

# FOREWORD

In publishing this booklet on the history of St. Theresa's Hospital, at Chesterfield Inlet, I wish to thank the author, Father Charles Choque, O.M.I., former Provincial of the Hudson Bay Oblates, presently researching the history of the Churchill-Hudson Bay diocese. Father Choque has graciously undertaken the writing of this history on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the arrival of the Grey

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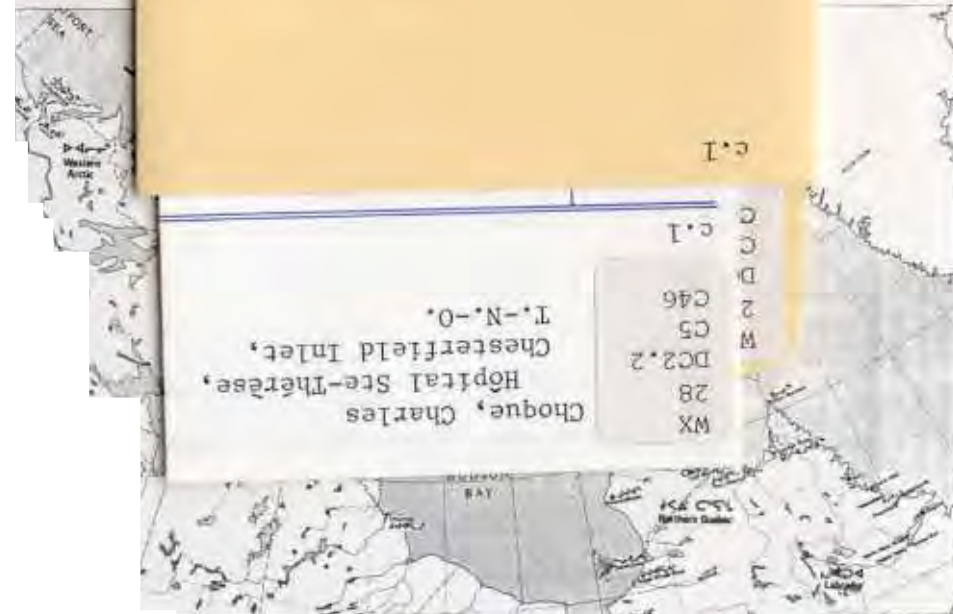
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Chesterfield is located on the N.W. coast of Hudson Bay, 500 kilometre north of Winnipeg

# St. Theresa Hospital

CHESTERFIELD INLET N.W  
1931-1981

by Re Charles Choque, O.M.I.

In September 1912, Father Arsène Turquetil, Oblate of Mary Immaculate, sent by Bishop Ovide Charlebois, O.M.I., bishop of Keewatin, came to Chesterfield Inlet to establish the first mission among the Inuit of Hudson Bay.

On July 2, 1917, on the feast day of Our Lady of Deliverance, patroness of the mission, thanks to the extraordinary intervention of Little Theresa of Lisieux, the first converts offer their foreheads - and their souls - to the mysterious contact with the baptismal water.

More and more, Father Turquetil becomes their "grandfather" in whom they place their trust; daily, he knows more about their language, their customs and their way of life. With them, he shares the joy of a successful hunt, the anxiety of families whose men are carried adrift on an ice floe, the cleanliness of a brand new igloo as well as the nauseating air of an old winter home which, lit by the weak flame of a seal oil lamp, seems like unfit for human beings.

Life is bad enough when the Inuit are in good health. If illness strikes or famine menaces, they are seriously threatened since they are far from the most elementary care or the minimum essential security.

Can we blame them for being afraid, for praying for help from the spirits, for seeking to pacify these spirits by beating the drum during endless sorcery seances, or for imposing again to please the spirits, very strict taboos which strike mostly the mothers? We can then only approve Father Turquetil and his companions when they preach not only the Gospel but also seek solutions to soften humanly desperate situations: the plight of the sick, the women, the elderly, the handicapped.

Having become Apostolic Prefect in 1925, Bishop Turquetil multiplies the mission posts. Wherever possible, he secures from the Canadian government medicines (they do not have even the most common varieties) to distribute to the Inuit who complain of afflictions such as ear infections, sore eyes, toothaches, abscesses, painful anthrax due to the mothers' deficient diet, a list as long as is the good will of the improvised doctors.

Professional medical doctors are seen only, at the time, once a year. They travail either on chartered government ships which brave floes and icebergs, to assert Canadian sovereignty as far north as possible in the arctic archipelago, or on aboard of the M. S. Nascopie. Each year, without fail, the latter drops anchor wherever the Hudson's Bay Company has raised its pennant, renewing the annual supplies in each trading post.

With the first snows, early in November, the Inuk, whipping his dogs, will lay his snares, hoping that the crafty small white fox will be caught. He relies on the value of his furs to secure tea, tobacco, flour and, above all, the needed ammunition for the seal or cariboo hunt. Without too much notice, the trap line becomes the frontier of his territory, the trading post store, its vital centre. Thus it erodes in him the ancestral nomadism which had made of him the undisputed king of the Arctic.

Since the beginnings of its northward expansion, Anglicanism has been closely linked to the Honourable Compagny which was desirous of making the natives faithful subjects of His Britannic Majesty. This policy was certainly to the advantage of the ministers of the Anglican faith, who made it a trump card in claiming exclusive rights, even in the area of health care.

Bishop Turquetil, a native of Normandy, is not a person who gives up easily, and once he is sure of his rights, he knows how to use diplomacy knowledgeably. He presents his case directly to the Hon. Mr. Stewart, the Minister responsible for the Territories; immediately the Minister revokes an edict of his deputy minister which forbids Catholics to do anything with the Eskimo without government approval. This decision gives the Bishop much liberty of action.

More and more, he feels the need to build a hospital at Chesterfield. Old Peter Maktar who is dying slowly in a miserable plank and moss cabin, where the Fathers came daily to redo his dressings, would be so much more at ease! And old Silu, too, would have profited; she died alone in her tent, while her adult children, encouraged by the traders, were dancing frenetically. In a hospital she could have died with dignity and, perhaps, as a Christian. And, of course, epidemics such as malignant grippe and debilitating dysentery which could be more easily controlled, but often deadly. Is it not following such an illness that Nuliayok's little girl was devoured by dogs?

The Bishop knows very well all the objections the officials will make, as the Department in Ottawa is also looking into health services for the Northwest Territories. Many hold Dr. F. F. Banting's opinion; after having visited the arctic regions in the summer of 1927, he says that the whites and its civilization cannot bring anything good to the Eskimos and that one should let them live on as they do now. Others hesitate, but would favour itinerant doctors instead of building hospitals.

