



The *Great* Canadian
Catholic Hospital History Project

Documenting the legacy and contribution of the
Congregations of Religious Women in Canada,
their mission in health care, and the founding and operation of Catholic hospitals.



Projet de la *Grande* Histoire
des hôpitaux catholiques au Canada

Retracer l'héritage et la contribution des
congrégations de religieuses au Canada,
leur mission en matière de soins de santé ainsi que la fondation et l'exploitation des hôpitaux catholiques.

**Sisters of Service
Edson, Alberta
1926-1986, 60 Years of Service
St. John's Hospital**

Source: Archives of the Sisters of Service,
Toronto, Ontario

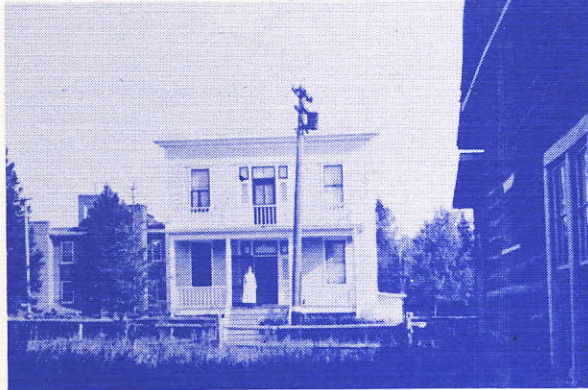
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Sisters of Service

Edson, Alberta

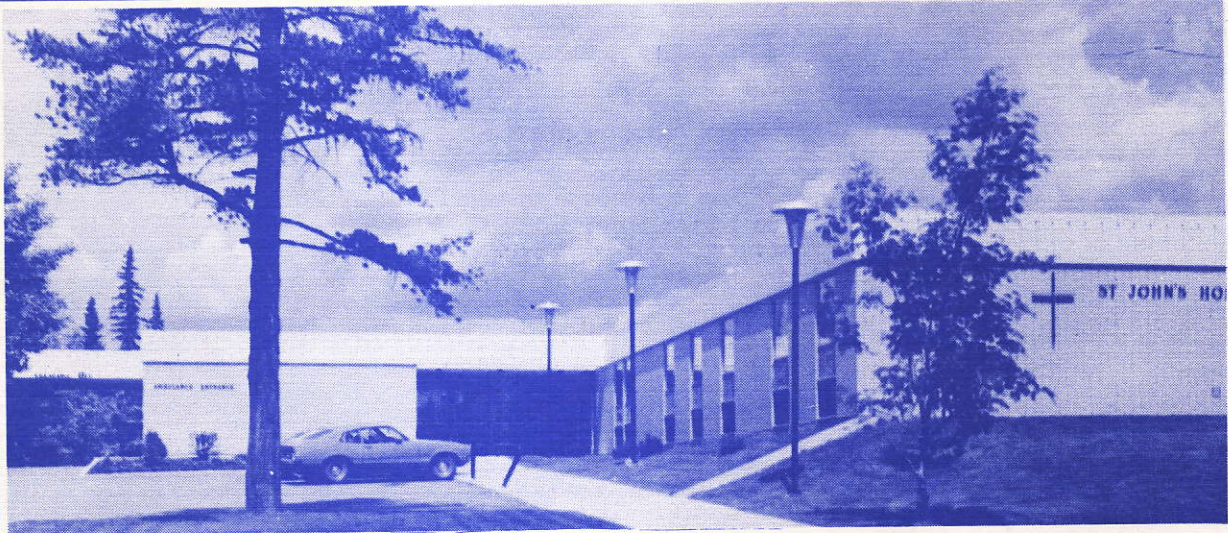
1926 — 1986



1926 - 1931



1931 - 1969



St. John's Health Care Complex

60 Years of Service

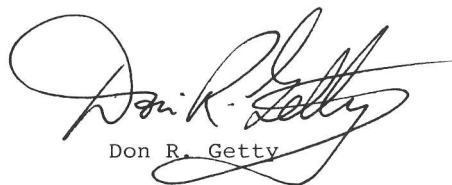
St. John's Hospital

Message from Premier Getty

I am pleased to extend greetings, on behalf of the Government and Province of Alberta, to the Sisters of Service on the occasion of your 60th anniversary of association with St. John's Hospital in Edson.

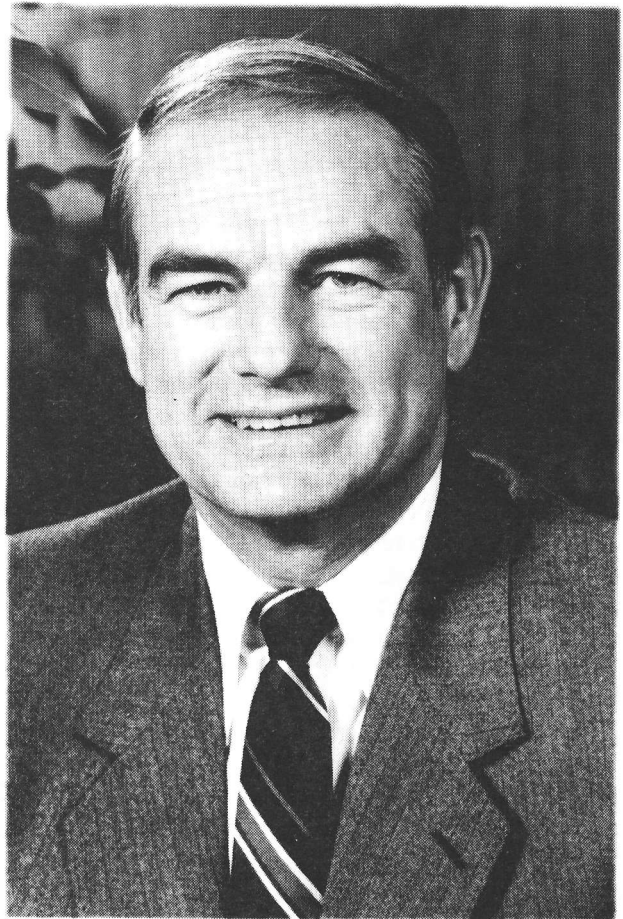
Since 1926, the dedication and perseverance shown by the Sisters of Service to St. John's Hospital has been immeasurable. I am sure that the people of the Edson area join me in saluting your contributions over the years.

Please accept my best wishes for continued success in the future.



Don R. Getty

July 16, 1986



From Sister Kathleen Allen:

Anniversaries bring us back to beginnings and who and what was responsible for the accomplishments made. The Sisters gave unstintingly and received from our 'friends' in Edson and district much in return.

We acknowledge our appreciation for all the help, financial and physical, but especially for your friendship, cooperation and trust.

This growth has been accomplished through the efforts of many people. First there was Father George Daly, C.Ss.R., one of the founders of the Sisters of Service who accepted the challenge to serve the people of the district, and guided and directed the Sisters in the take-over and reconstruction of the Lady Minto Hospital.

The pioneer Sisters with Sister Catherine Wymbs, R.N. (first Administrator), and Sisters Rodgers; McNally; E. Donnelly; A. Brunning, R.N.; Beatrice DeMarsh, R.N; M.A. Burke; A. Geraghty; M. Paradis; H. LaMothe; M. Quinn, R.N., and others who worked long hours so well and cheerfully.

The doctors are remembered with affection and gratitude. The pioneer doctors in our district were Doctors McCordic, Patton, Johnston and Tiffin. We remember these specially as well as the doctors who succeeded them — the doctors who came and went, and those who are with us now.

Many service organizations have been very generous with donations to purchase equipment and continue to do so in 1986. Also we are grateful to the individuals and families for their donations, their friendship and help.

