

Indian Residential School

REV. F. E. PITTS, B. A., PRINCIPAL

Alberni, B. C. January 11, 1937.

Dept. of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa, Canada.

Dear Sirs:

I hereby request authority to expend money up to \$35.00 for changing the Electric Light and Power Transformer pole and two others on the school grounds. These are rotted and unsafe and must be changed.

Yours obediently,

F. E. Pitts

Principal

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

Indian Residential School

REV. F. E. PITTS, B. A., PRINCIPAL

Alberni, B. C. January 11, 1937.

Dept. of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa, Canada.

Dear Sirs:

I hereby request authority to expend money up to \$35.00 for changing the Electric Light and Power Transformer pole and two others on the school grounds. These are rotted and unsafe and must be changed.

Yours obediently,

F. E. Pitts

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

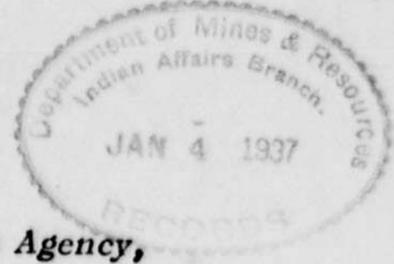
PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

159-1-5



Letter No. 589.C.36.

Handwritten signature

Office of the West Coast Indian Agency,

December 31 1936.

Sir,

I enclose herewith Vouchers Nos. 662.....,

amounting to \$ 40.00 in favour

of Principal, Indian Residential School, Alberni, B.C.

for Allowance towards salary, Night Watchman, for month of December 1936.

This expenditure was authorized by Departmental

Letter No. 159-2-5. dated October 7, 1936.

Your obedient servant,

Handwritten signature
Indian Agent.

The Secretary,
Department of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa.

Form No. 518

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY



Voucher No.....

DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

To Principal, Indian Residential
School,
Alberni, B.C.

662.

DATE	SERVICE	AMOUNT	
	To Allowance towards salary, Night Watchman, at Alberni Indian Residential School, for the month of December 1936.	40	00
<p>TRIPPLICATE FOR FILE <i>D. 1: 27</i> Voucher in duplicate detached for Accountant to pay.</p>			
Dept. Letter No: 159-2-5. October 7, 1936.			
TOTAL,		40	00

I HEREBY CERTIFY that this Voucher is correct, that the material has been supplied, the work performed and that the charges are fair and just; also that the expenditure has been incurred legitimately and that each item of the same is a fair and just charge against the Government of Canada.

W B Ashbridge
Agent

FORM No. 506

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

EXTRACT
ORIGINAL ON
25-159

159-1-5

DEPT. OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
DEC 11 1936
RECORDS

[Handwritten signature]

West Coast Agency,
Port Alberni, B.C.,
November 30, 1936.

R

Sir:

I have the honour to submit herewith the regular monthly letter covering conditions within this agency for month ending November 30, 1936.

x x x

H
D.S.D.

SCHOOL FIRE APPLIANCES AND ESCAPES:

In obedience to the Department's instructions, watchmen have been engaged at Alberni, Ahousaht and Christie Schools, and commenced their duties November 1st. Instructions were given them in all cases as to their duties and responsibilities. Fire escapes are all being put in first class order. New escape has been placed at Christie School, and another one being built. Escapes at Ahousaht have been improved and a new one is to be built immediately. All pyrenes are in good order and axes and fire pails are being put where needed. Fire drills are being conducted, and much improvement is observed in equipment and preventative measures.

x x x

P. B. Ashbridge.
Indian Agent.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES
CANADA

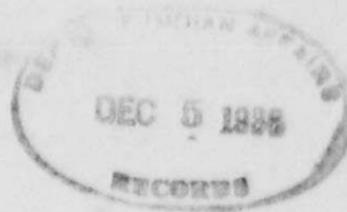
POOR-COPY

159-1-5



CANADA

R



Letter No. 530.C.36.

Office of the.....West Coast.....Indian Agency,

November 30 1936.

Handwritten signature

K.D.
H

I enclose herewith Vouchers Nos. 596.

amounting to \$ 40.00 in favour

of Principal, Alberni Residential School, Alberni, B.C.

for Allowance towards salary, Night Watchman, November 1936.

This expenditure was authorized by Departmental

Letter No. 159-2-5 dated October 7, 1936.

