

Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Evron

Mission St-Raphael - Le Goff, Alberta

Chronicles - First booklet (1916-1919) about the first mission of the SNDE in LeGoff.
(I borrowed these chronicles - 148 pages - from Sister Ann Yuhasz on November 23, 2021).

June 4, 1916 - page 4

The next day, Sunday, June 4, all the Indians came to attend High Mass; the church was full. All sang at the services; they pronounced Latin quite well, recited the Rosary in Montagnais; the hymns were also mostly in that language.

June 19, 1916 - page 8

Monday, June 19, was a great day for the little Montagnais, for they had long been waiting for the "Sarés" (Sisters) to come to school. The parents were also waiting for them impatiently. The Father came at 9:00 a.m. after ringing the church bell, and brought in the whole merry band that had been waiting for a long time in the courtyard. Two adult Indians were brought in to serve as interpreters for the Father in the recommendations he wanted to make. Since he could not say everything in Montagnais, he spoke Cree. These men, proud of the trust placed in them, carried out their duties as true orators and all listened attentively.

[...]

The Government, providing the children with dinner, had not bothered about dishes any more than the rest; so, the little that the Mission had was insufficient. Without a doubt, it was even better than at home; they did not seem in any way upset or surprised to be eating 4 from the same plate. No cookies yet, so every day one or two of the older girls had to come to the kitchen to bake and make the cookies, which didn't always suit the little cook, because the apartment and the stove were not big enough. But, on all sides, good will was needed and we should not forget that it was the beginning of the Mission.

July 15-19, 1916 - pages 12-13

From the 15th to the 19th, it was the Treaty vacation. For the young and old, it was a feast, although the remuneration received was minimal: \$5 per head in each family, for the Chief \$25 and his Advisors \$15.

Around the 20th and 21st, the Sisters received a visit from the Indian families who were going on a pilgrimage to [Lac] Ste Anne, 200 miles from here. They think that shaking hands with the Father and the Sisters will bring good luck and divine blessings on their long and tiring journey. The care of a young girl was entrusted to them during these days, her parents not wanting to leave her alone in their absence. The girl, of a very boorish nature, found herself quite out of place; nevertheless, she gave herself willingly to the small jobs that were entrusted to her. She was especially happy when the Sisters made her a beautiful dress from the material she had brought with her. The last days seemed long to her, she was anxious to see her dear parents and to resume her life of freedom in the tent.

July 30, 1916 - pages 13-14

On July 30, the school was closed; typhoid fever had already claimed 10 victims among the children. The Sisters, during the whole time that the epidemic lasted, made numerous visits to the sick scattered on the reserve. Their rounds were sometimes quite long. It was during these excursions that they got to know the faith, the good spirit, the confidence in the priest or the Sisters of their dear Montagnais, their sensitivity to signs of affection and devotion.

But also, they were more than once able to observe the uncleanliness, the disorder of their grown-up children of the woods, their carelessness and little care for their sick. The little authority that the parents exercise over their children in general.

[The description of this tour continues to page 18: misery, disease, uncleanliness].

September 25, 1916 - page 22

Another event that gave the little Missionaries great pleasure was the reopening of the school on September 25. No tent, therefore, which was rather expected. Their little Indians came home happy and in fairly large numbers and they were glad to see them again and to hear their noisy frolics again. It was a little more attractive for the Mistress, for it was better, she had what was needed to maneuver: boards, slates, pencils, paper, had arrived during this forced vacation; she herself now had a beautiful desk painted in red. So, everything was for the best. The illness was slowly going away; the children were no longer affected; it visited the adults for a while.

October 1916 - page 24

During this month, visits to the homes were few, the fever was going away; only two were still in quarantine, Simon and J.-Marie. The latter was really like a big child and often asked for a visit from the Sisters, just to have the pleasure of hearing that he was all right.

October 18, 1916 - page 25

The next day, they had a visit from the Agent who inspected the school in detail; everything was inspected, even the singing. He was satisfied and renewed his promise to subscribe the teacher to the *Canadian Teacher*.

October 28, 1916 - page 25

On the 28th, at 6:30 a.m., new gifts of 4 beautiful fish and a duck, by a good Montagnais woman. Two days later, another one arrived. All these surprises were always carefully wrapped in more or less black and greasy rags, but it was a small detail of Indian Mission to which they did not consider anymore.

Mid-November 1916 - page 30

Towards the middle of the month, the schoolchildren became less assiduous; supervision during recess was made easy by the appearance of the sleighs. The girls began to work on small works intended to make the surprises for the projected Christmas Tree. The beads especially had the gift of delighting them; each one put all her ardor in it. Many of them asked to wash their hands before working on them; this was something new.