To our Board Members, Ladies' Auxiliary, Volunteer Workers and Staff, past and present, we extend our thanks; and to our friends in the hospital and government, both local and provincial.

We can't forget our dedicated Clergymen from our first Pastor, Father T. Ryan, to Father T. Kroetch, our present Pastor and Chaplain; including the Clergy of the various local Churches.

As for the patients we have cared for in our hospital and sometimes in their homes, we love them all.

Over fifty individual Sisters have served the people, many for many years, some for lesser periods. Teaching Religion has been one of our works from the time of our arrival to the present. Sister Paradis was Organist at the Catholic Church shortly after her arrival in Edson, and so it has been with others who succeeded her until 1986 we have Sister Anita Hartman, and sometimes Sister Daley.

In the 14th Chapter of St. Paul to the Romans, St.



Paul said: "The Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating or drinking, but of justice, peace, and the joy that is given by the Holy Spirit. Whoever serves Christ in this way pleases God and wins the esteem of men. Let us then make it our aim to work for peace and to strengthen one another."

Thank you and God bless all!



Phase 1 — 1926 - 1931

In October 1926 the Sisters of Service of Canada took over an old abandoned hospital in Edson, Alberta, known as the Lady Minto Hospital.

Lady Minto was the wife of Lord Minto, Governor General of Canada from 1889 to 1903. Previously, Lord Minto had served in the Riel Rebellion and had been offered a post as Commandant of the North West Mounted Police.

After their return to England, Lady Minto sent to the Canadian Red Cross a donation to build hospitals in the rural areas of the West. These hospitals were hence called "Lady Minto Hospitals".

Hospital History One of Achievement

The following article by Sister Margaret Guest appeared in the *Edson Signal* in 1958. It tells residents of the history of the Sisters of Service in Edson and the widespread area from the Coal Branch to Shining Bank, Wildwood, and Evansburg, through St. John's Hospital.

— — —

On February 6th, 1914, a representative group of the citizens of the Town of Edson held a meeting and passed a resolution to incorporate themselves into a society known as the "Lady Minto Hospital, Alberta".

It was then resolved to accept an offer of \$3,000 from the Victorian Order of Nurses towards the building of a hospital which would be operated and maintained by this Order.

Following the meeting, a request was made to the Town of Edson for a further sum of \$2,000 and a site of land suitable for a hospital. This was granted. On May 11, 1914, the Edson Construction Co. was engaged to erect a two-storey building. The work must have been completed during the summer months, for a resolution was passed at a meeting on October 16 to place a mortgage on the building.

Emergency Centre During 'Flu Epidemic

There is no record of the hospital being used after erection, but on January 25, 1916, a resolution was passed at a meeting of the Corporation to write to the Victorian Order of Nurses regarding the furnishing of the hospital.

(We have been told that the building served as an emergency centre under the direction of practical nurses among the women of the town during the influenza epidemic of 1918.)



St. John's Hospital — October 1926 - December 1931

On April 8, 1921, a meeting of the Corporation was held and Nurse McRoberts, VON, was present. She agreed there was a real need for a hospital in the area, but there would have to be more assurance of financial support if her nurses were to operate one.

She pointed out that it would take between \$5,000 and \$6,000 to repair, alter and furnish the existing building which would not provide more than ten hospital beds unless a nurses' residence was added to the hospital.

On September 2, 1921, it was decided to change the name Lady Minto Hospital to Edson General Hospital. Eleven days later another meeting was called and a resolution was passed to advise Nurse Reeves of Provost, Alberta, that her offer to operate the hospital, rent free for one year, was accepted for October 1.

For Sale Motion Defeated

On August 22, 1922, the resignation of Nurse Reeves and her assistant was accepted for October 1. Nurse Reeves was present at the meeting and reported that she had admitted 83 patients with almost a thousand hospital days at the date. She also stated that the hospital furnishings were worth \$1,165.

A motion was made and seconded that the hospital be put up for sale, but this motion did not carry. (These facts were taken from records kept at the Town Hall.)

The building must have been entirely vacant from October 1922 until the summer of 1926 when negotiations were underway for the transfer of Edson General Hospital to the Sisters of Service of Canada, with headquarters in Toronto.

The building was now in need of extensive repairs which were made at the Sisters' expense, and the building was rechristened St. John's Hospital.

On December 8, 1926, it was officially opened, and on December 9, two patients were admitted: Mr. Bedome with a fractured hip, and Joe with an injured foot. Both were Workmen's Compensation cases. After discharge, Joe remained as maintenance man and orderly, when required.

A graduate of St. Boniface Hospital, Sister Wymbs served overseas during World War I. She was awarded the Bronze Medal of Honour by the French Republic in thanks for noble deeds bestowed on the wounded in France. Sister Wymbs was appointed as the first Superior of St. John's Hospital at Edson, and at that time it was feared that the 15 beds in the hospital would not be able to meet the needs of this isolated population, as there was no other hospital between Edmonton and Kamloops, B.C., at that time.



Sister Catherine Wymbs

Sister Catherine Wymbs First Matron

Sister Catherine Wymbs (deceased February 1954), who had served in the Canadian Army in World War I, came as matron of the hospital and the superior of the first group of Sisters assigned to work in Edson.

Conditions were primitive in this first hospital and the limited space made it difficult to operate. Plans were soon underway for a new building — a two-storey brick building with a full basement — at a cost of approximately \$90,000.

This sum would not go very far today towards building a hospital, but it was a great debt to assume in those days.

St. John's Hospital

In August 1926, the contract was given to Mr. J.J. Doyle of Edmonton to repair the old building which had been bought for the Sisters of Service by our founder, Rev. G. Daly, C.Ss.R.

The meeting of Father Daly with some of the influential men of the town with regard to a hospital grant, was held in the front room, and, as chairs were rather scarce, boxes and nail kegs were used for seating purposes.

Sisters Wymbs and McNally went to Edson to see the hospital to get an idea of the equipment needed, number of beds, etc. Father T. Ryan, P.P., met the Sisters and took them to the Imperial Hotel as they had to remain overnight.

When they went to the hospital they saw a large, dilapidated, two-storey square building with numerous windows (only a few escaped the expert stonethrowers of the village).

Inside, the plaster had fallen and floors were ruined. There was a huge skylight in the operating room through which snow and rain found many inlets to the regions below.

Mrs. MacDonald, president of the Altar Society, introduced the Sisters to several ladies who were very kind and interested.

When paying the hotel bill before leaving, the



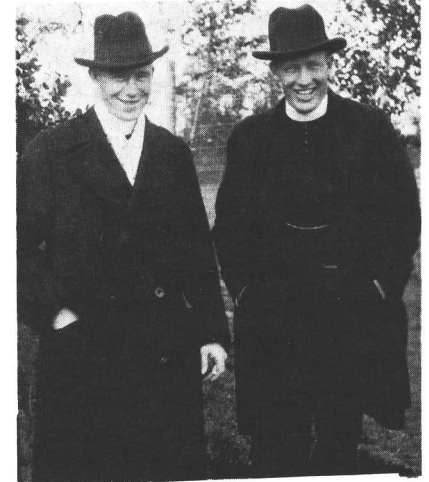
Sister Eveleen Donnelly, M. Rodgers, M.A. Paradis, and F. Eagan with one of our first patients, 1927.



First patient in the old hospital, Joe Vondra, December 9, 1926.



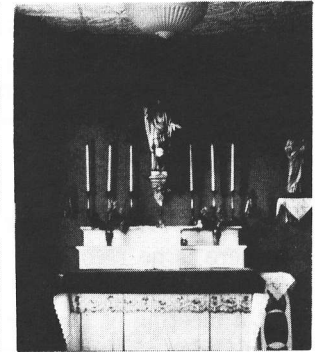
Marie Tenta, Laundress



Fathers McGowan and Ryan



"Doc Tiff"



"The Powerhouse"

SISTER AGNES BRUNNING
succeeded Sister Wymbs as
Superintendent in 1931.



manager handed back the amount paid as a donation to the hospital.