Your obedient servant,

Handwritten signature: P. B. Shbridge

Indian Agent.

The Secretary,
Department of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa.

Form No. 518

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

159-1-5.

EX'D.

Ottawa, November 5, 1936.

Dear Sir:

I have your letter of the 21st instant, reporting on the condition of the fire escapes and fire fighting appliances at the Alberni Indian Residential School.

The Department is pleased to note that this school is well equipped to meet emergencies, that all fire fighting appliances are in good condition and that there is ample water pressure. It is noted, also, that the Principal and yourself are of opinion that there is no present need of any further expenditure in connection with the fire equipment and fire escapes at this school.

Yours truly,

A. F. MacKenzie
A. F. MacKenzie,
Secretary.

P. B. Ashbridge
P. B. Ashbridge, Esq.,
Indian Agent,
Port Alberni,
B. C.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

159-1-5



DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
CANADA

OFFICE OF
INDIAN AGENT

Condition of Fire Escapes and Fire Fighting Appliances
at
Alberni Residential School
October 20, 1936.

Forwarded under cover of letter
Oct. 21/36. See file 159-1-5
JH

Fire Escapes. There are two fire escapes in the front of building, of iron construction, to which the children have access from all dormitories through the wash rooms. Wash rooms have concrete floors, and windows leading to escapes are kept on latch easily opened. Escapes are kept in good order. School was emptied under two minutes at inspection.

Pyrenes and Axes. There are 3 five gallon, and 6 small pyrenes placed at various parts of the building, also fire axes on each floor.

Fire Alarm. Large gong, electrically operated from box on each floor. In good working order, and sufficiently loud to arouse the whole school.

Stand Pipes and Hose. Stand pipe extends through the centre of the building, and hose connections with hose attached on each floor. There is also a hydrant outside of the building, with hose attached.

Water Pressure. The water pressure is about 80 lbs., and sufficient to throw a stream over the roof. Water is supplied from the City reservoir, by gravity. Due to small storage capacity, the pressure could not be relied upon for any great length of time.

Fire Drill. The children are well disciplined, and understand their stations in case of fire. The staff also have their appointed stations, and drills are well conducted.

General. This school is well equipped to meet emergencies, and fire escapes are placed in that part of the building least likely to suffer from fire. Pyrenes, hose, alarms, and axes are placed at advantageous points, and the staff and children acquainted with their use. With the addition of the watchman, it is considered that present facilities are sufficient and the school well protected. No further expenditure is recommended in fire appliances for this school. This opinion is also shared by the Reverend Principal.

Respectfully submitted,

M B Chisholm
Indian Agent.

PBA/AM.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

EX'D.

Ottawa, October 14, 1936.

Dear Sir:

I have your 1130/36/D of the 24th ultimo, regarding the accounts submitted, covering cost of labour and material for painting roof of main building at the Alberni Indian Residential School. In this connection I have to say that a cheque, to the amount of \$500.00, is being sent Reverend F. E. Pitts, the Principal, in payment for material and labour.

You should inform the Principal that, in future, he is not to undertake any work for which the Department will be called upon to pay, until he has first received definite authority regarding labour and purchase of material. If work is undertaken without authority, the Department cannot be responsible for payment of costs.

Yours truly,

A. F. MacKenzie
A. F. MacKenzie,
Secretary.

P. B. Ashbridge
P. B. Ashbridge, Esq.,
Indian Agent,
Port Alberni,
B. C.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

Schools
[Signature]
OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL
OTTAWA



DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
CANADA

159-1-5.
159-1-5



October 6, 1936.

MEMORANDUM:

The Honourable the Superintendent General,-

I have to refer to my memorandum dated July 24th, last, requesting to be advised the name of the firm from whom to purchase paint, and also the foreman to be employed in the painting of the roof of the main building and other miscellaneous repairs and painting, at the Indian Residential School, Port Alberni, B. C. (Electoral District of Comox-Alberni).

You instructed that the paint be purchased from John Thomson, Alberni, B. C., and that Alexander J. Thomas, Port Alberni, be employed as painter. The local Indian Agent was advised accordingly.