The Anglican Church is definitely in favour of a hospital on Baffin Land. As soon as 1931, St. Luke's Hospital was opened in Pangnirtung, for the Eskimos of Cumberland Sound and neighbouring posts, where Dr. Leslie Livingstone began to work here in 1923, while travelling on the C.G.S. Arctic, the famed wooden ship of

renowned Captain Joseph E. Bernier. "An excellent surgeon", it is said of Livingstone, "he was an intrepid dogsled traveller, a knowledgeable prospector, a good hunter." By 1928, he is considered as the superior medical official of the Department of Health in Ottawa. These prophetic words are attributed to him: "Unless free assistance to the Inuit is strictly controlled, the latter are inevitably doomed to degeneration."

In 1929, a house is built at Chesterfield under the guidance of the Hudson's Bay Company post chief. It is to be used as general headquarters for the government health officials. Livingstone himself was the first to live in it a few months early in 1930. He found there, he said, a small population which obtained from the sea only a small portion of its food needs. This group was made up of elderly men and women who would, in the near future, create a problem.

Obviously Bishop Turquetil had also noted the problem, because he had set aside a special area where he would take in these indigent people. He knew from experience how, in the primitive and pagan Eskimo world, elderly persons were unable to pursue the struggle for life against the elements and often gave up. They would let themselves freeze to death or, better still, put their necks in a fatal noose which would end all human misery. Without judging these suicides too severely, Bishop Turquetil wanted to substitute for this entrenched mentality of desperation a much more humane and consoling vision of the Eternal Father, the "Nunaliorte", opening his Paradise, more attractive than any hunting ground...

Administrative difficulties having been solved in this same summer of 1929 Bishop Turquetil, who has a flair for business, buys all that is needed to build his hospital. Unfortunately, when the ship leaves for the North, no one knows why, everything is left on a wharf in Montreal. The project is postponed for one year.

Meantime a grippe epidemic falls upon Chesterfield and Father Armand Clabaut visits the tents, distributing pills and cough syrup. An old lady, named "Catholic", stricken with advanced tuberculosis, dies well prepared and fully resigned. The funeral is not fancy. A large crate from the store is used as a coffin; assessing both the weight of the box and the pagan attendance, Father Clabaut suspects that near the body, sewn in a cariboo skin, has been placed the old stone pipe of the deceased, tobacco leaves and maybe a few needles - in the hope of making eternal idleness less boring to her. There is probably also the old alarm-clock, the ticking of which will survive her but for a few hours, then fall also into the great silence of the kingdom of the dead!

"We are not interested in furs nor in precious stones," Bishop Turquetil often says in his homilies, "but in the Eskimos themselves and in their souls which we want to lead to heaven." Even poor Peter Maktar who languishes in his old cabin has heard these comforting words; because Mikilar, (Father Lionel Ducharme), has set up a loud speaker linked to a microphone in the chapel, thus modernizing the first miniature hospital where Christ's charity is the main healing agent.

The real hospital however is yet to rise from the ground. In July 1930, with a small motorized cement mixer, Oblate Fathers and Brothers will pour the

foundation. Brother Jacques Volant, (now in charge of the Eskimo Museum in Churchill) has much to tell about this work, as he is one of the devoted laborers who threw their hands, their sweat and their hearts into the project, under the direction of a lay brother from Edmonton, Brother Antoine Kacl, of Polish origin.

The Inuit who watch these feverish activities from a distance do not dare come near as Dr. Livingstone, because of a pneumonia epidemic, had enforced a quarantine, more or less observed because the "Igluligardjurmiut" find it difficult to refrain from visiting one another.

Once assured that the exterior of the building will be finished before winter, the doors and windows well closed so that the snow and thawing will not mar the interior, Bishop Turquetil boards the "Therese" (the Prefecture's ship), and returns to Churchill where he notes with joy that his humble bishop's palace is ready for him.

"Now," he writes to Bishop Augustin Dontenwill, Superior General of the Oblates, "I have to find a religious community which will take charge of the hospital," This is not easy! Already he had talked to the Montreal Grey Nuns; although the Superior General had been sympathetic, her administrative council had voted negatively. In the spring of 1931 Bishop Turquetil, having prayed to Little Theresa of Lisieux - even proposing naming the new hospital after her, sought out the Grey Nuns of Nicolet, at that time still independent from Montreal.

### **The Grey Nuns of Nicolet have accepted!**

On April 26, 1931, the Bishop addresses the Nicolet Sisters, beginning with these emotion charged words: "Ever since Little Theresa granted the great favour I received on easter Sunday, That is the assurance of your help and collaboration in the work of the Northern Missions, I am free to devote my energies to the advancement of the missions, especially organizing the hospital now being erected!"

The Nicolet Sisters had, therefore, accepted.

The news was sent to all the houses of the Congregation in these words: "Holy Easter day, April 5th, has brought us a great joy. As Christ appearing to the Holy Women sent them to announce his Resurrection, thus one of Christ's missionaries entrusted us, yesterday, to carry to an ignorant tribe the testimony of our faith through the heroic devotedness of our lives. (Circular letter from Sister Florida Doucet, Gen. Sup., April 7, 1931.)

On April 30 Bishop Hermann Brunault, of Nicolet, signs the official contract between the Apostolic Prefect of Hudson's Bay and the Superior General of the Grey Nuns.

This contract stipulates that all travel expenses and the upkeep of the four promised nuns would be paid by the Apostolic Prefect, "since the Eskimo country is a desert which does not produce much food and that transportation of essential

supplies is exceedingly costly, in order to support this work of charity the aims of the faithful are needed. The \$1,080.00 government yearly salary of the registered nurse, plus a daily allowance of \$1.50 for each patient-day is far from being sufficient to cover expenses."

Bishop Turquetil commits himself also to promote, the best he can, the religious life of the Sisters at his service, insuring them of the presence of a priest so they may attend daily Mass, confess regularly and have the spiritual exercises every year according to their Holy Rules.

"He hopes that his grand act of devotedness on the part of the Grey Nuns will bring heavenly blessings on their Congregation and would be a source of numerous vocations into their institute."

Bishop Turquetil can then rely upon the presence of four Sisters. But who will be chosen for such a difficult call? Sr. Doucet does not wish to impose such a difficult task on any one and asks for volunteers. There are numerous responses: Sisters Marie-Anne Fréchette, Adelaïde Fafard, St-Ignace-of-Loyola and Theresa-of-the-Child-Jesus are chosen. The first three already have had experience in Indian missions in Alberta; two are still working there. Sister Fréchette (1886-1972) has been in Cardston since 1924, as bursar of Blood Reserve Hospital, then cook at the residential school in Cardston, Alberta.

The General Administration of the Nicolet Grey Nuns assigns to them the responsibility for the "Hospital-hospice" of St. Theresa at Chesterfield Inlet. In her letter of obedience Mother Doucet compares the "Eskimos to diamonds which, with Sister Fréchette's life, full of sacrifice and immolation to the missionary priests, will assist in developing their full brilliance!"