Busy Days

The days were very busy. Mrs. Wilcox was hired to help with the work, and Mrs. Fred Hindle will ever be gratefully remembered by the Sisters of Service for her kind and generous help. She and Sister Rodgers made the sash curtains, painted the radiators and screens, etc.

The name "St. John's Hospital" was owing to a gift of \$5,000 made by Mrs. T. Small in memory of her brother, John Korman.

When the Sisters arrived and opened St. John's Hospital, there were two doctors working in the town: Dr. McCordic and Dr. R. Johnston. Dr. M.E. Tiffin arrived shortly afterwards and was well known as "Doc Tiff" to all who knew him and loved him. Nothing was too difficult for him — from orthopedic work to delivery of babies, or repair of severe lacerations of lumberjacks, miners and railroaders.

Father Timothy Ryan was Pastor in 1926. He was succeeded by Fathers Art McGowan, Kennedy McLean and Cornelius Landrigan.

Sister Catherine Wymbs was the Superintendent until she was succeeded by Sister Agnes Brunning in 1931.

Other Sisters on the staff were Sisters Mary Rodgers, Catherine McNally, M.A. Paradis and H. LaMothe.

A Miss Hildebrand, R.N., was one of the first lay nurses employed; her salary was \$65 a month. There was also a Miss McNamara, R.N., and a number of temporary nurses from the General and Misericordia Hospitals in Edmonton who helped in times of emergency and busy seasons.

Mary Koebel (nee McMullen) was also employed in the hospital in the early days, and later George Koebel was added to the staff as engineer in 1931.

In Sight of the Rockies

(From January 1927 and 1929 Field at Home)

Being a division point on the main line of the CNR between Edmonton and Jasper Park, Edson is an admirable location for a hospital. South of this point there are some 5,000 miners in the coal fields at the foothills of the Rockies.

The Sisters have been extremely busy around the Christmas season. The work was so heavy that our Sisters had to hire two lay nurses to help them.

A collection taken up among the people of Edson for our St. John's Hospital, shows how much the work of the Sisters is appreciated by the railroad people and miners of this town and vicinity.

In addition to working in the hospital, the Sisters radiated as catechists into the mining camps south of Edson, where there are some 5,000 miners in the coal fields. Many visits were also made to poor families in the rural areas in Yates and Rosevear, etc.

The Frontier Line

(From January 1927 Field at Home)

The Catholic hospital on the frontier line of the Mission Field stands out as one of the highest expressions and living symbols of Christian charity.

It has always ranked in the vanguard of our missionary efforts, often blazing the way to the return to or the acceptance of the true Faith. For as Pius IX said to Ozanam and his worthy disciples: "When the world has ceased to believe in miracles and sermons it still believes in charity."

The precept and the example of the Master has given to the Catholic hospital this place of prominence in the Mission Field. The corporal works of mercy are an integral part of His Gospel. Do we not read of the Saviour that — "He went through all the towns and villages teaching in Synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and *healing all diseases and infirmities*. Many followed Him and He healed them all." (Matt. xii, 15). And as proof of His Messiahship did He not say to the Precursor: "The blind see, the lame walk and the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear." Did He not command His Apostles to do likewise: "And into what city soever you enter — heal the sick that are therein and say to them: The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." (Luke x, 8-9). Pius XI, in his memorable letter on Catholic Missions, orders the missionaries to take an interest in the public health of the community and to minister to the sick, so that the hearts of the people may be easier won over to the Gospel by the kind offices of charity.

First to Erect Hospitals

This lesson and example of the Master was always held in favour by our missionaries throughout all ages. The first missionaries in our Western Field followed them to the letter. They were the first to erect hospitals at various points along the mission trail. The larger Catholic hospitals which now serve the needs of our larger Western cities were a few decades ago but frontier hospitals in sparsely-settled towns. But with immigration the frontier line has been pushed back. Can we say

that our hospitals have followed the settler into the hinterland of our prairies? The rapid extension of our larger hospital-units in the cities have so absorbed our forces that we seem to have left the rural field to non-Catholic organizations. These various churches have dotted the Western field with small hospital units so as to meet the needs of the new settlers.



FATHER G. DALY

It is not a case of saying with the Master: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." (Luke xvi, 8). The multiplication of these small Catholic hospital-units, in our estimation, would have better the interest of Faith and Charity than the present large developments of our city institutions. A more even distribution of our forces would have been more profitable to the souls of our people than their concentration in our large urban centres. For the rural hospital remains a missionary and charitable endeavour. It offers greater scope to the charitable efforts of the individual Sister and offers more occasions for real Christian Charity. Our present large city hospitals, we must admit, are so controlled by exigencies of state and civic and federated-budget regulations, that the hands of our Sisters are tied and their charity becomes as it were commercialized. Moreover, the administration of these large units so absorb the forces of our sisterhood that the nursing sister hardly comes in direct contact with the patient, who is thus deprived to a very great extent of her soothing care and spiritual influence.

Realize Our Mistake

Under the pressure of events we have begun to realize this mistake in our policy. This explains the program of extension that is now in progress in various parts of our Western provinces.

In accordance with this missionary ideal, the Sisters of Service, like some others, have gone out to the very fringe of the country to minister to the sick and the dying. Moreover the rule of their institute prohibits them from accepting large institutions in towns and cities. It is essentially a missionary endeavour. Pioneer work is the special calling of the Sisters who have taken as the motto of their life the words of the Master, "I have come to serve."

G. Daly, C.Ss.R.

Some Choice Snippets from

Father Daly's Early Letters

November 25, 1926

"I hope by this time that you are quietly settling down in your new foundation. I was greatly impressed by your little hospital and its great possibilities. The only fear I have is that you will be over-burdened with work, but I will do my utmost to help you. I will send you Sister Paradis after her vows, which she takes on December 9, and I will try to get you Sister Brunning for a few months if it is at all possible. But you know it is not always easy to know how to meet the various demands — but, let us have confidence in God. He will be with us, for we are working for Him, and Him alone."

†

December 10, 1926

"Be economical in your expenditures, for I can assure you that Edson is going to cost us more than we thought of in the beginning, only I can tell you *confidentially* that I had an interview with the President of the Canadian National Railways, Sir Henry Thornton, and he has promised me \$1,000 a year for ten consecutive years for your hospital. Have courage and do the work for the love of God and souls."

†

December 24, 1926

"My heartfelt congratulations on the opening of your hospital. I just received a letter from His Grace, the Archbishop, who is very much pleased with his Sisters at Edson.

"Take my advice and buy as little on the installment plan. It is far better to do without a thing for a time and get it when you are able to pay.

"In the meantime, be full of cheer and carry on the good work. We are all behind you with our money and our prayers. Only, I would ask you to proceed very economically. Make no other important expenditure without referring it to headquarters, as the Edson Hospital is costing us far more than we ever expected to spend, but like yourself I believe in its paying power.

"Do not worry about it, I will see to it. With renewed best wishes to you and to all of the Sisters."

†

February 1, 1927

"You know your health is an asset with which you must count . . . If you see the necessity of hiring a nurse even for some time do it by all means.

"Our hospital at Edson was a rather heavy undertaking for the small number of Sisters we had to dispose of but I do hope that all will work out for the greater glory of God and His Church. The field is open for great missionary work, particularly in the mining district south of you. I hope to see the day when Edson will have become a most flourishing centre."