The accounts covering the cost of this work have been received. A certain portion of the paint was purchased from John Thomson, and Alexander J. Thomas was employed in carrying out part of the labour. Besides the above, considerable of the labour was performed by Walter Adams and J. W. Georgeson - both of Alberni; and, while the greater part of the paint was obtained from John Thomson, purchase was also made from Carter's General Store and A. McDonald & Sons - both of Port Alberni, B. C.

The local Indian Agent was requested to state why the instructions given him, regarding the labour and the purchase of the paint, were not carried out. He now advises as follows:-

"On receipt of official letter of July 29, 1936, I immediately informed Rev. E. F. Pitts as to

- the Department's

Schools

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

the Department's instructions re labour and material, only to discover that he had already commenced the work and purchased some paint, etc., from A. McDonald and Sons and Carter's General Store. This, he did in anticipation of authority being granted and upon his own responsibility and not with my knowledge or instruction.

"Immediate steps were taken to rectify this but, unfortunately, due to my being up the Coast at the time the work had been started, the purchases mentioned had been made, and Walter Adams and J. W. Georgeson had already done considerable work. I understand that Mr. Pitts commenced the work as it was necessary to get the outside painting done during the dry weather."

The Principal of the School, Reverend F. E. Pitts, arranged for the purchase of the paint and for the labour without awaiting the necessary instructions.

I should be pleased to be advised if it will be in order to pay the accounts of those merchants who supplied paint and the labourers who were not included in the instructions to the Agent.

OK but advise Agent to make sure that precautions are taken to see that instructions are carried out should the Dept. be doing any further repairs at this school

Schools.

Harold W. Gill

Deputy Superintendent General.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

- C O P Y -

Orig. on 159-1-5.

Ottawa, October 7, 1936.

Dear Sir:

Owing to certain fire hazard at the Ahousaht, Alberni and Christie Indian Residential Schools, it has been decided to make an allowance, at the rate of \$40.00 per month, towards the salary of a night watchman at each school for the period from November first, next, to April 30, 1937. This is the same rate and for the same period as we provide grants for this purpose at a number of other schools, where there is fire hazard.

You should immediately request each Principal to obtain the services of a reliable man to carry out the duties as night watchman. He should make hourly visits during the night throughout the building and especially pay attention to the furnace room or where there is any danger of fire. Should it be necessary to pay a watchman more salary than the grant we allow, the school authorities will be responsible for payment of same, from per capita allowances or other receipts of the school.

The Department will rely on yourself and the Principals to see that this service begins as from November first, next. Payment of the allowance made by this Department towards salary of the watchman will be made at the end of each month, upon receipt of a voucher, in triplicate, from you. The voucher should be drawn, in the case of each school, as per the sample enclosed. Payment of the allowance will be made the Principals and not to the man employed, at each school.

I would request that you communicate with the Department, stating the name and, briefly, the qualifications of the men who are engaged as night watchmen at each of the above named schools, and also the date they began duties. This matter should receive your immediate attention.

Encl.

P. B. Ashbridge, Esq.,
Indian Agent,
Port Alberni, B. C.

Yours truly,
A. F. MacKenzie
A. F. MacKenzie,
Secretary.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR COPY

October 6, 1936.

MEMORANDUM:The Honourable the Superintendent General,-

I have to refer to my memorandum dated July 24th, last, requesting to be advised the name of the firm from whom to purchase paint, and also the foreman to be employed in the painting of the roof of the main building and other miscellaneous repairs and painting, at the Indian Residential School, Port Alberni, B. C. (Electoral District of Comox-Alberni).

You instructed that the paint be purchased from John Thomson, Alberni, B. C., and that Alexander J. Thomas, Port Alberni, be employed as painter. The local Indian Agent was advised accordingly.

The accounts covering the cost of this work have been received. A certain portion of the paint was purchased from John Thomson, and Alexander J. Thomas was employed in carrying out part of the labour. Besides the above, considerable of the labour was performed by Walter Adams and J. W. Georgeason - both of Alberni; and, while the greater part of the paint was obtained from John Thomson, purchase was also made from Carter's General Store and A. McDonald & Sons - both of Port Alberni, B. C.

The local Indian Agent was requested to state why the instructions given him, regarding the labour and the purchase of the paint, were not carried out. He now advises as follows:-

"On receipt of official letter of July 29, 1936, I immediately informed Rev. E. F. Pitts as to

- the Department's

J.P.
Schools

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

the Department's instructions re labour and material, only to discover that he had already commenced the work and purchased some paint, etc., from A. McDonald and Sons and Carter's General Store. This, he did in anticipation of authority being granted and upon his own responsibility and not with my knowledge or instruction.

