

who ran away numerous times also could be charged under the *Juvenile Delinquents Act*. In such cases, they could be sentenced to a reformatory until they turned twenty-one.⁵⁵⁶

The 1894 *Indian Act* amendments made parents who did not return truants to school subject to prosecution. The Mounted Police were often called in to force parents to send their children to school.⁵⁵⁷ The Blue Quills, Alberta, school journal entry for May 1, 1932, reads: "The savages having received the order to bring their children to school unless they want the police to get involved, some parents did obey the order today. But there are still those who turn a deaf ear."⁵⁵⁸ In 1937, a father who refused to return his son to the Sandy Bay, Manitoba, school was sentenced to ten days in jail. To prevent him from running away again, the boy was sent to a school in Saskatchewan.⁵⁵⁹

Parents were often outraged at having to return runaways. Wallace Hahawahi's father was reported as being "very indignant" at the prospect of sending his son back to the Brandon school in 1936. The boy was over sixteen and needed to help out at home. In this case, the father's argument prevailed and the boy was discharged.⁵⁶⁰ Another runaway from the same school, Kenneth Thompson, told the police, "I am a Treaty Indian of Assiniboine Indian Reserve, I am 17 year of Age. I wish to state the reason I ran away from school was because I have to work too hard in fact I do not study at all. I am working around the school all the time. I consider if I have to work I may as well work at home for my father."⁵⁶¹ Despite his argument, he was returned to the school.⁵⁶²

Indian agents often referred to ongoing truancy issues at specific schools as "epidemics." The agents viewed such epidemics as a sign of underlying problems at a school. In 1928, Indian agent J. Waddy wrote that at the Anglican school in The Pas, "hardly a day goes bye [sic] that one or more do not take leave on their own account."⁵⁶³ In 1935, ten pupils ran away from the Birtle, Manitoba, school.⁵⁶⁴ In the closing years of the 1930s, the Shubenacadie school in Nova Scotia experienced continual truancy problems. It was not uncommon for some students to make numerous attempts to leave the school. On the morning of July 7, 1937, Andrew Julian decided not to join the other boys assigned to milk the school's dairy herd. Instead, he headed for Truro, where he was reported as being sighted in the rail yard. He was not located until the end of the month. By then, he had made it to Nyanza in Cape Breton, a distance of 260 miles (418.4 kilometres) from the school.⁵⁶⁵ The following year, Steven Labobe (also given as LaBobe) managed to make it back to his home on Prince Edward Island. The principal decided not to demand the boy's return.⁵⁶⁶ Other boys were not so lucky. One boy, who ran away five times, was eventually placed in a private reformatory.⁵⁶⁷

Many students said they ran away to escape the discipline of the school. Ken Lacquette attended residential schools in Brandon and Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. "They used to give us straps all the time with our pants down they'd give us straps right in the public. Then ... this started happening, after awhile when I was getting old enough I started taking off from there, running away."⁵⁶⁸ Others were seeking to escape something far more sinister