December 12, 1916 - page 32

The Agent came to make a visit around the 12th; the inspection was not long, because there were only a few children. Nevertheless, he was long and meticulous in his explanations.

January 1, 1917 - page 36

First day of the year on Indian land. The little Missionaries will remember it, because it was marked by an interesting ceremony. On that day, everyone on the reserve kissed each other, men, women, children, young and old, even the little ones received the traditional kiss on the lips and we hear it well. Fortunately, the Sisters had been warned because they too could have received a few kisses. [The description of the day follows...]

January 1917 - page 41

If home visits were rare, the Indians and Indian women often came to see and consult the Sisters and always asked for some medicine. On Sunday, especially, it was very busy. One day, a good old Grandma came in about 12:30 p.m.; she didn't want any medicine, but she opened her mouth, signaling that she would like something to put in it. She was shown a piece of bread, her face smiled and her hm, hm! made it clear that she wanted to have dinner. It was just the right time; they were happy to serve this poor old woman who didn't need her fork; her hands were much more convenient utensils. After her dinner taken in the school, she slipped into the kitchen to carry her dishes and squatted in the middle with an air of satisfaction.

January 1917 - page 44

They responded in great numbers to the call of Father who had made, the previous Sunday, strong recommendations to the parents to send their children regularly to school. They came back happy and docile. Cleanliness, alas, had not made any progress; the little heads sheltered travelling inhabitants. The teacher had to make a good act of self-sacrifice before the writing lesson, because while making her rounds, she sometimes, despite all precautions, collected a few large ones.

The girls came to take a manual labor lesson half hour in the morning and evening. They like it and apply themselves to it; the Cook occupies two of them after dinner. The little boys are requisitioned to make the snow supply each in turn. It is a pleasure for them, especially when a candy comes to reward the little chore.

February 8, 1917 - page 45

From time to time, some of the many first graders of June 1916 who did not usually come to school, made a small appearance. On February 8, it was the turn of a famous Victor, a pure Montagnais, for whom life in the woods was more beneficial than school. He had three pairs of pants on top of each other, hiding their holes, but, alas! some of them were facing each other, so it was his skin that was showing. He fought and pushed the others like an Indian, so when he didn't come back after two days, he was not missed at all.

Mid-February 1917 - page 47

Towards the middle of the month the weather became milder without the presence of snow, there would have been some illusion of spring, but this lasted only 8 days. The Agent came to visit the school on the 19th and brought the teacher's salary, then he promised to send something for the

one who filled the role of Field Matron. But promises do not cost the dear man; he is slow in fulfilling them, and it is often necessary to take a further initiative to get something that is due, however.

February 1917 - pages 48-49

The Cook sometimes had trouble with her little employees. The girls, who were too talkative, were separated, one washing dishes, the other grinding coffee in the next apartment. For the boys, she didn't have it so good, because the smart ones brought her dirty snow; naturally, it was refused, so each one apologized to his neighbor and the quarrel quickly heated up on the spot. Then she would call for help and peace would follow closely, for they were usually easy to calm down. These little scenes rarely happened, because the Sisters chose their little men.

March 1917 - pages 49-50

With March came Lent, the month of St. Joseph. A small altar was set up for him in the church, roses and chrysanthemums surrounded him. At school, his image was honored and after the 10 o'clock recess, the children sang a hymn to him. Every Friday the Way of the Cross in Montagnais took place at the church at 3:30; it was worth the trouble, it lasted 1 ½ hours. None of those present, who were quite numerous, seemed to find it too long, except for the babies who sang in their own way, as they do during all services.

The warmer weather brought the goblins back to school. They were as dissipated as they had ever been, but this did not last, fortunately for the teacher. They gradually calmed down and became more manageable. Several of them were put in the cellar, a penance that produced a wonderful effect. To interest them and to vary a little, one hour of the Thursday evening was devoted to manual work; the little boys worked with plasticine. This was new, so much so that many of the children, seeing themselves in possession of their piece, had nothing more urgent than to taste it. Each one applied himself to make the requested object; the pipe, the axe were the first ones. They had a real success.

April 1917 - pages 54-55

Easter Monday, a big vacation, each one does what she wants, while not going too far to have the pleasure of being together.

The Sisters of Lac d'Oignon, always very kind to the little Missionaries of St. Raphael, came to surprise them through the intermediary of a good Indian with a kind letter and a small consignment: a box of cakes and a jar of raspberries to celebrate Easter in union with them. The whole thing was found delicious. Thanks be to the good Providence who sent little treats to her children.