"Immediate steps were taken to rectify this but, unfortunately, due to my being up the Coast at the time the work had been started, the purchases mentioned had been made, and Walter Adams and J. W. Georgesen had already done considerable work. I understand that Mr. Pitts commenced the work as it was necessary to get the outside painting done during the dry weather."

The Principal of the School, Reverend F. E. Pitts, arranged for the purchase of the paint and for the labour without awaiting the necessary instructions.

I should be pleased to be advised if it will be in order to pay the accounts of those merchants who supplied paint and the labourers who were not included in the instructions to the Agent.

Howley

Deputy Superintendent General.

Schools.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

Your file No. 159-1-5

September 15, 1936.



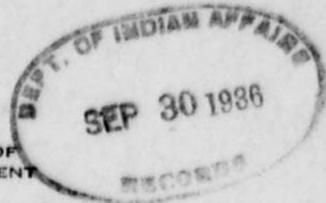
DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
CANADA

1130/36/D.

[Handwritten signature]

OFFICE OF
INDIAN AGENT

West Coast Agency,
Port Alberni, B. C.,
September 24, 1936.



Sir:-

I have the honour to refer to your letter of September 15, 1936, respecting account covering cost of labor and material for painting roof of main building at the Alberni Indian Residential School.

On receipt of official letter of July 29, 1936 I immediately informed Rev. E. F. Pitts as to the Department's instructions re labor and material only to discover that he had already commenced the work and purchased some paint etc from A. McDonald and Sons and Carters General Store. This he did in anticipation of authority being granted and upon his own responsibility and not with my knowledge or instruction.

Immediate steps were taken to rectify this but unfortunately due to my being up the Coast at the time the work had been started, the purchases mentioned had been made, and Walter Adams and J. W. Georgeson had already done considerable work. I understand that Mr. Pitts commenced the work as it was necessary to get the outside painting done during the dry weather.

Your obedient servant,

[Handwritten signature: P. B. Ashbridge]

P. B. Ashbridge,
Indian Agent.

PBA/A.

The Secretary,
Department of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa, Canada.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

159-1-5.

Pitts

Ottawa, September 17, 1936.

Dear Sir:

I have to acknowledge receipt of the voucher which you submitted, in favour of Rev. F. E. Pitts, covering the cost of material and labour in painting the roof of the main building at the Alberni Indian Residential School.

In this connection it is noted that, as you were instructed in official letter of July 29th, a certain portion of the paint was purchased from John Thomson and also that Alex. Thomas was employed in carrying out the labour. Besides the above, it is noted that considerable of the labour was performed by Walter Adams and J. W. Georgeson, and that some of the material was obtained from A. McDonald & Sons and from Carter's General Store.

I would request that you will state why Adams and Georgeson were engaged to assist in the work and also why purchase of part of the material was made from Alex. McDonald & Sons and Carter's General Store. Did you obtain these names from Mr. Neill, M.P.? Payment of the account is being withheld until full explanation is received from you, as requested.

Yours truly,

A. G. Mackenzie
A. G. Mackenzie,
Secretary.

JP
ADM

P. B. Ashbridge, Esq.,
Indian Agent,
Port Alberni,
B. C.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY



159-1-5



Letter No. 355.C.36.

Office of the West Coast Indian Agency,

September 11 1936

Sir,

[Handwritten signature]

I enclose herewith Vouchers Nos. 399,

amounting to \$ 500.00 in favour

of Rev. E. P. Pitts, Alberni Indian Residential School,
Alberni, B. C.
for painting roof main building, and all collapseous repairs
and painting.

This expenditure was authorized by Departmental

Letter No. 159-1-5 dated June 5, 1936.

Your obedient servant,

[Handwritten signature]

Indian Agent

The Secretary,
Department of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa.

Form No. 518

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY



Voucher No.....

DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

To: Rev. E. F. Pitts,
Alberni Indian Residential School,
Alberni, B.C.