Sr. Fréchette will be renewed twice in her position as Superior. She will leave the north finally in 1940 but her influence had been such that, in order to show his gratitude, Bishop Marc Lacroix, invited her to the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Hospital.

Sr. Fafard (1885-1972) leaves from St. Anne's Hospital at St. Célestin for the Frozen regions of the far north. "If I had to rely only on myself," she writes, "I would be afraid of the sacrifice expected but, since the Lord calls me, He will not fail in strenghtning my good will and support my weakness."

Sr. Fafard is a woman of all trades; she has proved this during nearly twenty years of mission work in the West. Cook, bursar, boy's supervisor, shoe-maker, nothing is beyond her. It is said that she even dug wells, swept chimneys and bled a calf and a pig to give meat to "her dear Indian children." This had been a good apprenticeship for one who is going to the country of the "Eaters-of-raw-meat." For thirteen years, she will be there as a cook, sometimes improving sparse menus with her good humour and a piety which will remain constant until the day when, at Nicolet, Hotel-Dieu, paralysed, a rosary in her hands, she will knock at St. Peter's door.

Still, to-day, the other two foundresses are alive and are in agreement that they prefer nothing be said about them. How does one react to this...? They did

nothing special: they obeyed God's will as expressed by their Superior's orders, they have given their lives for the Inuit... only that! One would think that, for them, there is nothing to boast about; the daily heroism which they lived was quite ordinary. Ask them for details about their missionary life, they will talk about the Fathers, the Inuit, but not about themselves. They had lived so long at Chesterfield Inlet that it was their home, and the Eskimos, their children.

Sr. St-Ignace-de-Loyola, who much later took her family name of Sister Anastasie Héroux, was born in Quebec, February 6, 1900. Having made her profession with the Grey Nuns of Nicolet, she was sent, in 1924, to the Biggar (Saskatchewan) mission. In 1930 she completed her studies as a nurse in Saskatoon and was posted to the Cardston Hospital where, according to the local diary, her good services and happy attitudes were appreciated. The people are sorry to see her go, but to her, as to Sr. Fréchette, "the same honour is given and the same sacrifice is requested: to go to Chesterfield." In May 1931, she leaves Alberta to visit her family briefly and to prepare for the long journey to the Hudson Bay.

Here is how Sr. Theresa-of-the-Child-Jesus is introduced to Bishop Turquetil by Mother Doucet: "the youngest of the chosen sisters bears the name of Sr. Theresa-of-the-Child-Jesus, and by a coincidence which seems auspicious to me, this little Sister Theresa (born July 17, 1906) presently is of the same age as the great "Little" Saint at her death, and she will sing the Lord's praises among the Eskimos". "Theresikulu", as the Inuit will call her, will fulfill her calling well; all her life will be a song of love and joy; through her melodious voice, her dexterous needle, her artistic taste, God will be infinitely praised.

As sacristan she will work miracles with whatever is at hand so that one can pray in beauty; she does not tolerate torn vestments or cassocks. If the little Jesus in the crib has a damaged finger, she will fix it before laying it between the ass and the ox. Her soul is of crystal, as is her smile, and, when she leaves the mission house after the weekly cleaning, everything shines.

In 1961, after thirty years of devoted service, because of ill-health Theresikulu will be recalled to Nicolet by Mother Clarilda Fortin, her provincial superior. "She accepts this sacrifice generously and," according to the chronicles, "she leaves to those who have known her more intimately an unforgettable memory in which affection is mingled with gratitude. She knew how to appeal to the Eskimos, old and young, and to put them at their ease."

But, before achieving this, the four foundresses had a long way to go. Let us look at them at Nicolet, June 21, 1931, when in the Cathedral, before a large assistance, they kneel in travel costume, before Mother General to receive their official obedience. Mother Doucet invites them to thank God, to rely on Him to save their own souls and to help mightily in the salvation of souls in pagan country.

Bishop Brunault repeats his words of admiration and sends them, in the name of all his diocese, to their far away mission. Bishop Turquetil, in full regalia, also expresses his gratitude to God and to the Grey Nuns; he asks the four chosen

ones to meet him in Montreal, Monday, June 29. From where they will go together for the Eskimo missions.

Their rail tickets are bought; their berths reserved and paid for, and moreover, he adds: with a smile, "they will have no problems with excess baggage." This is a reference to the fact that Mother Doucet had told him each Sister wanted to add something to her trousseau: "if need be," she suggested, "we will sort it out so as not to be over the regulation weight." Most important is that the trunks and hand baggage be on time at the station, because there is only one weekly train to Churchill and "it would be unfortunate," responded Bishop Turquetil, "if they should arrive there without a change of clothes."

In Montreal, after a visit to Mother d'Youville's tomb and to St. Joseph's Oratory, a final good-bye is said and the train departs with Sisters Fréchette and Theresa-of-the-Child-Jesus who will meet Sisters Fafard and St-Ignace in Ottawa.

On June 30, with Bishop Turquetil, they all leave for Toronto. It is impossible to sleep on the train as the heat is torrid, and the open windows let in choking dust. "It is fine this way," says the Bishop to console them, "you will not miss civilization so much."

They reach St. Boniface and finally The Pas, from where they leave for Churchill July 4. Now they experience 500 miles in a shaky railway car, travelling through a forest of white birch and green spruce. The train does not hurry on this swampy land, hardly unfrozen; time is found to get off and pick pretty wild roses on the right of way.

As they travel, the days get longer and the cool air, more penetrating, and the impression is gained that the last traces of human life are left behind. This is dispelled at the small stations where one can get off and mix with the local Indians at the town cafe for a two-bits cup of coffee, drunk at the accompaniment of enormous buzzing mosquitoes. Eventually the trees are more and more stunted. The Sisters count the miles left to travel; the numbers are indicated on small pegs.

About 10:00 p.m. on July 5, a Sunday, the train stops suddenly, seemingly nowhere. Actually this is the terminal. The Sisters and their baggage are driven by the Brothers to the Bishop's residence in the mission pick-up truck during a gale force wind and light rain.

The Bishop resides in a small wooden house, in the midst of boulders overlooking the seaport. The bell rings in their honor; the most important people of Churchill arrive to welcome them. After a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, it is supper time. Sr. Fréchette notes that Brother cook does his best but, ill at ease, he drops everything.

The Sisters go upstairs to their rooms where all has been prepared for them, even to nails driven in the walls to hang their clothes, wash basin, candles and matches, ink, two chairs, two tables against the walls, even two statues.

Bishop Turquetil has no more in the one room in which he sleeps, works, receives guests. There also is the stove to heat the whole house: an oil barrel open at one end and laid on iron brackets as legs.

Despite the bad weather Churchill is very active. Two thousand men are building railway sidings, the Canadian National Railway station platforms, a grain elevator, an electric power plant; in brief, they build the town as we know it today. The Sisters will have enough time to see it several times as the departure for Chesterfield of the M. S. Ungava, of the Hudson's Bay Company, is set for Monday, August 10.