†

August 3, 1931

"Yes, my dear child, there is a lot of trouble in the world today, and I am afraid we are facing a terribly hard winter. We shall be called upon to do a great deal of charity so let us husband our forces and finances to meet the emergencies of the hour. To help others, to be of service to others should always be our joy, for we are then in our real vocation.

"As to George M.'s letter re paying off his bill in vegetables, I would suggest he pay *some* of it in that way, for as he writes himself, you will likely be 'drowned' in vegetables at the fall of the year.

"Bad times will not always be with us — so look at the 'silver lining' — of the passing dark cloud."

†

March 6, 1935

"My sole desire, my dear Sisters, is to see your Institute do 'well' what you are called to do in the Church of God. You owe to God and to the Church the best that is in you."

†

October 26, 1935

"My dear Sisters, if we do the right thing, if we lead a real religious life, if we are truly apostolic and zealous for the conversion of souls and the welfare of the Church, Providence will always come to our assistance. The only thing I fear at times is, shall we always be worthy of this special protection of Divine Providence?"

†

October 2, 1939

"During the war period particularly I would ask you to live strictly within your means and not take on burdens that are not absolutely necessary. Beware of payments on the installment plan. At first it looks very easy, but you would be surprised how heavy this burden can become when you have to add these monthly installments to the ordinary running expenses."

Phase 2 — 1931 - 1969

Official Opening — October 15, 1931



OFFICIAL OPENING — October 15, 1931



Left to right: Sisters H. LaMothe, M. Morgan, A. Blaney; Archbishop H.J. O'Leary; Dr. M.E. Tiffin; Father Daly; Sisters M. Burke, C. Wymbs, and C. Egan.

October 15, 1931, will go down as one of the most important dates in the history of the Town of Edson, Alberta, for at 2:30 in the afternoon, His Excellency H.J. O'Leary, Archbishop of Edmonton, and M.A.D. McMillan, Mayor of Edson, met at the hospital, and each cut a ribbon which was drawn across the main entrance, and so officially proclaimed St. John's Hospital open to the public.

Father C. Landrigan, Parish Priest of Edson, was chairman for the occasion, and introduced the various speakers, who were all eloquent in their praise of the new hospital.

His Excellency outlined the history of the coming of the Sisters of Service to Edson, and told of the sad conditions which existed prior to their arrival.

"I remember some ten years ago when I first came to Edson your hospital was in ruins, and a large number of people, probably three or four thousand, in this vicinity, were practically without hospitalization. The conditions were very sad. Children were born under conditions which were a disgrace to modern civilization; the sick

had to be sent to Edmonton in order to receive proper medical attention . . . now the people of Edson have a splendid new hospital with equipment equal to any large city hospital in the country . . .”

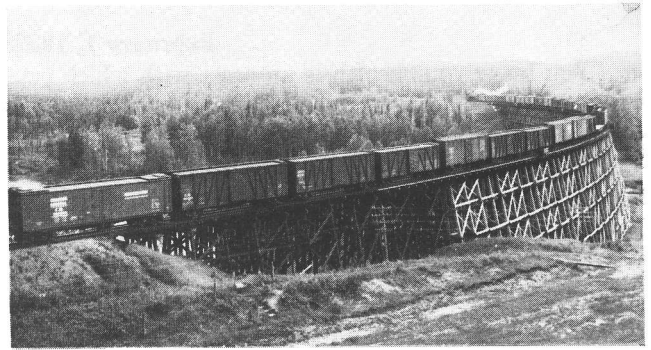
“The idea came to my mind that something had to be done. I heard that the good Victorian Order had tried to run a hospital but had failed. I sent Father Hughes, now of Regina, to study conditions and find out if the situation was as grave as it seemed to me. He investigated and replied that something should be done for the people of this district. I communicated with the Victorian Order. They said that they would be glad to assist me, but doubted if it would be a financial success, as they finally donated their share in the old building.

“It was then that I met Father Daly. Once he told me that he would undertake the venture, I felt safe that your district would receive not only the necessary but efficient service. I have often had the opportunity of speaking to the good Sisters, and they have never been able to speak too highly of both the doctors and officials of the district in this matter. At all times they have been loud in their praise, and it was only as I expected, for nowhere else could we find a more generous hearted people than in this district of Alberta. These Sisters have worked with you and seem to feel that they love you. They are a voluntary organization and have left their homes and consecrated their lives to one purpose, that of labouring for the Master and love for humanity. It was only as a result of their generous response and service that you yourselves responded and their efforts have been a success.”

“When Father Daly came to me and proposed the construction of this new hospital, I was doubtful. Times were hard and money was scarce, but such was Father Daly’s faith and that of the Sisters that they persuaded me almost against myself to make the venture. Life is not constrained by a few years, hardly by decades, rather by centuries, and when we look back and consider that in these foothills of Alberta fifty years ago there was hardly a human being, we can realize that Father Daly’s optimism was something more than an illusion. We look forward to the evidence of this optimism with enthusiasm.

“After all, this hospital belongs to nobody but you. It is true that the management may be handed to the Sisters, but it is also true that it must become your responsibility, because its service to the public who find their needs met therein. I notice that the operating room is one of the finest; the equipment equal to many of the large city hospitals. You have here also a very extensive amount of fire protection.

“I want to congratulate Father Daly. He has at all times been a friend of Western Canada. He has always been a booster of Western Canada. It is because he is a man of vision. We all feel the weight of these days, but in



BIG EDDY BRIDGE to the Coast and Coal Branch.

fifty years from now these days of depression will seem a very small thing indeed. And Father Daly has the vision that in later days there will be a population in Northern Alberta of 70,000 and that in this Province we will have one of the finest populations of people on the earth. Therefore, he has not hesitated to build this hospital, investing more than would seem prudent.

“I also want to congratulate the sisters. They have left all that the heart holds dearest. I have often been asked what it is that makes the work of the Sisterhood so successful. It is that they are taught to see in every sick person the Master Himself, and to minister to that sick person with the same devotion and the same love as they would to the Master Himself. They have now facilities to work with and that work must continue to develop and grow.

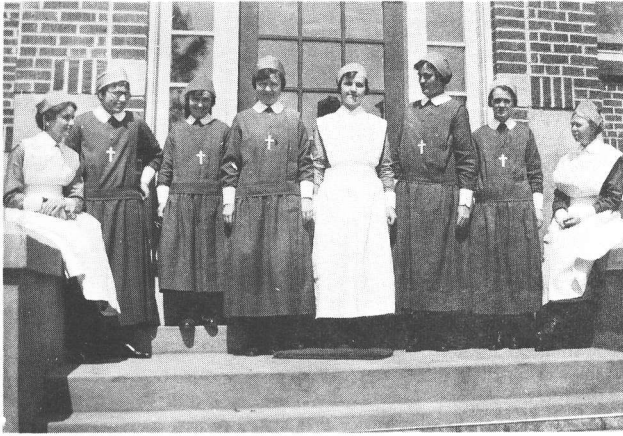
“I want to congratulate the Canadian National Railway for their sympathy with this hospital work.”

Father Daly Speaks

Reverend Father Daly, C.Ss.R., who was present for the opening of the hospital also spoke of the coming of the Sisters of Service to Edson and stated that though beginnings seemed so dark, the Sisters had carried on, trusting in a brighter future, and their hopes had now been realized. “So, on this great day,” concluded Father Daly, “I wish to thank you all for your kindness to the Sisters of Service. They came five years ago, and are still living among you. They are dedicating their lives to your sick; and let us never forget that life is the dearest possession we own . . . On behalf of the Sisters I wish to thank the doctors. They have been most unselfish in their work, and surely there is no profession wherein a man has to sacrifice himself so much as that of a doctor? . . . and then may I also thank His Excellency, to whom, after all, we owe this hospital . . . He is a great Canadian, not only a great Archbishop . . .”

