Aboriginal family at the Elkhorn, Manitoba, school. Indian Affairs took the position that once parents enrolled their children in a residential school, only the government could determine when they would be discharged. General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada, P75-103-S8-56.

opinion to the effect that "the fact of a parent having signed such an application is not sufficient to warrant the forcible arrest against the parents' will of a truant child who has been admitted to an Industrial School pursuant to the application." It was held that, without legislative authority, no form could provide school administrators with the power of arrest.[132] Despite this warning, well into the twentieth century, Indian Affairs would continue to enforce policies regarding attendance for which it had no legal authority.[133] This is not the only example of the government's use of unauthorized measures. In the 1920s, students were to be discharged from residential school when they turned sixteen. Despite this, William Graham, the Indian commissioner, refused to authorize discharge until the students turned eighteen. He estimated that, on this basis, he rejected approximately 100 applications for discharge a year.[134]

In 1920, the *Indian Act* was amended to allow the government to compel any First Nations child to attend residential school. However, residential school was never compulsory for all First Nations children. In most years, there were more First Nations children attending Indian Affairs day schools than residential schools. During the early 1940s, this pattern was reversed. In the 1944–45 school year, there were 8,865 students in residential schools, and 7,573 students in Indian Affairs day schools. In that year, there were