The long wait does not cause them to lose their good humour; Sister Fafard takes over the kitchen; the sacristy is looked after; all the clothing repaired, everything that comes out of the warehouse for the missions is dried out and much time is spent writing letters to Nicolet and to relatives.

Meantime the "Thérèse" has brought building materials to Chesterfield where the Fathers and Brothers vie with each other to complete the new hospital. Nevertheless it is not quite ready when the Sisters arrive on August 12. The voyage has been good, in a calm sea, with sunshine. No one was sea-sick, not even the chickens, pigs and sheep they carried along to supply fresh meat to the Company posts.

## The arrival at Chesterfield

The Sisters' hearts beat quickly when the Bishop hands them binoculars. They see from afar "their" hospital, the object of their desires and of their vows!

Now, with the naked eye, they can see the white red-roofed buildings of the Company, set on a rocky point jutting into the bay. Then the mission comes into view. It overlooks a sandy beach, set between the sea and a fresh water lake. West of the hospital, they spy a house - the Doctor's and, to the left, upon a rise covered with grass, hiding the ground frozen the year around, are the R.C.M.P. barracks where reside two constables and Sergeant Wight, whose wife and three sons are also aboard the Ungava. Sloping down to the sea, a forest of poles and cables marks the site of the radio station which broadcasts the movements of vessels and storm warnings in the vast Hudson Bay.

Having landed, the Sisters follow protocol shaking hands with all Inuit who came to meet them. The mothers laboriously push out their naked infants from the "amaut." These babes timidly extend their small hands and frightened, disappear into the bag which is a cradle carried on their mother's back. A few elderly men and women whose tents are at some distance, arrive breathless and sweating; the bell had told them that the "nayait" had arrived...

The word "naya", (plural "nayait"), in Inuktitut means sister (or sisters) in the family context. It is a word which indicates both affection and service. For the Oblate Brothers, "ikajurti" (one-who-helps) will be used, specifying as needed the type of service: thus Brothers Gilles-Marie Paradis will be "ikkumaliriju". (one who takes care of motors); Brother Boisclair who died recently, will be called "igayikulu" (the one who cooks). Sometimes the observant and teasing Inuk finds

a more typical surname: thus Brother Volant will be all his life, "pikku" (the one who stoops slightly).

The Inuit and the Sisters, having climbed the sand hill which leads to the mission, enter the small church where Bishop Turquetil, praying in Eskimo, places the new arrivals in God's trust. The latter renew sincerely the offering of their lives for God's glory and the salvation of souls.

The immediate question is where they will live. The hospital is not ready. It is decided the Fathers and Brothers will live in it, letting the Sisters use the mission house. They are nine: Bishop Turquetil, Fathers Lionel Ducharme, Armand Clabaut, Alain Kermel and Joseph Massé (now all deceased) and Brothers Kacl, Volant, and Paradis, the latter having just arrived, full of zeal, from the "Belle Province". There is also Mr. Gagnon, a Montreal plumber hired to install the sanitation system.

The Sisters marvel at the work already done. In the evening, they go across rocky terrain to the graveyard, where a tall cross dominates the scenery, and sing their happiness. Behind them, like docile and shy puppies, a band of ill-dressed children follows and observes the first white women they have ever seen.

On September 5 the "Beothic", a Newfoundland ship chartered by the government, enters the roadstead loaded with one hundred and fifty tons of building supplies for the hospital, all transported free of charge. To facilitate the unloading between the beach and the building site rails have been laid on which a small wagon is pulled to and fro by a winch. Under the circumstances this is the peak of progress! The Sisters identify the boxes sent from Nicolet in the jumble of crates and bales. Unloading goes on night and day for four days, even on Sunday, - restricted only by the tides.

On September 14, 1931, the news of Bishop Turquetil's elevation to the Episcopate comes out. He has not said a word about it. It is in a somewhat indiscreet letter from Churchill that the premature announcement is made. In February 1932, Canada's press will report the grandiose celebration of his consecration.

Such news is worth a holiday... thus, the next day, the Sisters go out to pick spurge (a small fruit which grows in the moss and looks like yellowish-orange strawberries). Having overcome their shyness, the settlement's little girls lead the Sisters to bountiful patches, crossing land points, around lakes, scaring away here and there a timid partridge which takes flight. The harvest is good. What succulent marmelade it will make! Father Marcel Rio, just in from Baker Lake, will love it.

On September 16, work is progressing, since "heavy smoke comes out the hospital chimney." The well-built house, they said, will need little coal during the winter.

On September 20, a Sunday, the Bishop administers confirmation to a few people of various ages. They have long matty hair, their clothes are dirty and tattered and reek of a strong rotten fish stench. But they are all pious and with bowed heads. As the Bishop addresses them, they nod their approval.

Eight days later the solemn blessing of the hospital is held. Bishop Turquetil has postponed his departure in order to preside. To mark the event the Eskimos are invited to a banquet of pork and beans and dry biscuits washed down with much tea. The repast occasions smiles of delight from the guests as the phonograph plays popular dance numbers. Then, picking up the uneaten food, they disperse.

The Sisters spend the evening writing letters they will entrust to the Bishop. No one thinks of sleep, since the latter was to say Mass, the first celebrated in St. Theresa Hospital, at one in the morning; as one might guess the chapel is adorned with artificial roses and varicolored vigil lights. Everyone is moved as, after a quick lunch, the Bishop leaves Chesterfield aboard the Therese. For a long time the regular thumping of the engine is heard. Then they go to bed with a heavy heart.

Finally, on October 3, 1931, the foundresses move into the hospital. They could not have chosen a better day than that of the feast of the "Little Saint" of Lisieux to open their doors, at last, to anyone who would seek help. Even if only the first floor is completed, there is enough room. The balance of the work will be done during the winter. There is comfort. Nothing is lacking and every one feels safe, since over and above the acknowledged protection of Mother d'Youville, there are several stand-pipes and nozzled hoses in case of fire.

During the first winter, Sister St-Ignace readies the wards for the sick: a six-bed ward for women and a three-bed one for the men, plus a small private room.

The first Eskimo patient is a woman admitted officially on October 17. "She is a good old lady called Lucy, suffering of palsy; she shows us much trust and love." "Unfortunately, the Sisters cannot understand her and she knows only three words in English: 'good, good, all right!'" She will remain with the Sisters until June 4, 1932, when, feeling death near, she asks to return to her family to die.

On October 21, poor blind Marie-Anne, widow of Pierre Maktar, is admitted with her grand-daughter, both taken in as "indigents." The local police supply them with rations and the hospital, a welcome roof. Then an epileptic girl and her mother, unable to earn a living, are admitted.