April 23, 1917 - page 56

On the 23rd, the Agent came to visit the school, he was long and meticulous as usual. There were 33 children and everything went very well.

April 28, 1917 - pages 56-57

Spring came again; several recesses were used to clean up the area around the house; the old grass was burned, which was a real joy for the little Indians. On the 28th, two Sisters went to

visit a sick family man who was dying. They found him perfectly resigned and calm. The poor house was very neatly arranged, as was the sick man on his thin mattress. A crucifix, a picture of St. Anne, one of St. Joseph, decorated the place; close to him, his rosary, his prayer book, holy water. Twenty spectators were crouched around him. When the sick man saw the Sisters, he stretched out his gaunt hand with a good smile; he had been longing for a visit from the Sisters, it seems. The old mother was near him; she spoke a little French. One of the Sisters told her that they were going to recite three Hail Marys for the sick man and his little family; she immediately signaled to all present that they were going to kneel down and respond in Montagnais.

The sick man was very grateful and asked the Sisters to return. They returned the next day, Sunday, all four of them, bringing him an image of the Scared Heart, some broth and chocolate that he had been wanting for a few days. It was as edifying as the day before; the sick man saw death approaching without any trouble. He promised the Sisters that he would think of them when he would be near God.

On their way out, they were surrounded by a dozen little Indians; fortunately, the box of candy had not been forgotten. They were able to make children happy.

The next day, the mother of the sick man came to say that he had died the day before. The Sisters gave her lunch and she asked for a slice of buttered bread for her old man who had not eaten. The funeral took place on Tuesday, with a large and pious attendance.

May 8, 1917 - pages 58-59

Finally, May 8 arrived... it had been a long time coming, because it was the day set for the departure of the two nuns called to Trochu to take part in the May retreat. The postman car that was to take them to Durlingville passed by at 11:00. The two remaining Sisters were brave; the little Indians, not used to the departure of their Sisters, did not know what to think. They watched the car drive away as long as they could, waving their handkerchiefs or hats to prolong the "goodbye!".

June 1917 - page 63

[Feast of the Blessed Sacrament] The Father prepared his decorations for the procession; he asked the Sisters to make the drapery for the canopy, a decor of fleur-de-lis and stars was placed on it, and then, with the beautiful red, yellow and violet rags brought back from Trochu, they made small banners with a picture stuck in the middle.

On Saturday evening at Benediction, the church was full, and the next day it was too small, because several Canadian families from Cold Lake had come to spend the day at the Mission. The weather was splendid and the procession took place in the same order and piety as usual. The children were more neatly dressed than last year. At the back of the procession two Indians, armed with sticks, kept the dogs away from the route. Their function was not the least laborious, because each family always brings a suite of 3 or 4.

June 1917 - pages 64-65

On the school side, the children were prepared for June 21, because St. Louis is the patron saint of the Rev. Father Dauphin, but the children were on vacation on August 25, so this date was anticipated.

It was a small family celebration: Father came the day before, the boys did better than the girls in their little affairs, but they all sang well, in English and French. Father distributed sweets and the rewards deserved by the most regular [in attendance]. After a good hour of work, the birds were set free and the Sisters prepared a picnic for the evening. It was simple and quick. At 2:00 p.m., the whole family went into the woods with a box containing cookies and cups, a small bucket containing orange salad.

All hearts were in joy, it was the first time they went for a walk. They had a good time and were very docile. They played to imitate the procession, picked flowers, climbed trees and sang everything they knew. The return trip was uneventful and everyone went home after a good prayer.

July 13, 1917 - pages 66-67

On the 13th, the great day of the Treaty, the Agent was expected, but he did not arrive until 10:00 in the evening. The wagons passed and passed again, heading towards the farmer's house, the Agent's residence. So it was on the 14th that he gave each family the famous \$5 per head.

In the evening, after supper, the Sisters were asked by Rev. Father to take a tour of the city. They left: in a small wood transformed into an Indian city, 2 camps: the one on the right, about 20 tents, was that of the pagans (Crees depending on the Cold Lake Reserve for the Treaty). The latter, seeing the Sisters crossing their camp, looked at them with distrust, some however risked a smile, some small ones came to shake their hands. The one on the left, around 40 tents, was that of the Montagnais. The welcome was more sympathetic.

They stopped and said a little word to the right and to the left, distributed medals which are always welcomed with gratitude. Their little Indian schoolchildren gambolled around them and showed off their stuff, for there were four stores held by a Canadian, a Syrian and the other two by the Indians. Candies, brightly colored fabrics, hats, etc., were mostly bought.