Superintendent McDonald, of the Canadian National Railways, who was also present on the occasion, very pointedly marked the contrast between the present-day institution and the few spasmodic efforts that had been made in the past to establish a hospital.

The Sisters



1936 — Left to right: Sisters M. Bohan, B. DeMarsh, A. Geraghty, M. O'Hare, A. Brunning, H. Furman, M. Muldoon and C. Wymbs



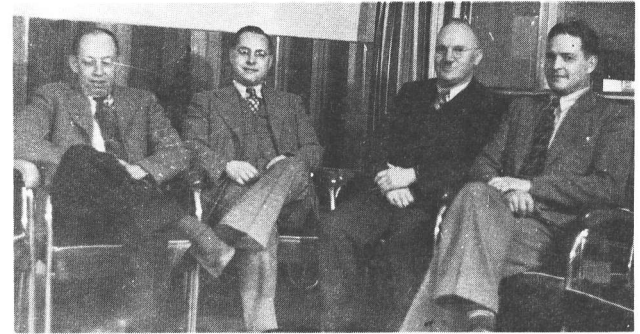
1939 — Retreat and Final Vows — Front: Sisters Ella Deland, L. Tyler, M. O'Kane, A. Geraghty, E. Donnelly, M. Corke, and R. Jolicoeur; back: Sisters C. Albury, S. Dube, M. Regan, R. Mill, M. Fitzgerald, and A. Brunning



A WELL-EARNED PICNIC at Pyramid Lake, Jasper, 1939 — Sisters G. Walsh, R. Jolicoeur, M. Fitzmaurice, M. Quinn.



DR. TIFFIN found these workers good targets for snowballs — January chinook, 1945.



Drs. Robins, Scherer, Tiffin and Cook



Funeral at Haddock, December 1942



Dr. Russell, Misses Mary Loveniuk and MacGillivray, Mrs. Louise Buck and Dr. P. Kimmitt



STAFF, 1955 — Back: M. Naeth, A. VanRootselaar, B. Naeth, I. VanRootselaar, B. Groenwold; front: Greta Kennedy, Pat Frith and Helen Kennedy



Sisters DeMarsh and Dube with two patients in the sun porch.



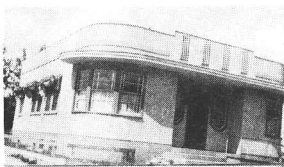
Sister E. Zink



Maria (Koebel) Connelly, R.N.



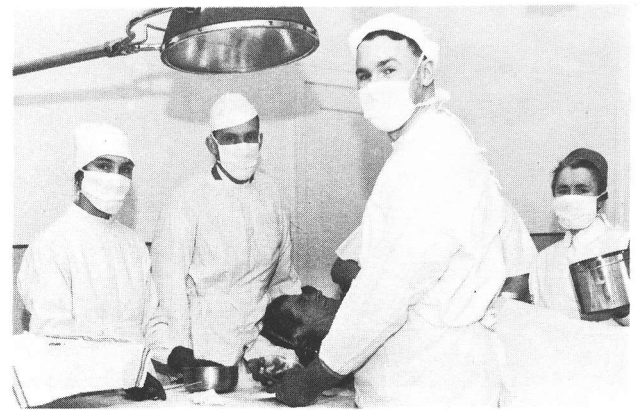
Sister L. Rose



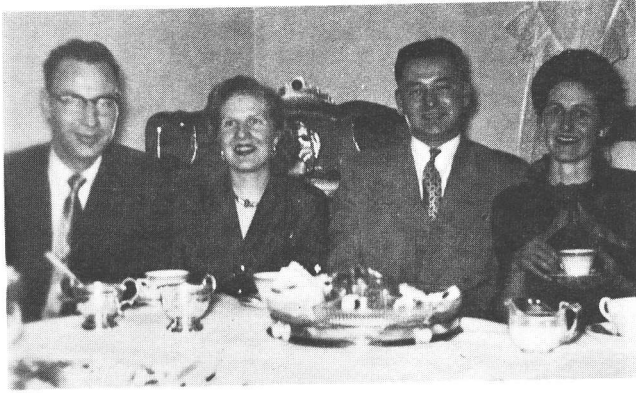
Dr. Tiffin's office, 1946.



Sister B. DeMarsh



Left to right: Sister Rose, Dr. Crawford, Dr. Begg and Sister Dube



Dr. and Mrs. Reynor, Dr. and Mrs. P. Kimmitt



Left to right: Madeline and Bernice Naeth, Sister Gallagher, L. De-Jong, Mildred Naeth, Hilda Engel and Sister Jansen



Sister M. Roberts; spring floods on 4th Avenue, 1954



Dr. and Mrs. Reynor and Karen, 1954



Dr. D. Begg, Ian and Patsy, 1953



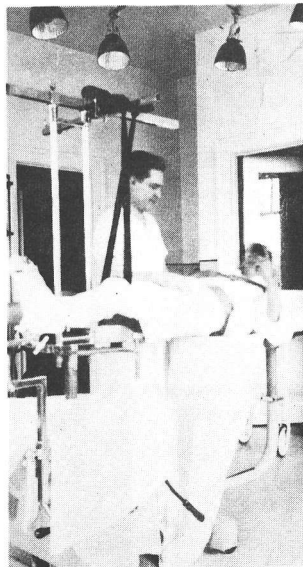
Mrs. A. May of Hospital Auxiliary



"Maw" Blair



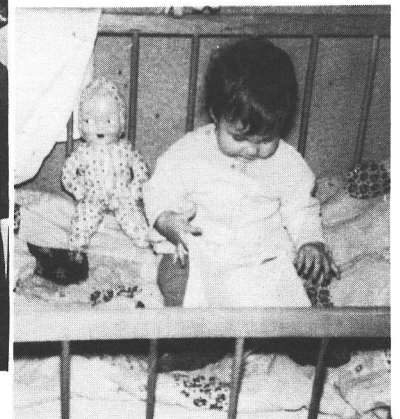
Sister S. Dube



Dr. Cook and Growling Feather



Hugh and Nora Grant with Patsy Grant Fortier, R.N., centre



OUR MIRACLE BABY — triumphant after many struggles to live.



Sister D. Daley



Sister B. Jackson and F. Zwiers



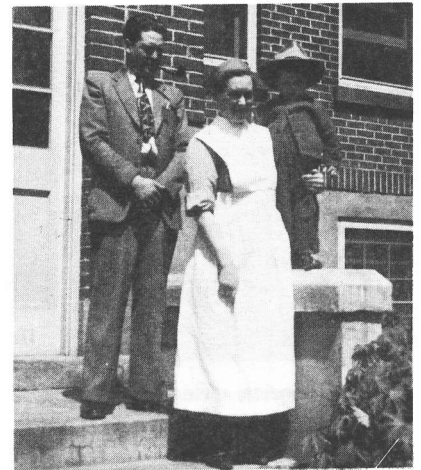
OUR NURSES IN WHITE — Back: Sisters B. Jackson, M. Knechtel, B. DeMarsh; front: Sisters K. Allen, J. Schaufhauser, M. Roberts



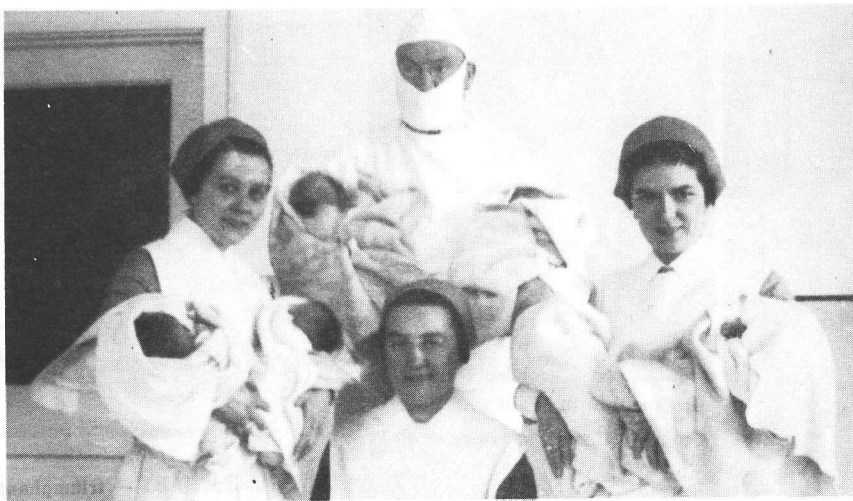
Sister R. Sullivan



Waiting for the "Chuckwagon".



