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Miss Joan Gilles,
R.L. #1,
New Westminster,
B.C.

From S. Matsumae,
Box 167,
Raymond, Alberta.

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Raymond, Alberta,

January 9, 1943.

Dear Joan,

Honestly, I'm so ashamed of myself. I just can't find the right words to tell you how sorry I am for being so long at writing to you. But I hope you understand, and forgive me, please???? To start out with "Hello to you all" and I hope you all had a nice "Xmas" & "A Happy New Year." (Though I never wrote a letter wishing you so, but I took granted that you meant it from me anyway.) However, here's hoping that this letter finds the Gillis' family in best of health.

Thanks ever so much Joan for your lovely present which you sent; it's just perfect & the thing I needed most. Honestly, I never dreamed of receiving such present as this under the present condition; I never expected to receive anything from ^{you} this year so you can just imagine how pleased I was!!! You know, we can't seem to break the "tie" between us & I hope that we never do. (not on earth, I want't.)

Well, here's me going back to school for another year. - Really??? but I doubt if I'll go back again next year (I mean if I am still in Raymond then.) Boy oh boy!! I'd give anything to be back at good ol' Queen Elizabeth. I'm suffering enough as I am now & I don't think I could stand for another year! After two whole months' work to catch up, it was impossible for me to

write to you. (I started school on Nov. 2nd, same
 day as Frank Ikeda.) I think I really could have
 written to you if I had tried harder. I don't know
 how it happened, but I'm sitting in the Grade X
 room anyway. French I, Soc. St., English, Health,
 General maths., Biology I, Home Economics are the
 subjects I'm taking this year, making a total
 amount of 30 credits for Grade X. If I go through
 school in Raymond, I'll have to come 2 years of Gr. 12
 to get all my credits. Credits start from Gr. 10 over
 here, and by the time you get out of high, you'll
 have to have a hundred credits. Only Typing I
 is given & Bookkeeping I and no shorthand writing.
 Home Economics & health ends in Gr. 10. Grades
 11 and 12 will not have to take health unless they
 wish to get some credits and take it with some
 lower grades. It certainly is a crazy way, don't
 you think, Joan? I get 11 study periods a week
 and that's monotonous so I wanted to take more
 credits, but the principle (Mr. Jacobs) said 30 credits
 is enough for a late-comer so I'm still carrying
 30 credits. You can't take more than 35 credits a
 year. Every Thursday, last period we get a 20 min
 seminary. Mostly everybody out here are Mormons.
 I never heard of this religion back in B.C. The

religions are divided into 3 groups; the Mormons, United, and Buddhists. I go to the United, & Mrs. Rolfson's our lecturer. Did you read an article in the school paper about Miss Gottenburg being married to Mr. Rolfson? Well, this is our teacher while Mr. Rolfson is a Mormon and he teaches the Mormon pupils.

There are no lockers in this school, and you just hang the coats up as we used to do in S. W. Public School, except that the coat hangers are way higher. The class room doors doesn't open until a teacher comes along & opens it for us. Do you know why the doors are kept locked? Out here, it seems as if the kids can't be trusted, & I think this is true! I had a brand new ruler and pencil and after one week it disappeared right off my desk! Was I mad. After that, I brought another new pencil & this one disappeared also. Now I don't carry a ruler or a pencil except for my new fountain pen which I keep it in my jacket pocket and take it around with me wherever I go. On the whole, work is fairly easy and not as much homework as we used to get back in B. C.

Tests out here seems just like those oral questions we used to have nearly every day. In June, they have the final examination. \$1.50 or \$1.70 per test. If I take every one of these examinations, believe me I'll be broke! They also take a Government examination in Grade 9. Kids say that Government exams are easier than teacher's exams, but I wouldn't know

unless I took one myself.

