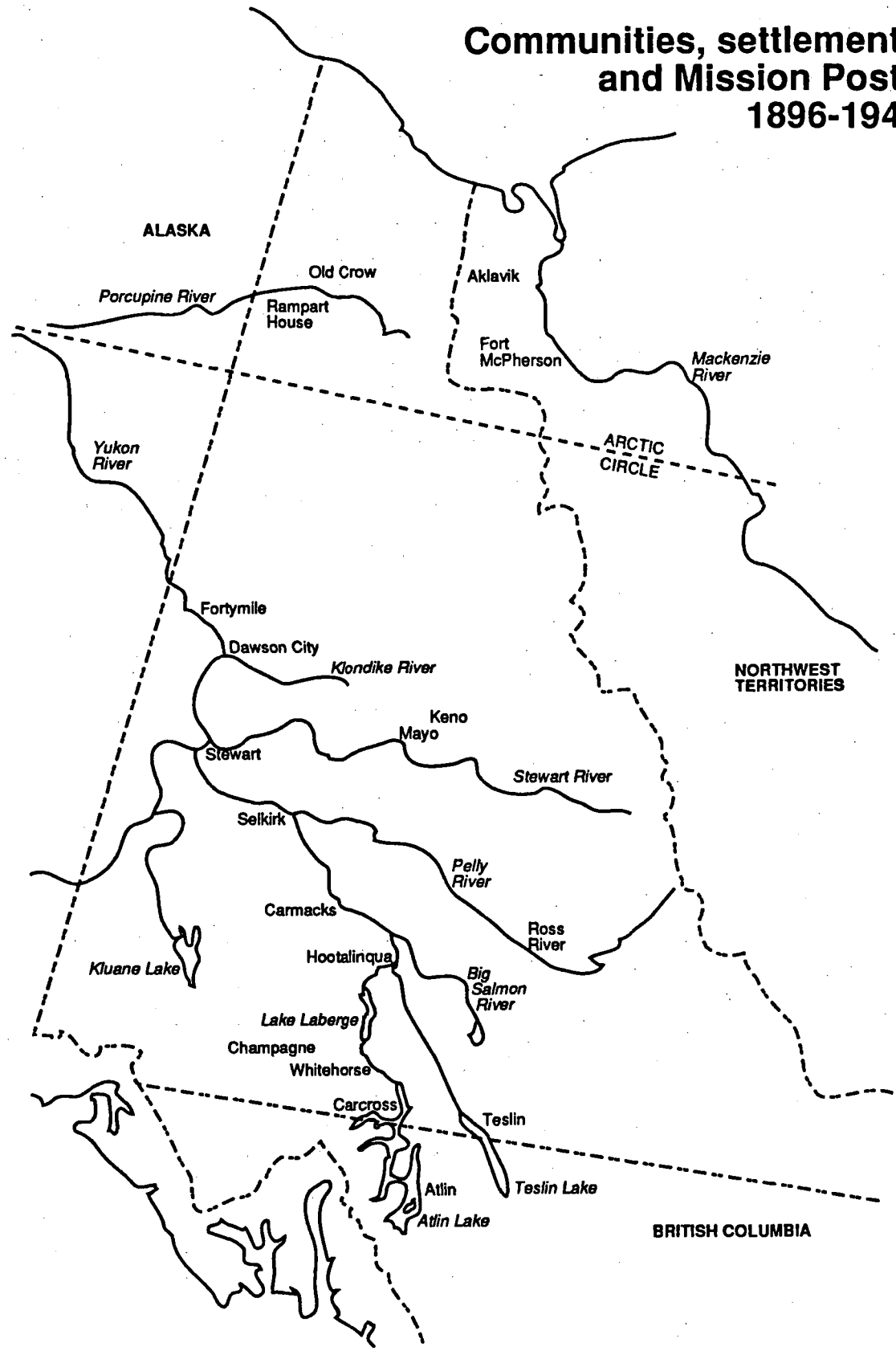




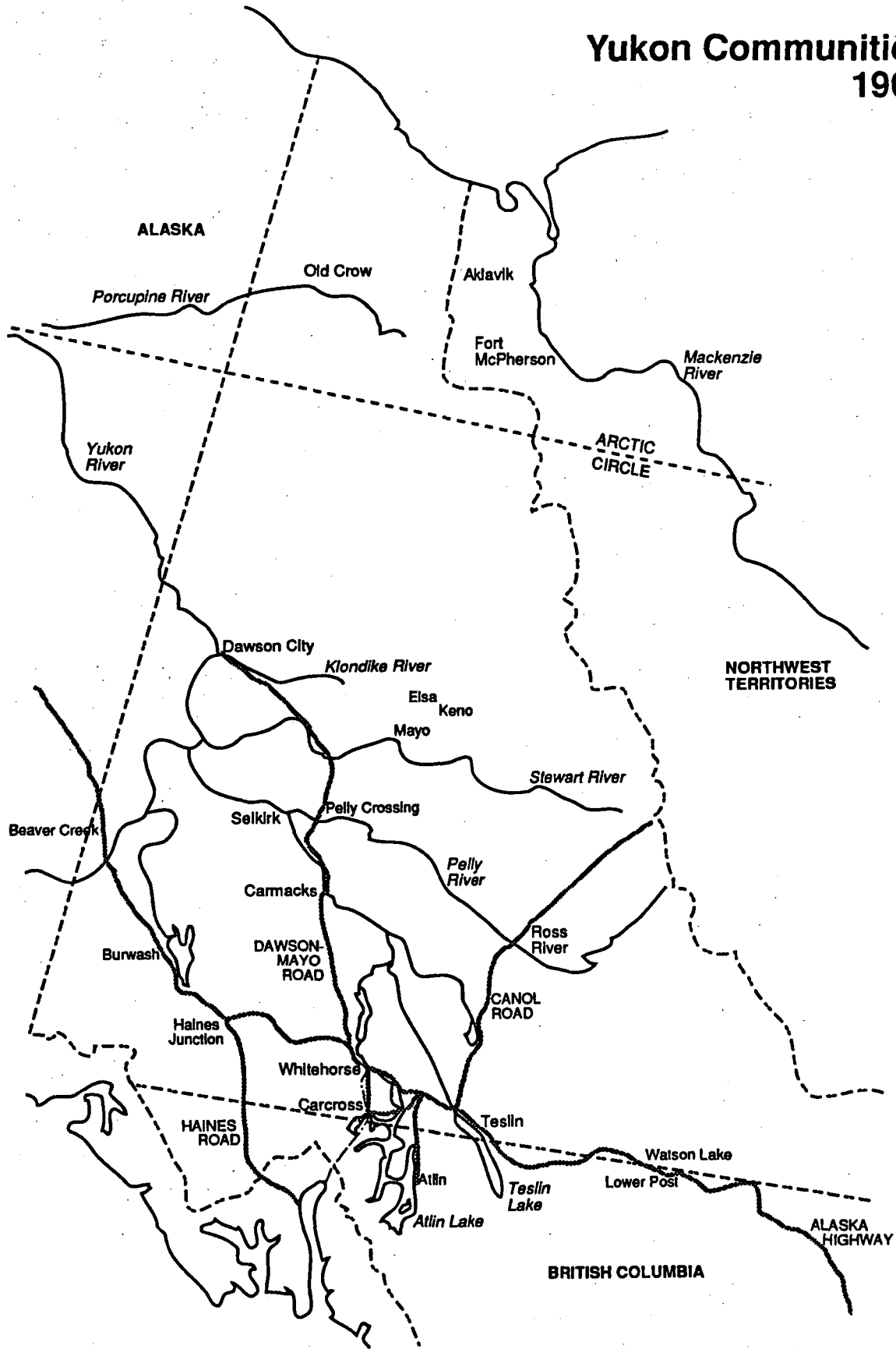
# Pre-Gold Rush Trading Posts and Mission Stations