Sister J. Dulaska, Dr. Cook



1945 — Dr. Tiffin, Sisters M. Murphy, B. Knopic, L. Tyler



Sister L. Rose



Sister J. Schafhauser



Sister B. Jackson with a group of new mothers and babies.



Sister K. Allen



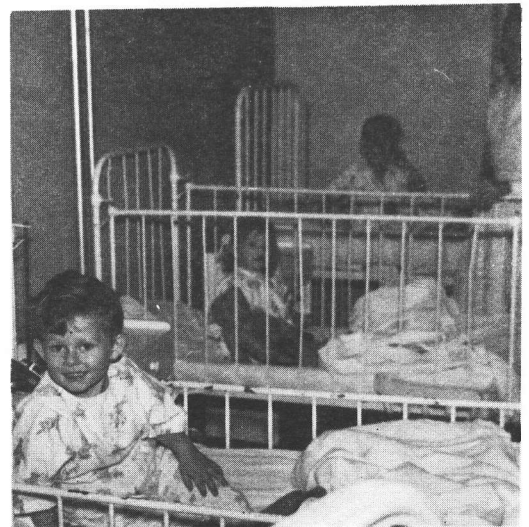
Mrs. Pat Loth, nee Langston



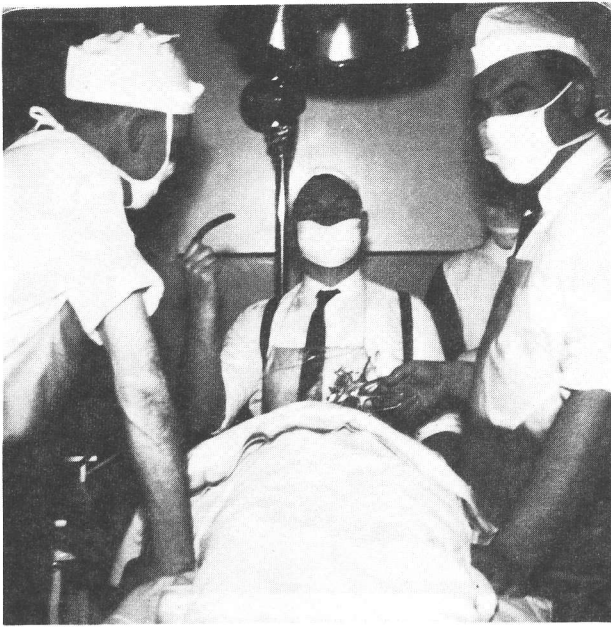
Sister K. Allen and Baby "White"



Sisters M. Knechtel, C. Wymbs, Miss A. St. Pierre, 1946



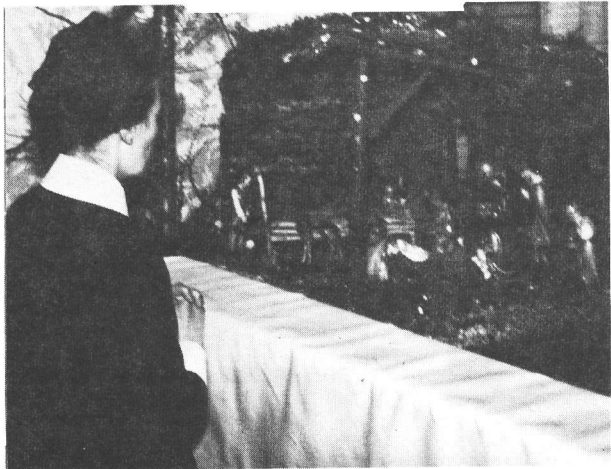
Pediatrics



Drs. Crawford, Begg and Lee



Sisters Daley, Allen, DeMarsh and Knopic



Sister J. Kinch



Sister E. Tunney

Advisory Board

An Advisory Board was set up in 1963 to assist the Sisters in their work in the health field and much thanks is due to the endeavours and interest of the first Board and all succeeding members. The first Board was composed of Guy Coulombe, president; A. Stanton, vice-president; J. Wynne, secretary; Paul O'Hara and H. Affolter.



Sister M. O'Hare



Sister M. Guest and Mrs. Lingitz



Audrey Somerville, office clerk



A. Stanton

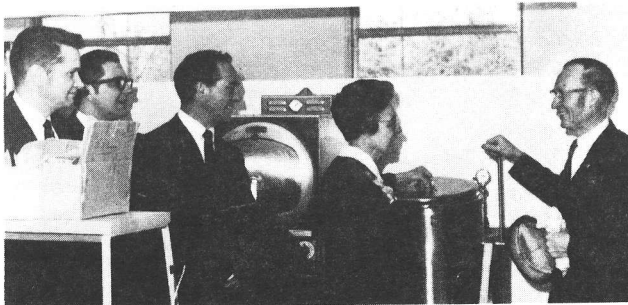
Phase 3 — 1969 - 1976



Back row: Sisters D. Daley, M. Guest, R. Hurley (visitor), E. Tunney, J. Schafhauser, M. Reansbury, M. Roberts and M. Halder; front: Sisters M. Knechtel, P. Coates (visitor), M. Quinn, H. LaMothe and B. Knopic.



RIBBON-CUTTING — December 8, 1969: Dr. D. Ross, Minister of Health; L. Halliwell, Hon. Bob Dowling, Hon. A. Sulatycky, Sisters Tunney and Roberts, and S. Hodgson, architect; back: G. Coulombe.



INSPECTION OF KITCHEN — A. Sulatycky, K. Wilson, B. Dowling, Sister Roberts and Dr. Donavon Ross.

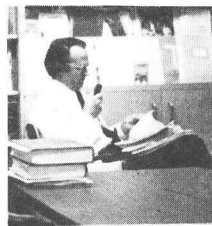
Medical Records Department

We are grateful for the efforts of Sister Margaret Guest, Reg'd. Record Librarian, in setting up our Medical Records Department. This was a very important item in the attaining of Accreditation by the Canadian Hospital Association. Accreditation was attained on our first inspection for a period of two years, followed by a second period of three years.

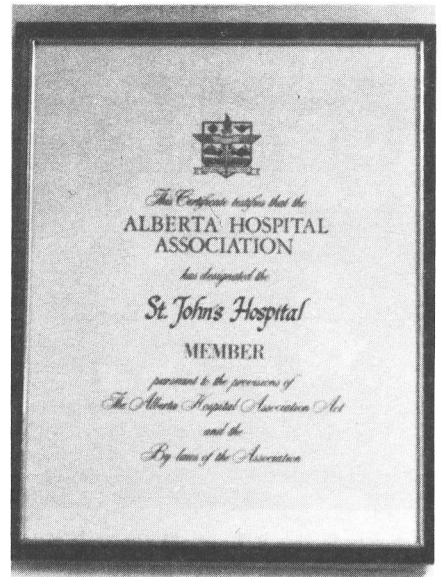
(NOTE: St. John's Hospital's Accreditation was renewed for another two years in September 1985. Disaster plans are carried out on a regular basis.)