399

DATE	SERVICE	AMOUNT
	Alberni School Account.	
	painting roof main building and miscellaneous repairs and painting. August, 1936.	500 00
	A. L. No. 159-1-5 June 5, 1936.	
TOTAL,		500 00

TRIPPLICATE FOR FILE
13-10-36
Voucher in duplicate detached
for Accountant to pay.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that this Voucher is correct, that the material has been supplied, the work performed and that the charges are fair and just; also that the expenditure has been incurred legitimately and that each item of the same is a fair and just charge against the Government of Canada.

[Signature]
Agent

FORM No. 506

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

Indian Residential School

REV. F. E. PITTS, B. A., PRINCIPAL

Alberni, B. C. Sept. 5, 1936.

Dept. of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa, Canada.

Dr. to Alberni Indian School as per authority granted to expend
money passed in the estimates as per vouchers.

Painting roofs of Residential and school buildings, repairs
and decorations as per vouchers:

Voucher #1	John Thompson, shingle paint.....	\$187.20	✓
" #2	Alex J. Thomas.....	40.00	✓
" #3	George Gus, Indian.....	18.00	✓
" #4	Robert George, Indian.....	12.00	✓
" #5	Carter's General Store, Oil, tar & paint...	86.14	✓
" #6	Walter Adams.....	105.00	✓
" #7	J. W. Georgeson.....	63.00	✓
" #8	Alberni Engineering Works.....	13.72	✓
" #9	M. A. Carson.....	13.00	✓
" #10	Alex McDonald & Sons.....	48.60	✓
		<u>\$586.66</u>	
	Paid from school funds.....	<u>86.66</u>	
		\$500.00	✓

F. E. Pitts

*OK
Bill*

RECEIVED
SEP 9 1936
INDIAN AGENT'S OFFICE
PORT ALBERNI, B. C.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

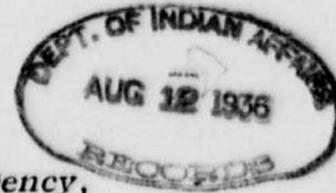
CANADA

POOR-COPY



159-1-5

Letter No. 266.C.36.



Office of the West Coast Indian Agency,

August 3

EXD 1936

Sir,

I enclose herewith Vouchers Nos. 298,

R

amounting to \$ 20.00 in favour

of Rev. E. F. Pitts, Alberni Indian Residential School,
Alberni, B. C.

for Cleaning of Septic Tank at Alberni School, July, 1936.

This expenditure was authorized by Departmental

Letter No. dated

Your obedient servant,

[Signature]
Indian Agent

The Secretary,
Department of Indian Affairs,
Ottawa.

Form No. 518

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
CANADA

1604/37/D.



R

OFFICE OF
INDIAN AGENT

15-95-1-5
West Coast Agency,
Port Alberni, B.C.,
February 23, 1937.



Sir:

I have the honour to submit my report on the fire at Alberni Residential School, which destroyed this building on February 21st, 1937.

Discovery of Fire.

The fire, which apparently started in the store room above the girl's dormitory, was first discovered by Miss Audrey Mills, teacher, who was at that time in the girl's dormitory.

She reports hearing a roar, and on investigation saw smoke coming from the upper landing.

Miss Mills immediately rang in the alarm from the fire station, and went in search of the Principal.

Immediate Action.

Mr. Pitts states that he ran upstairs, and saw smoke issuing from under the locked door of the store room. He opened the door and found the smoke too dense to enter. He locked the door again, and went down for a chemical extinguisher, but was unable to do much good.

Fighting of Fire.

The Alberni Fire Department were notified, and responded, arriving about 20 minutes after the fire started.

The fire engine of the Alberni Pacific Lumber Company also arrived to assist, but were unable to do much good, owing to trouble with their engine.

Progress of Fire.

The fire was very soon out of control, chiefly owing to lack of water pressure. The supply for this purpose is drawn from the Alberni City reservoir, and supplied to the school by gravity flow.

By 10:30 A.M. the school was completely destroyed.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY



1604/37/D.

West Coast Agency,
Port Alberni, B.C.,
February 23, 1937.

(2)

Report on fire at Alberni Residential School. (cont.)

Evacuation of Building.

The Reverend Principal does not appear to have a very clear recollection as to how the children left the building, but, from what I can learn from the teachers, they simply walked out.

The girls each brought a blanket with them, and were subsequently taken care of by Mrs. Sainsbury.

