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1927

## Montana, Fort Belknap Reservation, Fort Belknap School, 1927

William M. Hughes

*Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions*

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GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS-10  
MONTANA  
FORT BELKNAP RESERVATION, FORT BELKNAP SCHOOL  
1927

COPY FOR: Bureau

St. Thomas Mission,  
Lodge Pole,  
Brookside, Mont.  
January 18, 1927.

20-13

Rt. Rev. Monsignor William Hughes,

My dear Monsignor Hughes:

Sometime ago I wrote you regarding the matter of obtaining an allowance for our catechist, Paul Two Kill. Before his departure for California, Mr. A. A. Anderson told me that you were in favor of it if I should endorse the request.

At this time it seems to me his services are very much in demand here at Lodge Pole, but owing to the fact that our catechist at Milk River died lately from exposure, and as I can find no one suited to take his place, I should like to have him work in that district also.

As you may know, there is a larger number of Indians along Milk River than either here or around St. Pauls and owing to the fact that there is no residence where a priest may stay and work among them, many have fallen away from the church and become presbyterians or mormans.

Bishop Lenihan has promised to get five hundred dollars from the Extension Society for a residence, but as you know it will require about \$1250 to put up any kind of a decent house that may withstand the vigors of this climate. Every time I go to the River church and wish to stay over to visit the sick, I must sleep in the old log church that furnishes but little protection against our Montana winters.

We are badly in need of a church here too, as the present one made of logs is too small and is fast falling to decay.

Our friend, Mr. Anderson who was with me until a few months ago has done wonders here for our church at Lodge Pole. He has secured money for a new altar, Communion railing, pews, stations and a steel vestment case, besides getting donations of statues, vases, etc. All these together with the things you so kindly secured for us completely furnishes our little church to the great joy of our good Indians.

Now if we could but get started on our church at the River, I am pretty sure I can get Mr. Anderson to return here and set about helping to furnish it. He has very good taste and correct ideas especially regarding interior decorating and finishing and much of this work he could do himself, thus eliminating cost of high priced carpenter.

I am glad to be able to inform you that our position here at Lodge Pole is growing stronger as is evidenced by the conversion of ten presbyterians during the last year. Not one during the past year and a half, either pagan or presbyterian has died without first being received into the church.

But things are for different at the River for reasons given above. The presbyterians are practically running the county and government day school there in which over half the children are Catholics.

As to the instruction of the children in the day school at Fort Belknap, owing to the fact that I have no place of residence, I presume that work is to be done by Father Fretchner who is being paid for it, but so far, it seems he only hears Confessions and says Mass there once a month.

I should be glad to hear from you dear Monsignor what help the Bureau may be able to give us that the walls of Jerusalem may be built up and those people saved and those outside the walls be brought in.

Trusting you will make a special effort to aid us in our dire need, I am,

Gratefully and hopefully yours in Christ,

(Rev.) Patrick F. Savage, S.J.

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18-7  
May 19, 1927.

Rev. Patrick F. Savage, S.J.,  
St. Thomas' Mission,  
Brookside, Mont.

Dear Father Savage:

I have not yet been informed as to whether or not you have taken over the instruction of the Catholic pupils in the Fort Belknap Government School. Please let me know whether or not ~~this change has been made~~, and if so, the date on which such change was made. I desire this information in order to know from what date you are to be paid. As you probably know, the salary I pay for the priest attending the school, is \$100 a year.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain

Yours fraternally,

Rt. Rev. Mgr. William Hughes,  
Director.

JR

COPY FOR: *Bureau*

20-13

Harlem, Montana.  
June 15, 1927.

Rt. Rev. Msgr. William Hughes,

My dear Father Hughes:

Due to the high water these past several weeks my mail has been held up, so I did not get your letter of May 19 until a few days ago.

According to word reaching me from Father Levasseur, I began the entire work at the Agency in May.

I am glad to be able to report that a very fine Catholic spirit exists among these children and that much may be hoped from them in the future. One great drawback here is the lack of a small house where the missionary may stay for a few days every other week. He must be at the school on Saturday afternoons for Confessions, for Mass Sunday mornings and one hour a week in the evening for religious instructions.

I usually stay with the Agent, Mr. J. H. Marshall, and family, but I can not but feel that the priest ought to have a room of his own and so be able to go and come as his duties may require. I am quite sure I could put up a little two room cottage for about \$300. The agent will allow me to put such a structure at a convenient place near the school.

I am sorry to have to report that our mission ranch at St. Peter Canisus' Church on Milk River has been completely flooded. Our crop of over sixty acres was coming up nicely, but now it is a total loss. I still have hopes of some sort of a crop that may make feed for the stock, so I shall try to borrow \$150 to re-seed the ground.

Fourteen Presbyterians were received into the Church during the past year and I have good reason to believe that the rest who were prevented may come back before long. But our church is entirely too small and moreover is fast falling to decay.

I enclose a picture which may give you some idea of the devastating effect of the flood. This past month I have been literally put of house and home. I lived under a tent until lumbago attacked so fiercely that I had to decamp. Since then I have been wandering from house to house or boarding at a restaurant here in Harlem.

If you are in a position to allow me any or all of the salary in advance, I should greatly appreciate it. With very best wishes and much gratitude for all past favors, I am,

Yours very truly in De.,

(Rev.) Patrick F. Savage, S.J.

Copied by ER

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July 13, 1927.

Rev. Patrick F. Savage, S.J.,  
St. Thomas' Mission,  
Brookside, Mont.

Dear Father Savage:

I inclose Preservation Society check for \$100, covering your salary for attending the Fort Belknap Government School, from May-1927 to May 1928.

I also inclose report blanks for the four quarters of that year. I will ask you to fill out, sign and return the blank for the June 30, 1927 quarter, and do the same with the other blanks at the end of each following quarter.

Very sincerely yours,

Charles S. Lusk,  
Secretary.

GR

10-7  
September 21, 1927.

Rev. John W. Laux, S.J.,  
St. Paul's Mission,  
St. Pauls, Mont.

Dear Father Laux:

I note in your letter of September 8 to Mrs. John T. McShane, your statement that Father Savage has been sent to Alaska and that you are now in charge of the mission work heretofore attended to by him.

Part of Father Savage's work was looking after the Catholic children in the Fort Belknap Government School. I presume that either you or some other Father of St. Paul's Mission will continue this work. At least I hope so. A salary of \$100 a year for this service was paid to Father Savage and his predecessor, Father Pratschner. Father Savage was paid up to May 1, 1928. It is our desire to continue this salary if possible, after that date. The columns of THE INDIAN SENTINEL are open to the Father who may attend the Fort Belknap School to appeal for help. In a number of instances appeals of this kind by our missionaries have brought responses, some large and some small. A like result might follow an appeal made by you. I shall be glad to insert in THE SENTINEL any article that you may furnish detailing your work. Its readers like to know just what the missionaries are doing.

It is our practice to request from the missionaries who attend Government schools a report of their work, quarterly. I should like to have such a report beginning with this quarter from the priest who attends the Fort Belknap School. For this reason I inclose report blanks for the four quarters of the current school year, which I will ask be filled out, signed and returned at the close of each quarter. The information contained in these reports is of value to us and we would be pleased to be furnished with them regularly.

Yours fraternally,

Rt. Rev. Msgr. William Hughes,  
Director.

CSL:JR