The year bides ill for the hunt; fishing is no better. Early in November, Father Clabaut, and John Ayuar go fishing under the ice, but return empty-handed; fortunately, the hospital stores are full of preserves and there is no fear of scarcity. Near the basement entrance door a large mound of ice is put up in pieces 35 centimetres thick by 40 centimetres wide by one metre in length; as the need arises these are taken inside and pushed into a 3,000-gallon tank near the furnace; melted, it supplies water for the building.

Something is about to happen in Nicolet: Mother Marie-Anne Cayer will replace Mother Doucet as Superior General. The Bishop broadcasts the news through Churchill radio. The Sisters are happy but contain their joy as they are on retreat for the feast of the Presentation.

Since there is no resident doctor, Sister St-Ignace, is responsible for health services. Most of the time all is quiet. But, in December, old Krinerski causes a

near panic. Below the ear, his neck is devoured by cancer; a professional sorcerer from Eskimo Point, he is distrustful, never smiles and schemes to commit suicide. One day he runs away from the hospital, asking everyone he meets to put an end to his life. Sergeant Wight is notified, but already the sharp cold of the night makes the fugitive reconsider and he returns on his own to the "nayat." Gradually God's grace had been working and Father Ducharme had enough time to instruct the old man so that, when the fatal bleeding began, he received Baptism and died happily. Could there be a greater reward for the Sisters' devotedness?

At Christmas time the Inuit come in from the interior, their families and possessions loaded on sleighs. Igloos erected everywhere grow like huge white mushrooms. The Sisters, who watch through the lightly frosted windows of their common room do not realize what is happening. They see the women and children going down to the lake with a large ice chisel, a bowl and a skin bottle to fill with water. Meantime the men pick up the dog harnesses and traces and place them beyond reach on top of the igloo dome. With axes they cut up the little meat that is left, throw it to the hungry dogs who gulp it and then go to sleep curled up in the snow.

When the Sisters come down the hospital's outside stairs to attend midnight Mass, a splendid moonlight brightens the landscape. The cold seizes them, condenses their breath and fills their lungs with pure dry, icy air, in strange contrast with the undefinable odor which strikes them as they enter the chapel. All this is quickly forgotten as the "Kuyannamik, Jesuse annigmat" sounds off, announcing the mystery of Christmas.

After Mass, following a custom which will endure for many years, whites and Inuit meet in the hospital basement for the "réveillon." On Christmas morning, all come back to attend high Mass, also the Rosary, recited in the afternoon. A supper follows with various games afterwards. "Mikilar" immortalizes these events with magnesium photos, filling the hall with flashing lights and acrid smoke.

During the next few days the Inuit go back and forth between igloo and store, trading a few ox or seal hides.

Thus the year comes to an end. Everyone is happy, and it is appropriate to spend the last hour of the year 1931 in thankful prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. Theresikulu, the youngest of the four foundresses, so tiny she almost disappeared one night in a snow bank, admits being nostalgic about two of her religious sisters, one of whom, Sister Cécile, will later share her life in the North.

But, as she writes, "I have not come here to seek consolation but to work for the salvation of souls and through joyously accepted sacrifices and fervent prayer, I will succeed: let us go at it whole-heartedly!" This sentence, by itself, explains the entire life of these heroic women and adequately justifies the fifty years of existence of St. Theresa's Hospital.

Their's is a simple and joyful life, given gladly in silence and prayer as well as in the spontaneous laughter when tricks are played and, in card games where the theological virtues, replacing Kings and Aces, always triumph.

The Fathers of the Mission, as well, know how to entertain their neighbours with improvised concerts, broadcast over a local transmitter, making them believe they originate in Quebec. "We nearly died laughing;" the Sisters say.

To really take care of the Inuit one must speak his language. The Sisters understand this well and do their utmost to learn the essential words. Every evening between 7 and 8, as they visit the settlement's people, they use what they have learned. Nothing pleases the villagers more than to hear the "nayat" speak their language. And also, how much more interesting it is, for the Inuit to recite prayers and sing hymns when they understand the words. But a text is needed!

Since the patients are not too numerous the Sisters mimeograph 159 copies of the prayer book, 100 in syllabics for the Inuit, the others in roman type. It is a community project: Father Ducharme makes the stencils, Sisters Fréchette and St.-Ignace print them, while Theresikulu and Sister Fafard gather the sections and bind them. "It is a major enterprise which will banish loneliness for a good part of the winter."

Outdoors, it is 50° Fahrenheit below zero, sometimes more. We are in January 1932. The cold weather does not prevent the Inuit from attending Mass early in the morning, nor the Fathers from visiting the igloos wherever a sick person needs solace or when a child is to be baptized. Sister cook has also supplied them well with food.

On February 4, it is worthy of note, the first Eskimo baby is born in the hospital; its mother is all the happier since she had already lost two premature children. The next day, after Mass, the new-born is baptized and is named Alphonse Naukatsik. The father is delighted, it is a boy!

During February Father Ducharme is confined to bed due to excessive fatigue. The Sisters take care of him very well because they love and respect their spiritual father. He is not the very first one to be treated thus, since Father Alain Kermel, before returning to Eskimo Point, had been hospitalized for a sore foot, caused by the same illness which would soon force him to leave the North. This was the first symptom of paraplegia which would force him to spend the rest of his life in a wheelchair.

Many more Fathers will benefit by the know-how of the nursing Sister. In 1938, Father Julien-Marie Cochard will be brought out of Arctic Bay by Father Paul Schulte, the "flying priest," and treated at Chesterfield by Dr. T. Melling who resided there from 1936 to 1939.

His brother, Dr. J. Melling, took over; he looked after Father Joseph Buliard who, at Repulse Bay in the fall of 1939, froze both hands seriously. The doctor gives by radio to Father Marc Lacroix the most elementary instructions to fight incipient gangrene and sends the patient south to receive more adequate care.

## The first resident Doctor

The first Doctor in charge at St. Theresa Hospital will arrive there August 13, 1934, on board the "Severn", a Hudson's Bay Company ship. He is Dr. Stanley

Livingstone, whom we have already mentioned. He knows the place well. He arrives with his widowed sister, Mrs. Élise Thompson, whom the "nayat" find very pleasant. She had come to prepare the Doctor's house so he can receive Miss Mabel Anderson who was to become, when she alighted from the ship on September 26, Mrs. Livingstone! Reverend James, Anglican minister at Baker Lake, officiates at a ceremony held in the living room of the house, thus uniting two staunch Presbyterians for life.

As much as the Sisters are happy, medically speaking, to have their own Doctor, so much so they find him a little rigid in admitting patients. The Sister act according to their hearts while the Doctor consults his papers! From then on, he alone will decide if this or that patient needs hospitalization; he will set the consultation hours; he is the one who will grant or refuse help to the indigent. As to the elderly people who do not need medical care, let them seek another refuge!