They saw an interesting scene of several families preparing or eating supper. No awkward utensils: the grass served as a table, squatting in a circle, the group ate together from the same plate; some, better off, each had a plate and took the contents with the hand. The menu was more copious than usual, because most of them had bought canned food, which they loved: tomatoes, beans, corn, etc.

July 20, 1917 - pages 67-69

[Beautiful description of the Bishop's visit].

September 4, 1917 - pages 72-73

On the 4th, it was back to school; 24 elves answered the call, despite the rain. The floor, quite clean in the morning, was black in the evening; each one returned full of good will and well disposed, that was the main thing.

Several families, having nothing left to eat, went hunting and gathering berries; they are very fond of them: blueberries and cranberries especially, it was not perfect in terms of regularity [children in school], but the Sisters received their small share of hunting and gathering.

September 1917 - pages 73-74

In the course of the month, one of their schoolboys went hunting about 22 miles away, was mistaken for a bear and received a rifle shot that left two wounds in his side. In order to keep him within reach of the Sisters, the father came to camp not far from their home, and his grandmother was the nurse. Every day, for nearly two months, they went morning and evening to bandage this poor child who was taken, towards the end of the month, by typhoid fevers, which did not contribute to accelerate the healing of his wound. He made his first communion on the first Friday of October, and the Sisters brought him some treats, a rosary and a beautiful medal as a souvenir.

January 12, 1918 - page 84

The Agent came on the 12th, he was correct, but not very sympathetic; he asked that two Sisters go to see a sick woman 4 miles away. Mr. Martineau came to pick them up with his sleigh after dinner; it was very cold at 45° C, but they were comfortably installed and well covered. They did not suffer too much. They found a young woman lying on her bed with a high fever, breathing heavily and spitting blood. They asked for someone to come and get the medicine. All around the house, which was quite clean, were crouching Indian women who watched in silence. In a corner surrounded by a low fence, a nice little red calf was also watching what was going on: it was the first time they saw this detail.

Although the winter was harsh, the Sisters suffered less than last year. The dear Brother, becoming a little more considerate of them, faithfully brings them ice and snow for their water supply; all that remains is to melt it. He also often takes care of the wood supply for the kitchen. One of the Martineau children, Herman, has taken it upon himself to come, almost every day, to bring it in and put it away in the woodshed.

February 4, 1918 - page 86

On the 4th, the schoolchildren returned to school, impatient to get back. They were quite numerous, joyful and very well disposed. They did not give their teacher too much trouble. The first recesses were animated, because pretty small harnesses with bells, found in the case from Toronto, had been put aside to play horses, but they lasted only a few days, nothing resists them. They had to make do with ropes afterwards, and then it was time for ball games. The Sisters had a hard time providing them with them, they quickly got the end of all the ones made for them. The girls jumped rope.

February 1918 - pages 88-89

The little pupils worked well in general; however, there were a few exceptions, two or three preferred to run around in the woods and only appeared from time to time. One of them, Narcisse, the one the Sisters had looked after for so long, tried to do the same. He was absent for several days and his little companions reported one morning that his grandmother was scolding him loudly and trying, with a whip in her hand, to make him go to school. The next day, after their breakfast, as the house was not far away, two Sisters left and arrived at the house filled with Indians and Indian women who were barely awake and amazed to see the Sisters so early. Grandmother and her Narcisse understood at once the subject of this morning visit and the little scamp was returned before the Sisters to the school, escorted by a dozen comrades who had accompanied them joyfully. Since that day, he has been very regular.

February 1918 - page 89

It was in the course of February that the Sisters proposed to Fr. to train little altar boys, which he accepted with great pleasure. Four were chosen from among the wisest, but a condition was set: dirty face and hands, torn pants and paletot, stockings falling off, would never go to choir. "All right" was the cry of all. The next morning, two of them arrived with their faces and hands well washed, their hair cut, their stockings well pulled up. They worked hard to learn their answers. They are really proud to have been chosen and the parents even more so.

During Lent, as in previous years, the Way of the Cross was held every Friday, with a very large attendance, but the presence of the babies did not contribute to the recollection, only for the Sisters, because the older people did not seem to be troubled in the least. Some are taken out to be whipped, others, smaller, want to drink as if they were "at home" and the mother has no qualms about giving them the "consoler". On the third Friday, as the attendance became more numerous, the Sisters went up to the platform with all their elves: it was calmer, but less interesting, because from there one could see neither stations nor altar.

