

being met, “because of the appetite of this age group, the staff are finding 66¢ per day per student is limiting.”³³¹ In 1969, an official at Coudert Hall in Whitehorse wrote, “The \$0.80 allotted [sic] per student for food is not sufficient. In the north we find prices sky high.” To cope with the problem, the residence sometimes had to buy “less meat and served macaroni [sic] products.”³³² A November 1970 inspection of the Dauphin, Manitoba, school noted that the “menu appears to be short of the recommended two servings of fruit per day.”³³³

In their home communities, many students had been raised on food that their parents had hunted, fished, or harvested. These meals were very different from the European diets served at the schools. This change in diet added to the students’ sense of disorientation. Daisy Diamond found the food at residential school to be unfamiliar and unpalatable. “When I was going to Shingwauk, the food didn’t taste very good, because we didn’t have our traditional food there, our moose meat, our bannock, and our berries.”³³⁴ Dora Fraser, from the eastern Arctic, found it difficult to adjust to the food served in the hostels. “We were eating canned food, beans, peas, red beans. The food was terrible.”³³⁵ Even when traditional foods were prepared, the school cooks made them in ways that were unfamiliar and unappetizing to the students. Ellen Okimaw, who attended the Fort Albany, Ontario, school, had vivid memories of poorly cooked fish served at the schools. The school cook had simply “dumped the whole thing, and boiled them like that, just like that without cleaning them.”³³⁶

Bernard Catcheway recalled that in the 1960s at the Pine Creek, Manitoba, school, “we had to eat all our food even though we didn’t like it. There was a lot of times there I seen other students that threw up and they were forced to eat their own, their own vomit.”³³⁷ Bernard Sutherland recalled students at the Fort Albany school being forced to eat food that they had vomited. “I saw in person how the children eat their vomit. When they happened to be sick. And they threw up while eating.”³³⁸ These abuses led in 1999 to the conviction of Anna Wesley, a former staff member of the Fort Albany school, on three charges of administering a noxious substance.³³⁹

Some schools did make allowances for traditional foods. Simon Awashish recalled being allowed to trap for food while attending the Amos, Québec, school.

When we brought in hares, we were asked if ... there was some members of our nation that came to work in the kitchen, and we asked them to cook the hare for us in the traditional Atikameg way, in order to keep some sort of contact with our traditional food that we had before, before we were separated from our community.³⁴⁰

Students who spoke of hunger also spoke of their efforts to improve their diet secretly. Woodie Elias recalled being hungry all the time at the Anglican school in Aklavik. “Once in a while we go raid the cellar and you can’t call that stealing; that was our food.”³⁴¹ When Dorothy Nolie helped out in the Alert Bay school kitchen, she and her co-workers would eat bread as they sliced it. “Kids would come to me and ask me for bread, and I’d sneak it