Bishop Turquetil does not agree and goes to Ottawa to plead the cause of his dear Eskimo people. Ottawa sees his reasoning and a section of the hospital is set aside for the elderly, the mentally and physically handicapped, the ill-treated or abandoned orphans. Later, a workroom will be organized where, besides working hides, the women will learn sewing from the Sisters, while the men, under the supervision of the Oblate Brothers, will spend their time making fishing nets, sculpting in ivory, steatite and whale bone.

The Bishop knows that young and old will find in the Grey Nuns an image of Christ's charity which will help them accept their conditions and, perhaps through the contact of their communicative goodness, a few hardened pagans may find the road to Faith.

One can only understand a hospital like the one at Chesterfield in the light of the Cross that surmounts it like a beacon for all who, lost in a blizzard, find their way back, as well as for those who have not yet seen the light of the Gospel.

For such a hospital to function well and without friction, perfect harmony is necessary, not only within the Sisters' community, between Sisters, Fathers, and Brothers, but also and mainly between the personnel and officials of the Health Services. The Doctor is largely responsible for the ambiance within the hospital.

From 1934 to 1942, and from 1944 to 1958, ten doctors served at Chesterfield, each one with a different temperament, but all competent. The last one was Dr. Jean-Charles Patry, of Victoriaville, P.Q. He spent four years in Chesterfield with his wife, who gave him there his first two children. On February 1, 1958, as he was returning home from a visit to the Rankin Inlet mining centre, the airplane, caught in a fog, crashed on the ground. No one was killed, but Doctor Patry was so badly hurt that, in April, he left the North for good.

Few Doctors like isolation, as they feel the need to update themselves continually with their colleagues and thus keep up with the progress of medical science. No matter what the reason is, there will be no longer a resident Doctor in Chesterfield.

Throughout the hospital chronicles, the frequency of epidemics is notable. It seems that each ship's arrival is marked with a general influenza. Later the same will be said of the airplanes bringing in the mail. Possibly the Inuit do not have yet the resistance to illness-bearing germs from the Whites, specially at the close of a long, debilitating winter.

In July 1932 it became necessary, for the first time, to set up beds on the second floor to receive patients. However, this is not a grievous epidemic since, a few days later, all are very busy welcoming Bishop Turquetil mark his recent Consecration with flags, banners, garlands and fire-works.

In January 1933, small-pox attacks the children, then the adults and, becoming more serious, the elderly, Mrs. Sipialak dies of it; she was a pitiable old lady who had found the way to smile through contacts with the Sisters.

Besides small-pox, dysentery strikes, and the patients become so numerous that the Sisters have to give up their own dormitory to make room for them. A ray of sunshine: Jean Ayaruar arrives with eight caribos, the first fresh meat of the winter.

There are many sick people in the settlements. Sister St.-Ignace visits those who live in nearby igloos, thus tasting the pleasures of travelling by dog-sled.

In March 1934, after a period of very mild weather followed by a brutal cooling off, there is a new epidemic of grippe - undoubtedly the same strain that, more to the north in the Depot Island area, has caused the death of Niakrodruk, who has been baptized by Father Fafard, who named her Tirisikulu, and whose life he has written up in a booklet entitled, "A Flower in the Land of Ice."

In July 1936, despite very fine weather, the children suffer an epidemic of sore throat. It is not as serious as the one in 1944 when many children die while the Doctor can not precisely diagnose the illness. He even tries to operate on them without success. About twelve angels go to heaven.

In 1945, as the children are playing with small colored balloons celebrating the end of the World War, whooping-cough spoils the festivities; one more death is reported.

In 1948 while the Sisters, at the close of their devotions in honor of the Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys of St. Joseph, are preparing for the Solemnity, grippe strikes the population like an ill wind, beginning for the Sisters, with a head cold.

As the end of a week, everybody recuperates, except old Étienne Krimuksirar who dies well prepared and having received the Sacraments. He had desired wholeheartedly to see God. He leaves his wife Philomene and his daughter Sabine, whose face is entirely tattooed, in the care of the "nayat." Sabine will spend her whole life working at the hospital as charwoman.

Old Étienne had always refused to go to the hospital until feeling worse, he asked to be admitted. Sister Cécile Bisson was the nurse in charge. She gave him his first bath; "with much patience, soap and water. I managed to find the color of

his skin," she says with a smile. Life in a tent or igloo does not facilitate frequent bathing! It is not surprising, then, to see numerous children with scabies, as in November 1947, in Chesterfield.

The year 1948 will remain noted in the local annals for the visit, July 29, of the Very Rev. Superior General of the Oblates, Father Léo Deschâtelets accompanying Bishop Marc Lacroix, and by Pélagie Pubvalerak's decision to enter the Grey Nuns, beginning her postulancy August 4.

Also, alas! because of the tragic events in which I was personally involved. I discovered while on a visit to old Johnny Siudluk's camp that five adult Inuit had died there within five days. Returning from Tavanee, Dr. Joseph Moody imposes a quarantine as a measure of prudence. The autopsy performed on one cadaver brought to the camp indicated, it will be noted later, poisoning by ptomaine, a highly toxic alcaloid which is found in spoiled or rotten meat. It is known that, in the old days, Eskimos liked their meat well aged. The quarantine is lifted as danger of contagion is unlikely. Everyone breathes more easily...

But, not for long. Sister Pélagie has just taken her vows as a religious, and Father Paul-Henri Dionne has recently gone back to Eskimo Point, as poliomyelitis strikes. People are only one step away from accusing Father Dionne of having brought the illness.

On February 21, 1949, three died; on the 28th, there are twelve deaths. It is 43° below zero; and morale is low. Alerted, Ottawa despatches an epidemiologist and other specialists who, having performed lombar punctures as well as autopsies, confirm the diagnosis. It is polio. Quarantine is ordered for the entire Arctic, as Eskimo Point and Padlei are also struck.

On March 6, thirteen patients are evacuated on stretchers. A ski-equipped airplane lands on the lake and takes them to Churchill and to Winnipeg. St. Theresa Hospital is filled to capacity and yet more sick Inuit arrive from the camps. Father Roland Courtemanche, director of the Mission, and the Brothers help the Sisters; consoling the survivors, heartening those confined in bed and covering the dead with rocks.

Little by little the virus loses strength, the acute phase is over. On April 26, a group of doctors arrive, examine the survivors and look into what can be done to rehabilitate them. Nurse Constance Beattie, a physiotherapist, is already there to give specialized treatments. Progress is notable, but she does not understand why Doctor Moody continues to evacuate the sick. As the decision had already been taken, she will accompany them on board the "Canso" with six patients, August 12, which will never arrive at its destination as it crashed in flames near Nelson House, leaving no survivors. Nurse Beattie will be remembered as a devoted, joyous and conscientious person. The Inuit loved her.