March 1918 - page 91

The beginning of March was still cold, but the little schoolboys and schoolgirls continued to be quite regular and worked with ardor. To encourage them, the teacher had them do some large compositions: writing, reading, spelling, small homework, arithmetic; these were the first ones, and they put all their effort into them, because they had to change places. They began to become more interesting, which compensated a little for the beginnings which had been so arduous.

From time to time, adult Indians or Indian women who came to get medicine, entered the school without any formality and seemed to be interested in what was going on, because they gladly stayed there. One morning, the mother of one of the little schoolboys arrived; she was given what she wanted as medicine, but instead of leaving, she went to crouch by the stove. From time to time, she warned those who spoke and reminded the teacher that she had an assistant. But sometimes she was warned in turn, because when she wanted to know what was being said, she would ask the children out loud for an explanation. She stayed a good part of the morning; her departure was not regretted.

March 1918 - page 92

A good old Indian woman, Marie-Anne, who had been ill for a long time, went to see God. The Fathers esteemed her and were grateful to her, because at the time of the Indian rebellion, she had devoted herself to Father Legoff and had helped him with his books on the Montagnais language. There were many people at her funeral; the path to the cemetery was not easy because of the snow, which was very deep, but everyone went, and for the little schoolchildren, it was rather a pleasure.

March 19, 1918 - page 92

[Feast of St. Joseph] In the evening, Father Dauphin came to visit the children and question them: one of his good Indians served as an interpreter in Montagnais to say a few words of encouragement to them. He was pleased with their work and their progress.

March 29, 1918 - page 95

On Good Friday evening, a poor old Indian, father of 8 or 9 children, the youngest being 2 years old, came to the Sisters' house. He had been accompanied by another who spoke French: "This man," he said, "is the poorest of the reserve, he can't do much hunting, because he can hardly see anymore. His little boy is going to make his First Communion and he has nothing to change his child's clothes. He asks you if you could give him some linen to make something for his little Patrice". It was impossible to refuse such a request, especially since the poor kid was in rags. So, they found him some material to make him a little suit. On Sunday morning, his old father and mother brought him happily to the Sisters. He was really not too badly fixed up.

April 1918 - page 96

The first days of April were very cold, with high winds and snow as in winter, which did not prevent the little altar boys from coming in the morning to serve mass. One of them, Lazare, having been stubborn, was put in the cellar; he came out of it contrite and humiliated. The next day, he arrived at 5:30 a.m. for mass, determined to be a good boy. In general, the little pupils worked well, so to stimulate them, the teacher had them do large compositions again followed by changes of place and rewards for the most diligent.

End of April 1918 - page 97

The courtyard was cleaned, the wood was corded with enthusiasm by the little schoolboys. Foot ball was always the favorite game, but they quickly got the end of their balls which were not the most solid either. So, every Saturday or so, we had to make one or two new ones.

May 1918 - pages 98-100

There were several visits to make to the sick. One of them, Paul, had typhoid fevers; during this time, his wife fell ill in turn. In order to be more accessible to the Fathers and Sisters, they were brought to a place not far from the mission. It was a very sad picture for several weeks. They had nothing to eat and were cared for sometimes by an Indian woman, sometimes by a 9-year-old girl, their niece. The poor little boy, 3 years old, looked happy when he saw the Sisters arrive.

Several times they brought bread, eggs, meat, milk and even toys and pictures for the little one. This brought a smile back to the man who, sensing weakness and having nothing, was almost

sullen. The poor little woman received the last sacraments. This scene was not lacking in interest; both of them, lying on the same bed, the little boy not far from there, looking on in amazement. Men and women crouched all around.

The Sisters arrived during the ceremony; they knelt down, the whole audience did the same and the men uncovered themselves. The patient got a little better, but had new attacks from time to time; it was a very advanced heart disease. His Paul is cured; he was previously a pure coureur de bois. He seems to have calmed down a bit, but he still makes small escapes from time to time.

Their little Scholastique continued to languish. The good Jesus went to visit her several times and she always received Him with the same faith and the same edifying piety. Another woman had a large abscess in her breast; the Doctor came at that time and opened it for her and she came to the Sisters every day for treatment. An old grandmother, who, according to the doctor, was dying, came back to life and seems to be happy now, because despite her bad eyes and legs, the Sisters meet her from time to time during their visits.

Still May 1918 - page 100

[Nature awakens] The cows also give a lot of milk, so the Sisters stock up on butter, which is excellent. Almost always, it is the boys or girls who offer to churn. They do not forget to come to the kitchen at the 10 a.m. recreation time; all work deserves a salary and the butter is a cup of milk.