The older boys assisted in removing furniture, etc., from the building, and dispersed to various parts of the nearby reserves.

Notification of Fire.

I was notified of the fire at 12 noon, by a constable of the B.C. Provincial Police, and immediately proceeded to the scene.

I was not notified in any way by the Reverend Principal, or by any member of his staff, although I have phones in both office and residence.

Action of Agent.

On arrival at scene of fire, I endeavored to locate the children, and to care for any without shelter.

All the children were housed by 8 p.m. The following morning, the greater majority of those not resident in Alberni were sent home in care of their parents, or relatives.

Owing to fire occurring on Sunday, it was not possible to communicate with the Department by telegraph, but I phoned to Victoria and informed Mr. C. C. Perry, Assistant Commissioner, of the matter.

Fire Loss.

The main school building is completely destroyed, only the stone foundation being left.

The large chimney, which was still standing, was leaning at a dangerous angle, and this I had dropped, as it was a menace.

Practically all of the school equipment was destroyed; as was most of the clothing of both staff and children.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COP



DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
CANADA

OFFICE OF
INDIAN AGENT

1604/37/D.

West Coast Agency,
Port Alberni, B.C.,
February 23, 1937.

(3)

Report on fire at Alberni Residential School. (cont.)

Salvage.

Some furniture was saved from the lower floor, chiefly property of Mr. Pitts, piano, sewing machines, desks, and bookcases, etc.

Remaining Buildings.

Buildings not damaged by fire were: The large barn containing 33 head of cattle
Agricultural Instructor's cottage,
Primary Classroom
Small Cottage
Old Barn
Garage
Wood Shed
Implement Shed.

Investigation.

Capt. G. H. Barry, Inspector of Schools arrived on Monday evening, February 22nd, and rendered valuable assistance in investigating matters.

Accompanied by myself, he visited the site of the school, and questioned members of the staff, as to the cause of the fire.

The answers given were very unsatisfactory and contradictory, except those given by teachers, Miss Howe and Miss Mills, dealing with the discovery and alarm.

As to the cause, I have no reason to believe it was other than accidental, possibly from overheated chimney. Evasive answers were given by the kitchen staff as to the probable cause, but it was found that a pan of grease took fire in the oven about 7:45 A.M., the time of the fire.

Care of Children.

All school children, except those of the Cowichan Agency, have been sent to their homes, and these will be leaving on February 23rd.

Arrangements are being made to send some neglected and orphan children to Ahousaht School. These will be taken on the Department Launch. To date, no expense has been incurred in connection with the evacuation of the school children.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COP



DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
CANADA

OFFICE OF
INDIAN AGENT

1604/37/D.

West Coast Agency,
Port Alberni, B.C.,
February 23, 1937.

(4)

Report on fire at Alberni Residential School. (Cont.)

Care of Remaining Buildings and Stock.

The Reverend Principal and staff are remaining at the school, until final arrangements can be made, and will care for the stock, which consists of 33 head of cattle, together with the buildings before mentioned, and, of course, the farm.

General.

In the foregoing report, I have endeavored to cover the subject as thoroughly as circumstances permit at this time.

Mr. Inspector Barry is forwarding his own report, with his views as to the cause of the fire, and with which I thoroughly agree.

Respectfully Submitted,

Your obedient servant,

P. B. Ashbridge

P. B. Ashbridge,
Indian Agent.

PBA/AM.

The Secretary,
Indian Affairs Branch,
Department of Mines and Resources,
Ottawa.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COP

ACTIONS TAKEN BY INDIAN AGENT:

Mr. Indian Agent Ashbridge will render his own report; but I should like to say that when I arrived in Port Alberni he had the situation well in hand.

I shall remain for a few days to render Mr Ashbridge any help in my power, and to carry out any investigation which the Indian Commissioner may wish, but in the absence of definite instructions to the contrary I propose to return to Victoria at the end of the week or not later than February 28th.

In addition to informing the Assistant Indian Commissioner in Victoria by telephone of the fire by 2 P.M. on the 21st Mr Ashbridge wired to the Indian Affairs Branch in Ottawa this morning as soon as the telegraph office was open. Mr Ashbridge also wired to the Principal of the Ahousaht Indian Residential School to-day and learned that the Principal, Mr A.E.Caldwell could accommodate up to twenty five children if he were give some extra beds and bedding.

