



The Qu'Appelle school at Lebret in what is now Saskatchewan opened in 1884. O.B. Buell, Library and Archives Canada, PA-182246.

Reformatory Schools Act in 1854 and the *Industrial Schools Act* in 1857.¹¹⁰ By 1882, over 17,000 children were in Britain's industrial schools.¹¹¹ Under Ontario's 1880 *Act for the Protection and Reformation of Neglected Children*, a judge could send children under the age of fourteen to an industrial school, where they might be required to stay until they turned eighteen.¹¹² Such schools could be dangerous and violent places. At the Halifax Boys Industrial School, first offenders were strapped, and repeat offenders were placed in cells on a bread-and-water ration. From there, they might be sent to the penitentiary.¹¹³ The Canadian government also drew inspiration from the United States. There, the first in a series of large-scale, government-operated, boarding schools for Native Americans opened in 1879 in a former army barracks in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.¹¹⁴

On the basis of Davin's report and developments in the United States, the federal government decided to open three industrial schools. The first one opened in Battleford in what is now Saskatchewan in 1883. It was placed under the administration of an Anglican minister. The following year, two more industrial schools opened: one at Qu'Appelle in what is now Saskatchewan, and one at High River in what is now Alberta. Both these schools were administered by principals nominated by the Roman Catholic Oblate order. The federal government not only built these schools, but it also assumed all the costs of operating them. Recruiting students for these schools was difficult. According to the Indian Affairs annual report, in 1884, there were only twenty-seven students at the three schools.¹¹⁵