19 June 1918 - page 103

On the 19th, their little Scholastique left for a better world, assisted by Fr. Balter who came back edified from this good death. The four Sisters had gone to see her the previous Sunday. The poor child was pitiful; the abscess that had come into her neck formed a large hole. She was so thin that she was unrecognizable. She seemed to be happy with the visit and shook hands with all the Sisters as she looked at them. The burial took place on the 21st at 8:00 am. All the children were at mass.

June 20, 1918 - pages 104-105

On June 20, like last year, the children had to offer their festive wishes to the Rev. Father Dauphin. They prepared for this: each one brought his 5-cent contribution to offer a mass and a small spiritual bouquet composed of acts of obedience and prayers very well done. The whole thing went very well, French and English songs, a small play, pleased the Rd. Father who allowed them to have a little extra the next day and to take them for a picnic.

No one was missing on the 21st. After dinner, preparations were made promptly; at 1:30 p.m., the Sisters and children went into the woods with their modest provisions which consisted of 2 buckets containing, one of government cookies, the other of cups, a box of apple marmalade, a bag containing the Sisters' sandwiches, a bottle of citric acid, sugar to make drink, because water would have been too ordinary. The merry band did not stray too far, having found a splendid spot near the creek.

The goblins had their fun, climbing the trees like squirrels, playing procession, picking flowers, singing like little Indians. They proved to be docile. The little Sister Cook, not having very good legs, had brought her knitting and had settled at the foot of a tree, counting on being quite quiet there. But here are 3 or 4 small children who undertake to put her in a niche; some go to seek large branches of trees, the others fix them, so that after fifteen minutes, she is in a true shelter. They would go to her from time to time, bring her flowers and sing her a little verse. It wasn't easy to get in; you could only crawl in, which they did wonderfully. At 4 o'clock, the bell rang and the whole group gathered to enjoy the little lunch they had brought. Then, we took the way back and, before going back to their home, all the goblins made their prayers in the yard.

July 1, 1918 - pages 107-108

On July 1, the Sisters had not given leave, but most of them took it, because there was a fun game at Cold Lake that day. They had only 5 students from 2 families, so they were a bit spoiled. They were given a potato with their bacon and a small rhubarb pie for dessert. They wrote a letter to Evron and Trochu, which kept them busy for part of the day and they were very proud of their work.

Around 4 pm, all the little Community left with them to go to see Narcisse, good old Indian, sick for some time and parents of their elves. He was very happy to see the Sisters, he is one of those who asked for them the most and he made them say by his daughter who begins to understand and speak a little English: "All the Sisters are very good to come to see me to-day, thank you very much".

The little children had picked him a bunch of wild strawberries which he ate with pleasure. The woman, who was very gloomy because she was not happy that we had not gone earlier, finally relaxed when the Sisters told her that the weather was too bad and that one of the Sisters had had the flu. She finally got better when the Sisters gave her onions, cookies and rice to make soup for her old man. The latter died towards the end of the month with the most edifying feelings.

July 13-15, 1918 - page 108

The Treaty took place on the 13th, 14th and 15th. The Sisters visited the camp in the evening and entered several tents. There were no dances this year, but a car from the surrounding area shuttled around for part of Sunday to take those who wished to go. The ride, which lasted about 10 minutes, was 10¢; there were quite a few amateurs.

September 23, 1918 - page 112

On the 23rd, although the school was not completed [i.e., the enlargement], the children returned to school: only 10 answered the call at first. The Sisters were not too upset about this, because the class had to be held in a kind of passageway where there was not enough air and light. The teacher's task was difficult during this time, as the number of students was always increasing.

October 1918 - page 113

In the middle of October, Fr. Balter was appointed to the mission of Lac la Selle. This news was a real disappointment, for this dear Father was already well acquainted with the language he had been studying for 2 years; the children to whom he came every day to teach catechism in Montagnais, loved him very much. The Sisters also missed him.

Early November 1918 - pages 113-116

The feasts of All Saints and of the Dead were devoutly celebrated and there were many communions. On the 2nd, there was a procession to the cemetery; there the Reverend Father gave a little sermon on the occasion and ended by recommending them to be prudent, because the flu was lurking around the reserve and if they continued to spit everywhere and to run here and there, they would catch the disease, they would all pass away and many would come to take their places around the Cross [in the cemetery].

After the office, the Father kept 20 of them; some were sent to the woods for the church, others worked in the Fathers' house which was being repaired. The enthusiasm was general; 11 came to dine in the school and honored the "pémican" that the little cook had prepared for them.