MOVEMENTS OF CHILDREN SINCE FIRE:

At the time of my last inspection on December 10th 1936 there were 70 boys and 53 girls in the Alberni Indian Residential School.

Since the fire yesterday morning some 45 children from the local Indian Reserves have gone home to their parents. A number of children from more distant places are staying with relatives or friends on the local Reserves. Some 50 or more children have gone home to outside points with their parents in their own boats.

There remain to-night some twenty to thirty children whose parents have not come for them and who in fact for the most part live in different parts of the Cowichan Agency. Mr Indian Agent Ashbridge is arrangements with Mr Indian Agent Graham to move the remaining children to Nanaimo with a suitable escort. From Nanaimo it is hoped that Mr Graham will be able to arrange the movements of children to their own homes or to those of friends in one or two special cases.

Mr Indian Agent Ashbridge and I are agreed that it is necessary to get the few children left on the school property home as soon as possible. Many of the children are only lately recovering from illness, and there is no proper accommodation now at the school for these children.

There is no need for the movement of these children to other Indian Residential Schools at the present time. Should such cases arise from special conditions no doubt the Indian Agents will communicate with the Department. I had thought that it would be necessary to move some at least of the children to Coqualeetza and to Ahousaht, but such children as will in the end have to be sent there are being looked after for the present in the homes of friends or relatives, if not in fact at home.

There are some 33 head of cattle on the farm attached to the school. A recommendation as to their disposal will be made in my next report. In the mean time there is a Farm Instructor to look after their needs.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS:

There are three boys attending the Alberni District High School. These boys are living on the local Indian Reserve and are continuing to attend the District High School under instructions from Mr. Pitts.

RECENT DEATHS OF PUPILS:

Mr Ashbridge has brought to my notice the fact that on or about the 14th of the present month three girl pupils of this school died in hospital.

They all died from T.B.Meningitis I am informed. The girls were:-

MARY BOB Duncan
BERTHA FRED Alberni
VIOLET McKAY Ucluelet

I also understand that some boys have been giving trouble at the school, but I have not had time to inquire into this yet.

CAUSE OF FIRE:

I wish to say at once that I am not as yet satisfied that the cause of the fire was accidental. There are features that lead me to think that this fire might possibly have been caused by a pupil.

WILLIAM and LOUE BOB Brothers of and GERTIE BOB Sister of the deceased Mary Bob should be I think investigated. The other dead children appear to have been without brothers or sisters at the school.

The previous school here was burned on the 3rd of June 1917.

NEW SCHOOL:

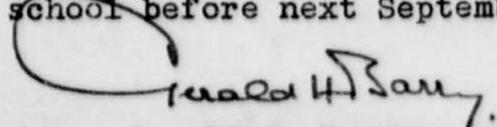
The Reverend Principal has suggested to me that the right course to follow would be for the Indian Affairs Branch to build a new Residential School to care for the children lately at the Alberni Residential School, and to absorb those now at Ahousaht, and the Ucluleet Day School.

I would most earnestly and with the greatest respect submit that great caution be taken in making any promise to the United Church of Canada with regard to the rebuilding of this school.

I do not believe that the Alberni Indian Residential School is wanted as such, or that the expense in per capita grants here is justified. The Principal informed me to-night that he could not suggest any child who should go at once to another Residential School on the grounds of having poor home conditions. If this is so it is indeed hard to justify the presence of the children in any Residential School.

I do consider that a large Indian Day School should be located on one of the Indian Reserves near Alberni and I would strongly recommend that, if not entirely too late, the sum of at least \$5,000.00 be set aside in the Supplementary Estimates for the erection of such a school before next September.

Port Alberni, B.C.
February 23, 1937.


Gerald H. Barry
Inspector of Indian Schools, B.C.

CONFIDENTIAL

Somass Hotel,
Port Alberni, B.C.

February 23, 1937.



Major D. M. MacKay,
Indian Commissioner,
P.O.Box 666,
Victoria, B.C.

Dear Major MacKay:-

I am forwarding herewith my Preliminary Report on the destruction by fire of the Alberni Indian Residential School, West Coast Agency.

