

CHAPTER VII

CHRISTIE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

Although Father Brabant advocated as early as 1895 the necessity of building a residential school for Indian boys and girls, his wish was not realized until 1899, when Rt. Rev. A. Christie was Bishop of Victoria. The good Bishop saw at once the advantages of such a school. Father Brabant was commissioned to select the place for the school. The Bishop would send up lumber and men to do the work, and when the building was started Father Brabant was to go East, begging for funds.

Father Brabant chose a place in Clayoquot Sound, on Meares Island, at the foot of Lone Cone, a mountain of over 2,000 feet in height. It is thus centrally located and easily accessible to the Indians living North and South of it along the West Coast. The school is removed from all Indian settlements, which is a great advantage that can be appreciated to its full extent only by those engaged in the education and Christianization of this race. Another consideration of great weight in the choice of this locality was the beach of hard sand. At low tide this sand beach affords an extensive playground for the children, more than ample room for football, base ball, races or any other game the children may engage in. Another advantage of building here was the natural water supply in a small creek which empties into the bay. This creek furnished the water for some years, being pumped up by a ram. In October the same year the school was built, and the following May, Rev. P. Maurus, O. S. B., arrived with two Benedictine Brothers and three nuns of the same order. The beginning of the school was humble, very humble. A frame building, 60 by 40, and two-and-a-half stories high, with a small outside building used as a laundry, constituted the establishment. There was no land cleared for a garden, on the contrary, a person had to be careful and keep his eyes open if he would walk around the building without stumbling over tree stumps. A week after the arrival of the school staff, school was opened with ten children. It was hard to get children. The

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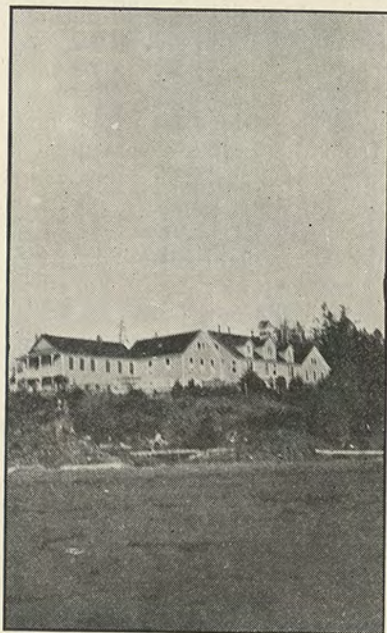
parents did not like to part with them. It needed a lot of coaxing and persuading. By July 1st twenty-eight children were enrolled and sixteen new ones were admitted from July 1, 1900, to July 1, 1901. Another year passed, and the number of pupils was 56. Prejudice against a Boarding School disappeared slowly among the Indians and Rev. P. Maurus, the principal, made plans for enlarging the building. Two wings were added in 1904, giving accommodation to 70 children. At the same time the Indian Department at Ottawa allowed a grant for 60 children instead of for 50, as at first. The water from the creek proved to be undesirable after heavy rains, and Father Maurus also obtained from the Indian Department a special appropriation to build tanks and lay iron pipes from higher up on the mountain side, and thus secure a plentiful supply of the best mountain water. In 1905 stoves were discarded and a central hot-water heating plant installed. 1909 saw a steam laundry, with the necessary machinery, added to the place. In the year 1914 a new large cow barn was built, and a smaller one for the hogs. Then came hard times, with high prices for everything. In spite of this, in 1907 an electric light plant was bought. But when the Indian Department, in



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1922, started to enforce the Indian School Act, according to which all Indian children of school age must attend school, the school management had to make room for more children. The grant was now for 70 children. To accommodate them better, a large gymnasium for the boys was put up as a separate building;



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ing; their former play hall in the main building being converted into a dining hall. The following year a large addition was added to the main building for exclusive use of the girls, giving them a roomy play hall, enlarging their dormitory and giving them a large new school-room. This part was finished in the spring of 1924.

In this school they get a thorough instruction in their religion, they are taught also the secular branches of reading, writing, arithmetic, etc., as thoroughly as in other schools. They are, moreover, taught to work. Each child goes to school daily half a day—the other half is for work, recreation excepted. The girls in the kitchen, sewing room and laundry; the boys in the barns, gardens and carpenter and shoe shops.

There are at the present writing, December, 1925, eighty children in the school, the 167th boy and the 154th girl that entered since the school opened.

Principals of the Christie Indian Residential School:

Rev. P. Maurus, O.S.B., May, 1900 to November, 1911.

Rev. Father Epper, O.S.B., November, 1911 to October, 1916.

Rev. Jos. Schindler, O.S.B., October, 1916 to July, 1919.

Rev. Chas. Moser, O.S.B., July, 1919 to April, 1922.

Rev. Ildefonse Calmus, O.S.B., April, 1922 to present time.

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CHRISTIE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL
Besides Band Instruments, Piano and Violin are taught to the
Indian Children



CHILDREN OF AN EX-PUPIL COUPLE