The next day, we heard that there were 5 cases of influenza on the reserve; the children were dismissed. Ten days later, the whole reserve, including the Rd. Father, a Brother and the Sisters, two of whom were very seriously ill. There were two terrible weeks, the worries were great.

The poor Indians were dropping like flies, the less sick were burying the dead, it was a very sad spectacle: we saw a tombereau driven by two men, the coffin and two or three dogs that followed with their heads down.

The Rev. Father, who was sick himself, could neither encourage them nor bless their dead. Soon the able-bodied were not available for the sad task, so the dead were piled up in a stable that was well closed because of the dogs. Decomposition was not to be feared, for the bodies were frozen before they got there. After the turmoil, they were buried in the cemetery. 78 went to God in less than 15 days. Poor people! How they suffered: from hunger, because it was hunting time for them, they had nothing left; from the cold, they are not farsighted by nature and most of them had to cut their wood. They were in the grip of a burning fever and had nothing to take care of themselves.

In one family, 4 died the same night; many fathers were left alone with 2, 3 and 4 children. One poor man lost his mind; in his madness, he had his wife and little boy put their right hands flat on the red stove and he himself put his in the boiling water. The unfortunate man who wanted to join his wife was taken away by the police. The others came to the Sisters for treatment. Several Indians, before being completely immobilized by the disease, came to the Father's house and asked to go to confession to be ready to die.

January 6, 1919 - page 118

On the 6th, it was the annual family celebration, the Christmas tree. After the evening service, at which the children were blessed and the "kissing of the little foot of the Child Jesus" took place, the school was filled with children and adults, everyone wanted to be part of the celebration. The children sang the old songs they had learned, because since November they had not come to school. The distribution was done, each one had a toy and a handmade work by the girls during the year: mufflers, necklaces, woolen caps, mitts, cuffs. All were happy, even the older children who were given a picture and some candy.

January 1919 - page 120

During the month, the Sisters made a few visits to the sick, which were rare, fortunately, because the weather was not favorable and the wind was frequent.

The good will and dedication of the children are generally sustained. As for manual work, the girls are more diligent than last year.

At the wake, with all the pictures that can be cut out here and there, the Sisters make little albums intended to reward the diligence and application of the elves at the end of the term. [... ...
... ...]

During this month, about twenty hair frames are still being made; for these poor people, they are as precious as the photographs of those who have left.

The desks for the school and the teacher, promised for so long by the Department, finally arrived at the end of January. The children were overjoyed and anxious to get settled in. One was set up completely to keep them waiting; everyone went to sit on it and repeated: "Good, Sister, very good! me come every day and I'll be good". For the lazy and dissipated, the teacher promises to leave the old seats, that is to say, the boxes of cookies. It will be a big penance.

In February, the temperature was very severe; the thermometer dropped several times to 40, 45° C. Nevertheless, the children did not stop coming to school. The 17th was the big day of the installation in the new room; all were happy and there were only red marks, the wisdom was sustained all week. But, as there was still only one stove, it was not enough to warm up the new part of the school; so, it was necessary to give up working there at least in the morning. The teacher gathered her little world around the stove, on cookie boxes, waiting for the cold to pass. At the end of the month, the Reverend Father installed a new one and the school could be held without any disturbance, to the great satisfaction of all.

March 1919 - page 123

With March, the harsh weather became milder. There was a large attendance at the Ash Wednesday service as well as at the Lenten Stations of the Cross, which were held as in previous years.

In the course of the month, the Edouard family, leaving for the hunt, came to ask the Sisters to keep two of their children, Lazare and Véronique, who were usually very good students and who preferred to come to school than to go into the woods. They were accepted to the great joy of the parents and the children; the father brought a sack of flour and a few pounds of fat as payment, the mother brought the bunks, which were reduced to a few blankets and two small pillows, and all their meager belongings in a small trunk. They were installed in a small room near the Sisters.

At the first free moment, the two little boarders were washed and changed from head to toe, because they were full of vermin. The Sisters made them a little straw mattress with packing cloths, which was less hard than the floor. They had never been so well set up or so well cared for, so they were not bored at all. The little boy helped the cook with the wood and snow, and

the little girl helped with the dishes. The sisters' house often resounded with their joyful laughter during their stay.

Still March 1919 - page 124

The schoolchildren are not numerous; many are still hunting, others, not caring about school, come one day and not the next, so the rewards for the regularity of this term will not be numerous.

Consistency is not their dominant quality; they like change and especially their freedom which is never constrained at home in general. Also, this work requires a good dose of self-denial and supernaturalness, and patience as well, because progress in everything is very slow. However, the Sisters noticed some progress: at school, they were beginning to be more interesting [sic for interested?], more polite, less combative. But recognition is not yet understood by these light and selfish little heads, with a few rare exceptions.