Sister M. Guest



Dr. T. Morgan, dictating histories



Demolition

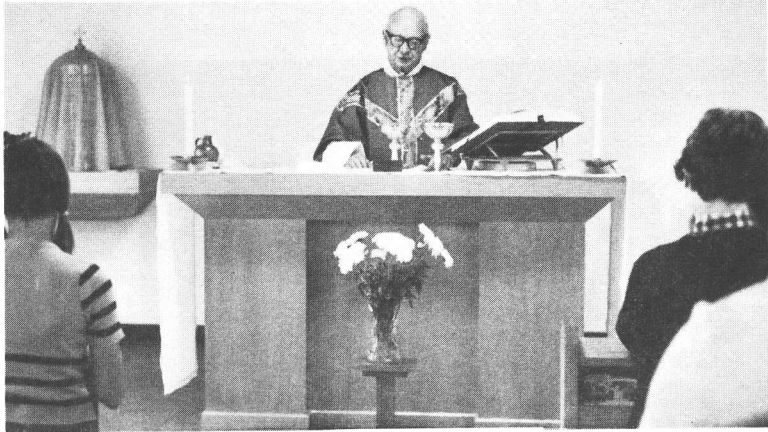


DEMOLITION OF FIRST HOSPITAL, with new hospital in the background — Sixth Avenue looking west



DEMOLITION OF SECOND HOSPITAL, Fifth Avenue, June 1970

1976



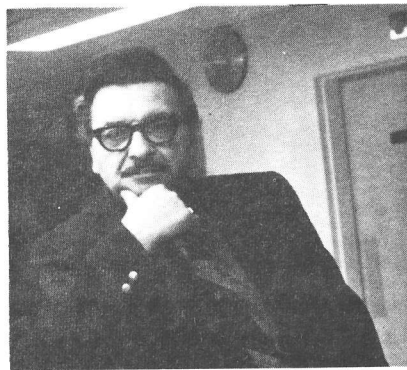
Father G. Gunnip, C.Ss.R., saying Mass in the Chapel.



Standing: A. Brandle and S. Hinchey, Medical Records;
seated: H. Chwyl, K. McNaughton, E.J. Magnan, business
manager; A. Mercier, administration



Dr. Crawford



L. Joy, Ambulance and Funeral Director



Dr. Macdonald and Dr. Hood

Some June 1976 Arrivals



"The Right to Live"

Phase 4 — 1976 -



June 1976 — These Central Elementary students were all born in the former brick St. John's Hospital. This information came out during their postage stamp project in which the students brought stamps postmarked from all over Canada. Teacher John May also had a stamp on the chart to show he was born in St. John's, the only teacher in the school to claim this honor.

Picture courtesy of The Edson Leader.

106 bed aim for St. John's Health Care Complex

(Edson Leader, March 17, 1976)

A nursing home on the west of, and joined to, the present St. John's Hospital, was envisioned by architectural representatives at the annual meeting of the St. John's Hospital Governing Board.

A total of 106 beds would be provided under the tentative planning for the new facility. It would be operated and owned by the Sisters of Service and named St. John's Health Care Complex.

The architects' plans have evolved after literally years of exploring ways that the nursing home element could be grouped as close to the active treatment hospital as possible.

Sod Turning Ceremony — September 1978

Participants in the Sod Turning ceremony for St. John's Health Care Complex included: The Hon. P. Lougheed, Premier of Alberta; The Hon. Gordon T. Miniely, Minister of Hospitals & Medical Care; The Hon. R.W. Dowling, Minister of Business Development & Tourism, Sister Helen Hayes, S.O.S., Sister General, Sisters of Service; Mrs. Sarah Harrison, representing the Edson District Senior Citizens; Mr. L.B. Halliwell, Chairman, Edson Nursing Home District No. 25 and St. John's Hospital Governing Board.

The Closing Prayer and Blessing were performed by Pastor R. Salzman, Edson Baptist Church, representing Edson & District Ministerial Association.



Official Sod Turning Ceremony — September 27, 1978

Staff Doctors — 1980



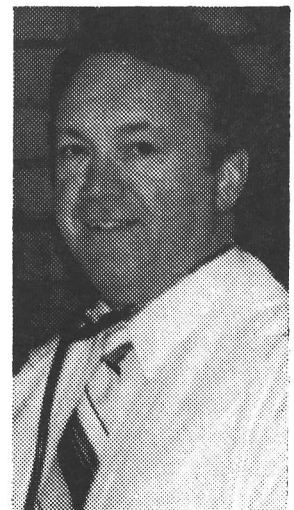
DR. MORGAN



DR. WILLIS



DR. MACDONALD



DR. CRAWFORD

† † †

An obstetrician and a banker were running for a vacant council seat in a local elections. In a question and answer session, one questioner asked the banker:

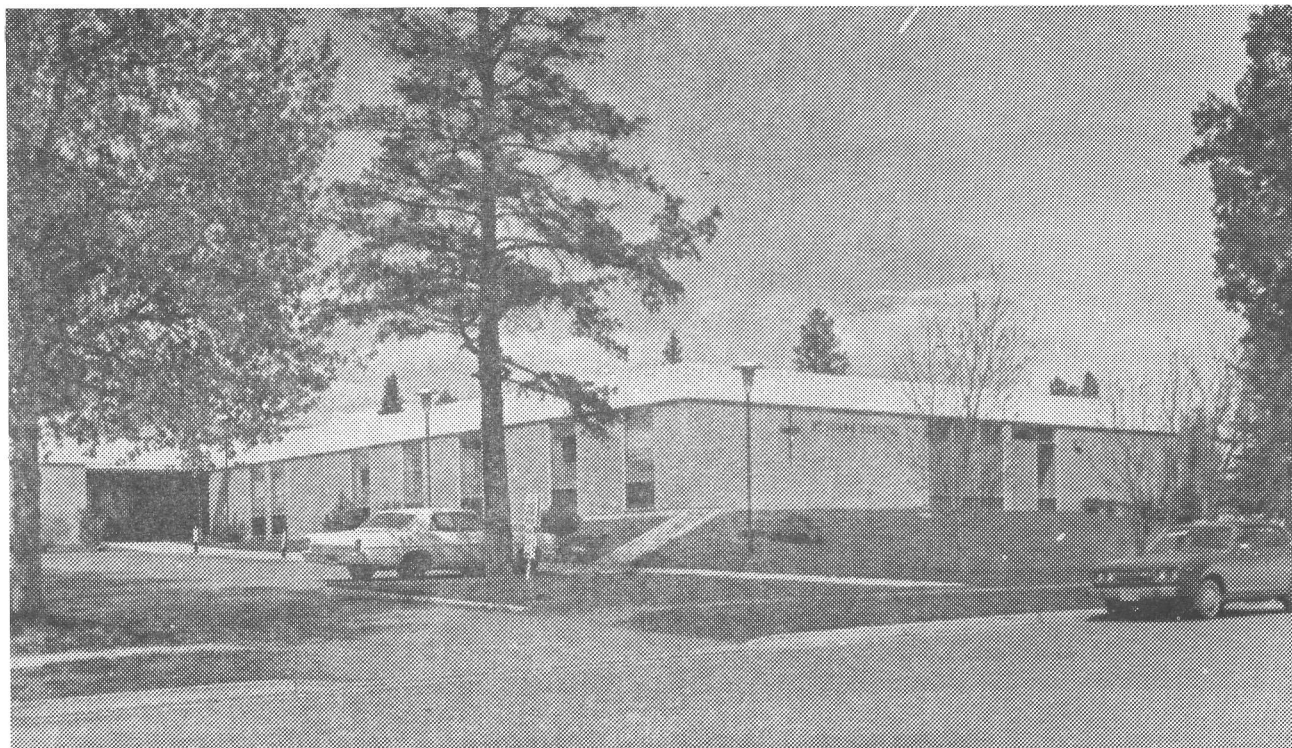
“Mr. Jones, you favour a balanced budget, low taxes,

and fiscal conservatism. Your opponent favours the same things. Why should we vote for you?”