Oh, goodness gracious!! but are the boys noisy? They (the boys) run in the hall ways, run up or down the stairs, shout, fight, etc. in the school building and whenever the teacher comes, the teacher passes on without saying anything about behaving! If you're caught throwing chalks, the penalty is one new box of chalks for the school. The kids are allowed to wear slacks, kerchiefs, skii pants or ^{skit} suit, coats, etc. during classes. When they answer the teachers, their reply may be no, yes, sure, etc. And not - "no, sir", "yes, sir", and in cases of a lady teacher, "yes, so & so" or "no, so & so". The kids thought it was funny when I said "yes, sir" or "no, sir" to a teacher. This shows how much they are mistaken, & not us. Pupils aren't so co-operative as the ones back in B. C. schools and they think that their school is of a high standard, but not to me. Our building has only two floors, while the Public building has four floors. You see, Joan's High School & Public School are separate buildings. In the whole, public building is larger. Both buildings are made of brick.

For 3 months school starts at 9:30 A.M. because it is so dark in the morning around 9:00 A.M. Lunch is from 12:15 P.M. to 1:30 P.M. School begins again in the afternoon at 1:30 P.M. until 4:00 P.M. but there is a ten minute afternoon recess.

For a month, since we started, we walked to school until December 1, the van from the cheese factory began to run. In the mornings, the van isn't so crowded as in night because the driver makes 2 trips; but at nights, he takes us all in one trip so you can just imagine how crowded it is inside! The Raymond Highway kids gets on the first trip (this is us.) and the Stirling Highway gets on the second trip. We reach school around 8:30 A.M. so we asked the principle for permission to play basketball in the mornings. The principle said "yes" so we play in the gym, which is only about 3 of L.E.'s gymnasium. For P.T., girls may wear skirts, dresses, shorts, slacks, or even leather sole shoes because I do. In Lethbridge or Raymond, I went all over the shoe stores asking for girls' white running shoes, but they don't have any more in stock. After P.T. everyone's supposed to take a shower, but no one ever does, besides there isn't any time. Well, Joan, I think I've talked enough about school, so I think I'd better leave the rest for the next letter.

The weather certainly changes quick out here. Just last week it was so cold, but now, the temp. is up to 40° . The coldest has been around 20° below. Out here, even if it is 30° or 20° below, you can't feel it, but just to make people say "See, it's cold today." Once we walked 5 miles to school in 17° below zero. It was kinda colder than most mornings we

thought, but I didn't imagine it would be 11° below. The van didn't run at this time yet. When we rush and walk without resting, our body is warm, but our cheeks, nose, and chin are just about frozen. There are quite a number of families living at least 5 miles out of town, but I don't think there is any ^{family living} more than ~~five~~ ^{five} miles.

Almost every farmer has started threshing again since the weather is excellent. My Dad has gone threshing also, except that our owner's thresher machine is old & gets broken easily; then my Dad has to stay around the machine & fix it everytime. He's more of a mechanic than a wheat-hauler, but he doesn't mind as he likes the job as a mechanic better. You know, he's so small & short, he's able to go under the machine & fix it.

Our beet crop on the whole was satisfactory. It averaged around 11½ tons per acre, while most of the other crops yielded 9-9½ tons per acre. We harvested ours quite early so we did 5 acres of another man's crop. If we had just finished harvesting our ^{own} crop and then went to school, I wouldn't be so far behind in my school work.

However, I'm getting caught up on it soon.

Joan, do you know what I got for my birthday? Guess, — first. I got a pair of black skates!! Just what I had been wishing for the last three years, and now I got my chance to get them.

When I return home again, you & I could go skating to the arena or wherever there is a skating pond. (if you want me as a company.) I think that would be fun. There is a rink in Raymond town which anybody can go in free, ^{as long as they} ^{stay} want to skate. I believe it's open every afternoon until 10:00 P.M. and 12:00 midnight, only on Saturday nights. There is also some music playing from the girls changing room. There is also another rink for boys' hockey square next to the ^{large} skating rink. I practiced skating on Teruko's skates on the frozen pig lake. Here's where we go mostly after-school because it takes just about 8 minutes' walk, any anyways it's Maudslip, so he won't chase us out.

Well, I've written enough for now so I guess I had better close. It's such a long boring letter that it'll take at least 2 days to read it, and what a scribble. If you can't make it out, Joan, send it right back & I'll rewrite it over again. Perhaps that'll teach me to be more careful.

Hoping to hear from you sooner than I wrote to you -

Your pal as ever,
Lumi.