



DEPARTMENT
OF
MINES AND RESOURCES
INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH

163/1-1
PLEASE QUOTE
FILE E-2

Stuart Lake Agency,
Vanderhoof, B.C.,
September 12th, 1946.

AIR MAIL

Department of Mines & Resources, Indian Affairs Branch,
OTTAWA, Ontario.

I wish to advise that the Rev. A.R. Simpson, Principal of the Lejac Indian Residential School, reported 100 absentee pupils at the opening of the term, September 3rd last. Despite the efforts of the Agency Staff and the assistance of Cpl. Fielder of the local Detachment of the R.C.M.P., there are still approximately 70 truants.

The Indians list a number of grievances, such as the time spent by pupils in manual labour, and religious instruction, and also, their desire for Day Schools, as reasons for keeping the children at Home. The antagonism and opposition displayed by the Indians towards the Lejac Residential School is more marked in recent months than at any time since I took over the Agency 8 years ago.

I have patiently discussed the situation with the Chiefs and Headmen of the Bands concerned and advised them that in all probability in the not too distant future, changes will take place, particularly in relation to education and establishment of Day Schools where practicable, and that they are defeating their own ends by their present attitude.

The Stony Creek Band, where there are 40 absentees are particularly adamant, and positively refuse to return the children to school. They recently sent a representative to interview and obtain legal advice from Mr. P.E. Wilson, Barrister at Prince George, B.C. I am enclosing copies of correspondence between Mr. Wilson and myself in this regard. It is gratifying to note that Mr. Wilson gave sound advice and advised his clients to send the children to school.

In view of the determined attitude of the parents I feel that in order to ensure attendance at Lejac Residential School, action should be taken under the Truancy Section of the Indian Act. I have already served written notices on about 15 parents in accordance with Sec. 10, sub-sec. 3 of the Act, but before proceeding to issue summonses, I would like to have the Department's advice and approval.

I would strongly recommend that when the new School Inspector is appointed for B.C., that he meet the Chiefs and Headmen of this Agency to discuss and investigate their complaints at the first opportunity.

A reply by air-mail will be appreciated.

R. Howe,
Indian Agent.



RH/jf

cc: Major D.M. MacKay,
Indian Commissioner for B.C.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6443, file 881-1, part 2)

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