This tragedy will weigh heavily on the Inuit who, for a long time, refuse all evacuation. Epidemics continue: chicken-pox, measles, influenza, all quite benign compared to long-time number one enemy: tuberculosis.



On July 28, 1954, ten Inuit leave for the sanatorium, prelude to a long exodus from all areas of the North which will fill for many years the Manitoba sanatoria of Clear Water Lake, Brandon, and even St. Vital (for the Central Arctic Region).

As of August 1940, St. Theresa Hospital has the necessary X-ray equipment. However, specialized teams, coming by air or by ship, cover the Arctic to track down all cases. In 1954, a complete wing of the hospital is set aside for the tubercular so as to avoid contagion.

## Teaching Sisters at Chesterfield

Quite happy with the good care given to the sick by the Sisters, Bishop Lacroix, who succeeded Bishop Turquetil, would like to have them also take care of the education of the Eskimo youth. In 1953, two Sisters teach at the day-school, opened in 1951. They are Sisters Elisabeth Herauf, principal, and Pauline Côté who, having suffered a heart attack, will be unexpectedly replaced by Sister Thérèse Plante, assistant-nurse, as impromptu teacher.

Until 1955 both teachers belong to the hospital community under the direction of Sister Jeanne Marcotte. Then, until 1955, after the building of the students' residence, a distinct community is formed with Sisters Geneviève Rocan, Denise Émond and others.

This community will last as long as the residence, that is until 1969 when "Turquetil Hall" will become an education centre for adults. But, if there are two communities, one only spirit of service inspires both, inviting them to share their joys, anniversaries, the feasts of the Grey Nuns' Congregation as well as their severe trials.

Such was the influenza and the measles epidemics which strikes the residence in August 1956 and which causes many deaths.

The hospital is full. This is just after it has celebrated the 25th anniversary of its foundation, in which Mother Élie, General-Assistant, took part as did Sister Fréchette, happy to see Chesterfield once again.

Since 1931 the hospital had seen many changes. It was extended eastward in 1949 and to the west in 1956, and imitation brick gave it a new appearance.

Between 1956 and 1981 many improvements are made: besides the introduction of the telephone in 1965, and of television in 1979, the electrical wiring is renewed and the heating system changed from coal to oil. All this is due to the know-how and silent devotedness of Brothers Gilles-Marie Paradis, Jean-Marie Tremblay and Roméo Boisclair. The latter will fix up the basement to house a post-office from 1962 to 1976 and, later, a trading post managed competently by Brother Raymond Bédard.

It would be unfair not to mention in this narrative which cannot, alas! report everything, all the good Inuit who, since the hospital was built, have helped tremendously either in supplying fresh meat: cariboo, seal, fish, or in working

inside the building as mechanics and carpenters, as well as assuring continuous supply of water and ice, hauling coal and oil, and – a job which nobody likes – cleaning out the garbage. Since the sudden death of Brother Boisclair in November 1979, the Inuit are solely responsible for the maintenance of the hospital.

One may wonder if operations were done at St. Theresa Hospital. Indeed! There were amputations: a gangrened finger or foot, appendectomy and amygdalotomy, to mention only a few. However since 1958 the operations are performed in Churchill or Winnipeg. Although there is no longer a resident doctor at Chesterfield, a plethora of doctors, dentists, psychiatrists, social workers, health workers, health services administrators come for a few hours or a few days at a time, usually enjoying, each one according to his speciality, not only the hospital facilities but also the generous hospitality of the Sisters.

To prevent the recurrence of epidemics, polio vaccines come into use, followed by those against diphtheria and small-pox. In 1967, a nurse came from Churchill especially to inoculate vaccine against tuberculosis which is now in notable regression.

However, alcoholism, another evil as pernicious, has fallen on the north, alas! It does not spare the Chesterfield people who live too close to Rankin Inlet. When this plague strikes, the nurses are called any hour of the night to mend wounds, sometimes to open the door to shivering children, afraid of their quarrelling and nearly dead drunk parents.

But where do the Sisters find the strength to smile facing all these human miseries? The Inuit themselves are not mistaken. They know the "nayat" are women of prayer. It is enough to say to a slightly noisy visitor: "Nayat tukisiartut" (the Sisters are praying) that he immediately lowers his voice and waits patiently until they finish their devotions to present his request to "Ananatsiar" (the "grand-mother"), Mother Superior.

We can say without hesitation that, during the first years of its existence, the Chesterfield community of Sisters was like a smaller "Nicolet," with the prescribed religious exercises, a precise timetable, the community bell, the traditional recreations and the compulsory silence where consecrated souls find time to listen to their celestial Spouse.

What a joy when, on July 22, 1940, Mother Marie-Anne Cayer, Superior General, came to visit bringing with her Sister Eva Piché, the new Superior, and Sister Juliette Thibault. Their laughter and tears mingle in a Magnificat of welcome!

On March 1st, 1941, the Nicolet Congregation of the Grey Nuns joined the one in Montreal. In August 1944, it was the Superior General of the Grey Nuns of Montreal, then Mother Évangéline Gallant, who brought them the solace of a motherly visit, taking advantage of the aircraft which carried Rev. Father Anthime Desnoyers, assistant-general of the Oblates.

Mother Gallant was in Chesterfield when the news was heard of the M. F. Thérèse's sinking. The loss of the supply ship affected the Sisters deeply; they sympathized heartily with Bishop Lacroix, and, the chronicles say, "adoring the designs of Divine Providence, we say together our 'Fiat'. Mother Gallant could be proud of her daughters; Mother d'Youville would not have reacted better."

In May 1954, Mother Flora Sainte-Croix, General Superior, also made a canonical visitation at Chesterfield; while she waited for the airplane which was to take her to Churchill, she visited a few igloos well preserved by the cold.

In 1962, Mother Clarilda Fortin, provincial superior at Nicolet, undertook the long voyage to Hudson Bay. This was a time of change in religious garb. The Grey Nuns also modernize their garments. On March 24, Mother Marie-Ange Laramée, expert and devoted cook at the hospital, came back from vacation in a renewed costume! A few days later, Sister St-Ignace, the superior, follows her example. The Inuit hardly recognize her!

Fortunately the habit does not make the monk, nor the nun. Mother Georgette Leduc, who had come to the 50th Anniversary of foundation of the Eskimo Missions, reminded the Sisters of it, invited them to walk always in the steps of Mother d'Youville and showed them the film of the Beatification of their Foundress.

Six years later, in 1968, Mother Leduc, still Superior General, returns to Chesterfield. She is accompanied by Sister Cécile Maurice, provincial of the Grey Nuns of St. Boniface province. An important event has just been taken place: deeply affecting the Chesterfield community, the hospital will hence be linked with the St. Boniface province of the Congregation. It will thus be better able than Nicolet to supply English-speaking personnel and St. Boniface is much more accessible.