May 1919 - pages 126-128

[Beautiful description of the emotions aroused by a big forest fire.]

June 1919 - page 129

This year, the feast of Father Dauphin, June 21, was celebrated more modestly than usual. To replace the songs omitted because of the lack of self-confidence of the teaching Sister, the latter had a little gymnastics session given which seemed to please the Father who had not yet witnessed the exercises.

It was not without satisfaction either that the Sisters felt the end of the school year coming on, for with the excessive heat that had made itself felt, the work became doubly difficult with children who were already inclined to be lazy by nature. To encourage and reward those who have shown themselves to be more regular and good, on the last day of school, June 27, which happens to be the feast of the Sacred Heart, and after having made an intimate visit to the chapel with their 16 little elves and prayed for all the great intentions, without forgetting the dear travellers whose thoughts hardly ever leave them, the Sisters make a great distribution of beautiful pictures framed by them. Thus, their little children left proud and happy and left them with the satisfaction of being able to be together again for a few good weeks.

Early July 1919 - page 130

For more than eight days, the Brother and the Sisters were the only guardians of the mission and the latter, in the absence of a Father, even gave permission to a foreign Indian to bury his little daughter in the mission cemetery.

January 1, 1920 - pages 137-138

The New Year's celebrations went on as usual and the Sisters received many visits with handshakes to everyone, even to the babies, which interested the new Sisters. But what was even more interesting and much better still were the few good days spent together, because since the formation of the little "trio", moments of leisure had been rare.

Thanks to the generosity of the ladies of Toronto, the Sisters were able to give a small party on January 6 as usual and reward their little children. Although the question of singing was more than embarrassing for the Sister Teacher, thanks to the help of her dear companions and the good will of the children, everything went well enough and everyone was happy, because to the pleasant they had been able to join the useful, their dear Sisters of Bonnyville having been able to make mittens, stockings, necklaces, etc., while waiting for their luggage to arrive.

January 1920 - page 138

After the holidays, many Montagnais went back to the woods and the Sisters again had their two boarders, Véronique and Lazare, who proved to be good enough children although still friends of their freedom. However, they did render some small services to bring in the wood and the snow, for the winter was exceptionally long and severe.

For more than a week, they also had two police men as guests, with, from time to time, one of their arrested. It was because they were looking for those white men who were delivering liquor to the Indians in order to put an end to the disturbances that were beginning to become worrisome on the reserve.

April 1920 - page 141

The Easter holidays also saw the return of almost all the hunters and once again the two boarders of the Sisters left them as soon as the first rumors of the arrival of their parents and one of them, Lazare, without even taking the time to cover himself properly in spite of the biting cold and the falling snow. Although they were well-behaved, the turbulent little Indians were not missed at the mission, for their presence always meant a lack of tranquility for the Sisters. For the first time, they began to study catechism and put into it an ardor and a good will that were truly pleasing.

April 12, 1920 - pages 143-144

To obtain this great happiness as soon as possible, the Sisters said a generous fiat! ... and on the 12th began their ordinary life again. Nine children, of whom only six were Indians, answered the call on the first day, which somewhat disappointed the Agent who found himself visiting the school that day. During the whole month of April, the regularity of the little school children left more to be desired than ever. It is true that the roads were not very encouraging. The sudden thawing of the thick layer of snow that still covered the ground had transformed them into real swamps and the creeks into rivers, so much so that on Friday the 23rd the Sisters were obliged to give a leave of absence, as the creek could no longer be crossed, even by wagon, without real danger.

June 1920 - page 146

The month went on without anything very striking, except that the little school children grew neither in number nor in wisdom: the great heat and the approach of the vacations made them even nonchalant and less docile. Only eight of them had the courage to come all the way to the end, so they were well rewarded at the distribution of the prizes on Wednesday, June 30, and they left proud and happy. Véronique, who should have been the first, did not come, having misbehaved the day before.

End of July 1920 - pages 147-148

The good Lord had indeed provided the Sisters with a great sacrifice: that of not seeing their beloved mission again and of abandoning their poor little and grown-up children... Too few Sisters to provide for the needs of the other houses, especially those of Bonnyville, whose works promised to be prosperous, the Superiors were forced, although to their great regret, to temporarily close St. Raphael's Mission, as the Government showed no good will to keep its promises to build a boarding school for the Indians on the reserve.

- ◆ Translated by Eloi DeGrâce with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version)
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