



The Mohawk Institute in Brantford, Ontario, was just one of the schools that had specific “punishment rooms.” General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada, P75-103-S4-507.

where students should *not* be struck, it does not specify where they could be struck, or place limits on what students could be struck with; and neither are there limits on the number of blows. Third, it is not clear that these instructions were ever issued to the principals. If they were, they were soon lost and forgotten. In later years, when conflicts arose over discipline at the schools, Indian Affairs officials made no reference to the policy. In 1920, Canon S. Gould, the general secretary of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, asked Deputy Minister Campbell Scott, “Is corporal punishment for disciplinary purposes recognized, or permitted in the Indian Boarding schools?” He noted that whether or not it was permitted, he imagined that it was applied in every residential school in the country.⁴⁰¹ The first—and only—evidence of a nation-wide discipline policy for residential schools that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada has been able to locate in the documents reviewed to date was issued in 1953.⁴⁰²

The failure to establish and enforce a national policy on discipline meant that students were subject to disciplinary measures that would not, as Clink noted in 1895, be tolerated in schools for non-Aboriginal children. Four years after Reed asked his staff to issue instructions on corporal punishment, Indian Commissioner David Laird reported that several children had been “too severely punished” at the Middlechurch school. “Strappings on the bare back,” he wrote, was “too suggestive of the old system of flogging criminals.”⁴⁰³

Corporal punishment was often coupled with public humiliation. In December 1896 in British Columbia, the Kuper Island school’s acting principal gave two boys “several lashes in the Presence of the Pupils” for sneaking into the girls’ dormitory at night.⁴⁰⁴ When, in 1934, the principal of the Shubenacadie school could not determine who had stolen money