It is now after 2 A.M. on the 23rd and I have been at work on this report since Mr. Indian Agent Ashbridge left me about 10 P.M. Under the special circumstances I believe that you will be glad to have some particulars of the burning of this school at the earliest possible moment, but I would ask you and the officials of the Indian Affairs Branch who may read the report to forgive mistakes and errors as I am very tired indeed after a most difficult journey and a number of interviews.

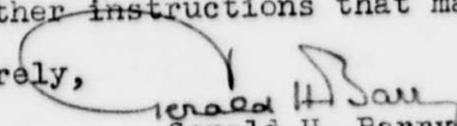
Mr Ashbridge and I shall visit the Indian Residential School property at Alberni to-morrow or rather this morning, Tuesday the 23rd, and I shall prepare a further report on that visit and forward it without delay.

Very little help can be had from the Reverend Mr. Pitts. As I have reported several times Mr Pitts is a very poor organizer and he appears to have lost his head completely. Mr. Indian Agent Ashbridge has excellent control of the situation. He is unhappy that he is unable to get a report off to you to-night, but trusts that the attached report of mine which he has read will be sufficient till he and I complete our investigations to-morrow.

May I most strongly urge in this confidential letter that the United Church of Canada be not given any promise with regard to the rebuilding of the Alberni Indian Residential School. An Indian Day School is required here with well trained teachers and not a badly managed Residential School such as the Alberni School has been for a number of years. I do not believe that the Residential Schools are worth the large sums spent on them, though some will have to be kept in operation for various reasons. The Alberni Residential School is not one of these, what the Church may urge to the contrary notwithstanding.

A copy of this letter and of my report is being addressed to you in care of the Indian Agent, Vancouver as you may have left Victoria before the original can reach you there. Please wire me any further instructions that may be necessary.

Yours sincerely,


Gerald H. Barry.

Inspector of Indian Schools, B.C.

GHB/

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COPY

INSPECTOR'S REPORT ON INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ALBERNI

United Church of Canada. West Coast Agency



Purpose of Report:

Acting on the instructions of the Indian Commissioner for British Columbia, I left Victoria on Sunday, February 21st, spent that night in Nanaimo, and arrived in Port Alberni at 4.45 P.M. this afternoon February 22, 1937.

From 5 P.M. to 6 P.M. was spent in the office of Mr. Indian Agent Ashbridge. The Indian Agent gave me a clear account of what he knew of the destruction by fire of the Alberni Indian Residential School on the morning of Sunday, February 21st 1937.

The Principal of the school, the Rev. F.E. Pitts, B.A. was good enough to meet the Indian Agent and myself at the Somass Hotel from about 7.30 P.M. to 8.30 P.M. this Monday evening. Mr Pitts was able to clear up a number of points with regard to which the Indian Agent had not been informed.

The purpose of this report is to inform the Indian Commissioner and the Indian Affairs Branch at the earliest possible moment of the facts so far brought to light with regard to the burning of the Alberni Indian Residential School. I have arranged to visit the school property with Mr. Ashbridge to-morrow but this Preliminary Report has to be prepared to-night to catch the mail leaving early in the morning.

A further report will be made when I have seen what is left of the school building, and interviewed some of the school staff, and such report will be mailed on the morning of the 24th.

DISCOVERY OF FIRE:

The Principal states that two teachers, Miss Audrey S. Mills, and Miss Kathleen How, who were not present at early Prayers, and who reside on the second floor of the building saw smoke about 8 A.M. They immediately rang the fire alarm.

The children were at the time at breakfast.

RESULT OF FIRE ALARM:

The Principal states that the children left the building by the side doors. Two that were ill in bed appear to have got up, and walked out of the building. The Reverend Principal does not seem clear in his mind as to what did happen to the children. He tried to locate the actual fire, and found that there were flames and smoke around the locked door of the attic room on the girls' side of the school. He states that this attic was always kept locked and that only he and Mrs Pitts had keys of the Yale Lock on the door. He unlocked the door and found the attic in flames. He then ran down to the main floor and returned to the attic with a chemical fire extinguisher. He could not make much use of this as the smoke drove him away. In the mean time a Mr Shaw, the Farm Instructor, had turned on the water of the stand pipe and had tried to put water on the fire through the hose. He too was driven away by smoke. Alberni Central Telephone Exchange was informed of the fire by telephone at this time.

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6433, File 877-5, part 5)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES

CANADA

POOR-COP