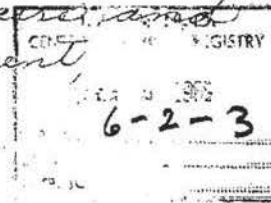


Bill Russell

48875135

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Ontario,
December 28, 1968.

The Honourable Jean Chrétien,
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern
Development,
Department of Indian Affairs and
Northern Development,
Ottawa, Ontario.



Dear Sir:

In the final week of October 1968 I was hired in Toronto by the Department of Indian Affairs to teach at Albany Residential School, Fort Albany, Ontario. On November 30th I submitted, along with five other teachers, a conditional resignation which was officially accepted by the principal of the school on the 13th of December, however not under the conditions set out in our letter. The conditions centred around whether an amicable agreement could be arrived at to the satisfaction of both parties when a representative from Indian Affairs came to Fort Albany.

DEC 28 1968

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At least four of the six teachers this school has lost would very gladly return to Fort Albany but since this is not possible immediately, it is my wish to make known the situation I found there in the hope that the Department of Indian Affairs will step in and alter the situation tout de suite.

This school is a residential mission school, and although we may not have understood the implications of working for a mission run school, we did think we were employed by the Department of Indian Affairs. The major complaints we had centred around the attitude of the people at the mission towards the Indian people which I would have to say is prejudicial, and the rules laid down by the administration on the private lives of the teachers. We were constantly reminded of our superior position and the need to set an example to the Indians. They seemed to very much dislike

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Moosonee and asked that Mr. Flaherty come up to give us some support and help resolve the problems we were facing. He was unable to arrive until December 13 due to freeze-ups in the north and flying conditions.

We were able to rent a cabin which was only large enough for three so three were going to remain at the residence until we found something else. However we were informed on Friday, November 29, by a note posted in the residence, that all six were to be out by the end of the month giving three of us less than 24 hours notice. On the Saturday we submitted our conditional resignation, having been provoked into this drastic action because of a lack of dialogue with the administration, and a concern about having to finish out the school year under such difficult conditions with no hope of any changes being made. Some of us would have retracted our resignations if we had been

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able to get the support of Indian Affairs in helping us locate accommodation in the village and if we felt that some of the teaching conditions might be altered a little. However, it became very obvious and finally we were told outright by Indian Affairs in Toronto that it would be easier to find six new teachers for January than it would be to make any changes in the attitudes of the administration at the mission. Since the inspector of this school considered this new crop of teachers to be the best Fort Albany has had, and this group is the first group of native English-speaking teachers the school has had, it would appear that little concern has been shown for the welfare of the children. Of course the argument might be presented that the teachers should have submitted for the sakes of the children but as I have said we were constantly provoked into more and more drastic actions and it was not possible to give up our basic beliefs about human

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will happily do it.

Sincerely yours,

[REDACTED]

- Encl. - copy of petition sent by villagers to Mr. Shaw, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Ontario Region, 1849 Yonge of Toronto 7, Ont.
- There were about 80 signatures, all gathered in less than 24 hours.