The mission also has a new director: Father Roland Courtemanche is replaced by Father Joseph Mééus, simply called "Josepi" by the Inuit. His good humour - and a tune on the guitar - will help the Sisters accept belonging to a new community, the evolution of which will be deeply marked by Vatican Council II.

In April 1969, Sister Thérèse Isabelle, a Manitoban, replaces at the infirmary Sister Liliane Bradette who is joining the Sisters of St. Claire's in Rivière-du-Loup, Quebec. In November, Sister Isabelle is recognized as public health nurse by the government. She will then visit Repulse Bay regularly. On May 21, 1970, she represents the Chesterfield community at the ordination of Bishop Omer Robidoux, O.M.I., called on to succeed Bishop Lacroix who had resigned at the end of 1968 on account of ill-health.

Bishop Robidoux is anxious to visit the Eskimo missions and already, on July 12, he pays a short visit to Chesterfield with the Hon. Jean Chrétien, then Minister of Northern Affairs. As he always will do in the future, he arrives in time to awaken the people... This time literally, since it is Sunday and the arrival of the "Twin Otter" awakens the villagers. After Mass the Bishop has barely time to visit the

hospital and its small group of handicapped, before the airplane flies on to Repulse Bay. It is raining heavily.

Of the four foundresses, only Sister St-Ignace is at her post; save for a two-year stay at Pelly Bay to keep company with Sister Victorine Servant, she will remain at Chesterfield until May 1974. In March 1971, in recognition of her many years of devotedness to the Inuit, she received the "Commissioner's Award". When she leaves definitely all the population wants to show its gratitude: her old friend Victor Sammurtuk gives her two ivory figurines he has carved. The animator, Sister Rosanne Lemaire, expresses the affection of all the community.

Alas! Sister Pelagie is no longer a member of this community. In 1970 she chose to return to her people at Eskimo Point where she would eventually get married. Later, in 1972, Sister Isabelle takes over the health services at Pelly Bay. In 1973, leaving their posts of teachers at the day-school, Sisters Dolorès Lussier and Lise Turcotte leave Chesterfield, the first for a new obedience in St. Boniface, the other to be in charge of diocesan pastoral services in the Hudson Bay diocese, residing first in Churchill, later in Rankin Inlet. At the end of 1975, there are only six Sisters at Chesterfield.

In November of the same year, eyes filled with the brilliant celebration in Rome of Bishop de Mazenod's Beatification as well as with the panoramas of the Holy Land, Father Courtemanche leaves Frobisher Bay and comes back to replace Father Rogatien Papion. He is alone. The mission house is much too large. He closes it and moves into St. Theresa Hospital, establishing his rectory, from 1962 to 1969, in the room on the first floor where the older boys of the residence had lived under the paternal eyes of Father Pierre Henry.

As to "Turquetil Hall", many years since the property of the government, it has been sold to the Inuit for the nominal value of one dollar. I note this because the village council hopes to transform it into a native art workshop and a hostel to shelter travellers, most of whom, until now, had room and board at the mission or at the hospital.

It was believed at one time that Chesterfield would be absorbed by Rankin Inlet, but now the village is very much alive and desirous of taking the future in its own hands. At Christmas 1975 the traditional banquet is held in the "Recreational Hall," at \$2.50 a plate, or \$5.00 per family. Sister Bernadette Poirier, provincial at St. Boniface, had the pleasure of sharing this meal and of tasting delicious cariboo meat. On the days followed she has a chance to see cariboes very much alive, crossing the end of the lake.

When Mother Denise Lefebvre, Superior General, comes to Chesterfield in July of the same year, the question is put to her: what does the future hold for St. Theresa's Hospital? The government is planning to build a nursing station, leaving to the Sisters, as their main task, the care of the handicapped.

In June 1976 the government takes the census of all handicapped in the Territories. In July a social worker comes to study "the physical and social needs

of the handicapped children of Chesterfield Inlet Hospital; in August an inquiry is made into the facilities for patients of this category - all this no doubt following conversations between Bishop Robidoux and the Health department in order to set up a new contract to replace the previous one.

In July 1977, after many snags, the new clinic is finally viable. Sister Marie Boulet accepts its direction and the necessary equipment is moved in the new building.

As she is on call twenty-four hours a day, she will reside in it, taking her meals with the community and attending the common meetings now essential to the survival of religious Congregations. In May the Sisters have the occasion to hear Father Fernand Jetté, Superior General of the Oblates, who was then visiting a few of the missions with Bishop Robidoux, speak of religious life after Vatican II.

Sister Alice Gauthier succeeds Sister Boulet in the handicapped ward, (she is assisted by Sister Gertrude Ponton), and also becomes animator of the community, in close liaison with St. Boniface.

On July 9, the funeral service of Helen Krisuk is held; she had died in a Winnipeg hospital. Born albino, she had been taken in at an early age by the Sisters. She often tried their patience, going as far as swallowing her prayer beads or pins; she also helped as much as she could. Helena's body was not buried among the rocks like her ancestors, but placed in the new graveyard, alongside a friend who had drunk, during a night of orgy, a mixture of beer and methyl alcohol! To the Sisters, Helena's death is almost like that of a member of the family.

The St. Theresa Hospital Sisters' first preoccupation is certainly the health care of the Inuit, but they wish to radiate beyond the walls of their abode, to take an active part in parish apostolate such as discussion groups with the older students on vocation, vocation to Christian life, particular vocations within God's people.

They are able to attend renewal sessions as well, not only from the viewpoint of religious but from the professional aspects - Catholic hospitals congresses, specialized training for the care of the handicapped and, for the registered nurse, attending official meetings of the nurses Association. In 1978, however, Sister Boulet will be exempt from participation in the nurses' strike, her services being considered essential to the welfare of the Inuit.

All these meetings call for long and expensive trips, also for lengthy absences: and, even though the landing strip is in perfect shape the weather does not always cooperate and flights are delayed.

At the end of 1978, the entire hospital building is renewed. Walls, ceilings and doors are covered with fire-proof gyprock as required by fire prevention regulations. Thanks to every one's cooperation the job is done in six weeks. Visiting the hospital in December, Bishop Robidoux expresses his satisfaction; so also does Sister Poirier, provincial superior, who arrives the day after Christmas.

Happy is their renewed home, all the Sisters will come into the year 1979, lighted candle in their hands, charity in their hearts...

In 1980, Sister Marie Boulet, having taken ill, was obliged to return to Saint-Boniface, Sister Marie Bonin, the new Provincial Superior, mandated Sister Georgette Charette to replace her as local superior in January 1981.

Really, nothing has changed since 1931.

As long as the Grey Nuns are in Chesterfield, the mentally and physically handicapped will find mothers... and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, faithful co-workers.



Sr Rollande Girard et William Okamaluk, d'Igloodik, T.-N.-O.

Sr. Rollande Girard and William Okamaluk, of Igloodik, N.W.T.