# Communities, settlements and Mission Posts 1896-1940



# Yukon Communities 1961



## PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

**Abbreviations:**   YA - Yukon Archives (Whitehorse)  
                  GSA - Anglican Church of Canada,  
                          General Synod Archives (Toronto)  
                  PAC - Public Archives of Canada (Ottawa)

<u>No.</u>	
1.	GSA, P7517-155
2.	GSA, P7517-204
3, 4.	Old Log Church Museum, Whitehorse, Y.T.
5.	GSA, P7561-4
6, 7, 8.	YA, Anglican Church Collection
9.	Old Log Church Museum, Whitehorse, Y.T.
10.	GSA, GS 75-103-S5-684 MSCC Photos
11.	GSA, P7561-34
12, 13.	YA, Anglican Church Collection
14.	YA, McCullum Collection, #86/61 T-5
15.	GSA, P8493-1 Episcopal Collection
16.	GSA, P7517-78
17.	YA, Anglican Church Collection
18.	YA, Vancouver Public Library Collection #2075
19.	YA, National Museum of Canada Collection #489
20.	YA, University of Washington Collection #1231
21, 22.	PAC, RG 85, Vol. 662, file 3787-4
23.	University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Arctic & Polar Regions Department Ralph McKay Collection #70-58-245
24.	YA, Betts Collection #9444
25.	YA, National Museum of Canada photo #374
26.	Estelle Cameron Wilson photo
27, 28.	PAC, RG 85, Vol. 662, file 3787-4
29.	GSA, 7517-218
30.	YA, McCullum Collection T-16
31.	YA, McCullum Collection #86/61 V-1
32, 33, 34.	YA, Anglican Church Collection
35.	YA, McCullum Collection #86/61 T-58
36.	YA, McCullum Collection #86/61 A3-112
37.	YA, McCullum Collection #86/61 A3-110
38.	GSA, P8802-8
39.	GSA, P8802-9
40.	YA, Anglican Church Collection, McCreery Photo
41.	YA, Anglican Church Collection H-134, #17
42.	YA, Anglican Church Collection
43.	PAC, Vol. 662, file 3787-4
44.	YA, Anglican Church Collection #88/35
45.	GSA, P8802-8
46.	GSA, P7517-275
47.	YA, Sam Wood Collection
48.	University of Alaska, Fairbanks Alaska-Canada Album #65-31-55
49.	PAC, RG 85, Vol. 662, file 3787-4
50.	YA, Anglican Church Collection
51.	R. Hougen, Whitehorse, Collection
52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57.	PAC, RG 85, Vol. 325, file 630/200-1, part 1
58.	YA, Todd Collection #9036
59, 60, 61.	Rev. E. Morisset, OMI, Whitehorse, Y.T.
62, 63.	Carol (Couch) Cawley, Whitehorse, Y.T.
64, 65.	Ellen (Cooper) Harris, Whitehorse, Y.T.
66.	YA, McCullum Collection, #86/61 T-57
67.	YA, McCullum Collection A-15
68.	Unidentified newspaper photo in author's possession
69.	Ed. Almstrom photo
70.	YA, McCullum Collection, #86/61, G-93 L-28
71, 72, 73.	Rev. E. Morisset, OMI, Whitehorse, Y.T.
74.	YA, Anglican Church Collection
75.	YA, McCullum Collection #86/61, L-101
76.	YA, Anglican Church Collection
77.	YA, McCullum Collection #86/61 T-148
78.	YA, McCullum Collection #86/61 T-102
79, 80.	YA, Anglican Church Collection

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2. Yukon Archives, Whitehorse, particularly YRG 1 (Territorial Government Records) and the Yukon Records Office Files; also the records of the Anglican Church, Diocese of Yukon, and other pertinent collections such as the Stringer and Canham Papers.

3. The General Synod Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada, Toronto, and the archives of the Anglican Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia, in Vancouver.

4. Records of the Church Missionary Society of London, England, available on microfilm in the Public Archives of Canada and also at Yukon Archives. These contain the correspondence of Bishop Bompas and other pioneer Anglican missionaries, as well as the Journals of Archdeacon Robert McDonald, the latter now available separately in printed form at Yukon Archives.

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