“Because,” said the banker, “you can bank on me.”

“True,” retorted the obstetrician, “but I can deliver.”

Official Opening of St. John's Health Care Complex September 19, 1980



Picture courtesy of The Edson Leader.

Years of planning . . .

(The Edson Leader, September 20, 1980)

It was decided very early to build a new nursing home facility adjoining the active treatment hospital. There were many advantages to that decision: the land was owned by the Sisters of Service who were willing to make it available; a combined facility would reduce the costs of construction and operation; any necessary treatment for residents would be much easier; several treatment centers such as the physiotherapy facilities, the jacuzzi tubs, the day beds, etc., could be used by outpatients and patients in the active treatment hospital as well as by guests in the nursing home.

Seven months were spent in vain trying to get firm decisions on land fill. No one seemed to know, or no one wanted to make a definite statement regarding sizes of culverts, etc. Finally it was decided to build on pilings.

Government department changed and all of a sudden previous decisions were no longer valid.

Then the government decided that this building would be one of the first to go metric adding another \$186,000 to its cost as all plans had to be re-drawn.

"Apart from the plans it made it a lot more difficult for us to discuss the building," said Mr. L. Halliwell, "we could visualize sizes in feet, but it was something else again when we were supposed to think in meters."

Finally, September 1978 saw the official sod turning ceremony. Estimated cost of the construction and renovation was four and a half million dollars. During the two years of construction this estimated was exceeded by \$90,000.00. Not too bad in these inflationary times.

† † †

Some advice given to religious nurses of the 14th century:

Brother, if you are in ecstasy, exalted like St. Peter and St. Paul, or whatever example you wish to take, and you hear that the sick are in need of warm soup or any other assistance, I here give you counsel: leave your meditation immediately and come down to earth and warm the soup . . .

—*Blessed Johannes Ruysbroek*
(1293-1381)

† † †

Cherish all your happy moments; they make a fir cushion for old age.

—*Booth Tarkington*

First doctor in Edson

(Edited copy of letter received December 1980, from children of Doctor McCordic)

Dear Sister Allen:

We are so sorry to be so long in sending you a picture of our father for the Edson Hospital.

My sister and I were tremendously impressed with your new facilities, accommodation and equipment in the new hospital. You, and all those who worked on the project are to be congratulated for planning this beautiful functional patient centered building. I do not know of any in the East of comparable size, which can in any way compare with it.

We wish to thank you, Sister Allen, for giving Kay and me such a complete tour of the buildings — particularly since we know you must have been extremely busy, since it was just prior to the formal opening.

We would appreciate having the picture of Dad hung in the corridor, even though it isn't as clear as it might have been. He was in Edson in those earlier and perhaps more difficult years. The amenities and roads were few. On many occasions, he travelled to patients by Speeder on the railways.

There were times when he was the only doctor in the district. We can recall when he and RCMP Matheson became lost for three days investigating a death many miles back in the dense woods.

Then, there was the great flu epidemic following the First World War when he, assisted by volunteers from the community, worked around the clock for days.

Kay and I, after all these years continue to keep in touch with many Edson friends. We take pleasure in visiting Edson from time to time.

Sincerely,

Pete and Kay McCordic

† † †

Lifeline

(Edson Leader, July 22, 1985)

Many individuals have done a lot of work over the last year to bring Operation Lifeline to Edson. St. John's Auxiliary were the original sponsors and Mrs. Ena Gwen Jones as coordinator did most of the legwork assisted by Mrs. Ann Bawol as well as many others.

The system consists of a light, battery powered medallion worn around the neck, a special machine hooked up to the telephone, and a central responder unit.

In an emergency the user presses a button on the medallion which activates the telephone to call the



Part of the interior of the air ambulance operated by Sundance Aviation. Interested visitors from Edson medical facilities came out to see the air ambulance put into service in March 1985. The ambulance is a Navajo which has been adapted to carry two stretchers. Its only purpose is transportation of patients from hospital to hospital if required. The air trip to Edmonton would take one hour and 15 minutes including the time spent on the ground from St. John's to the Edson Airport and from the Municipal Airport in Edmonton to the admitting hospital.

Picture courtesy of The Edson Leader.

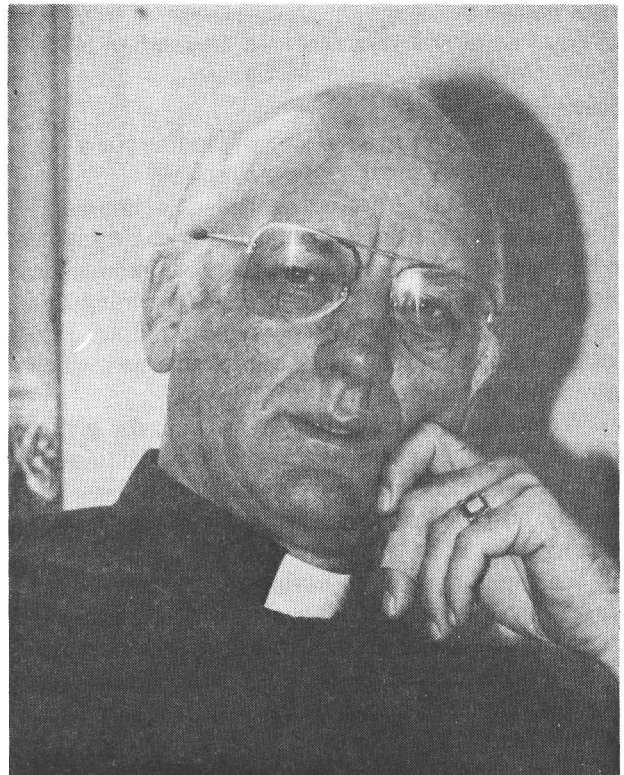
central responder unit (located in the nursing home). There is a print-out that states "number ... needs help". The person servicing the responder quickly finds the registration card of the caller and phones back. If there is no answer, four people, who have previously agreed to be helpers, are called in turn. Any one of these will go to the user's home to see what is amiss. Should all four helpers be unavailable, either the police or ambulance will be contacted.

The launching of the system was made possible by a very generous donation by the Edson Branch of the Canadian Legion of \$13,000.



July 1985 — A beautiful silver tea service was presented to Dr. Crawford and his wife Millie at a farewell dinner from the staff of the Edson Medical Centre. Making the presentation is Dr. Macdonald. Dr. Crawford, who is retiring after over 30 years work in Edson, was also earlier presented with a plaque from the Town in recognition of his service as mayor and councillor.

Picture courtesy of The Edson Leader



Father T. Kroetch, P.P. — Pastor/Chaplain

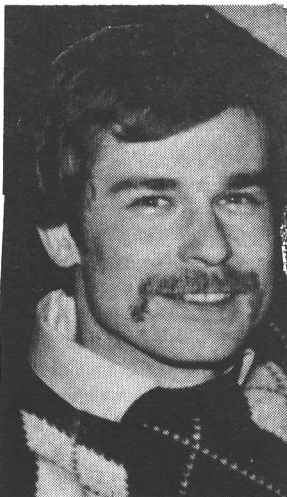
† † †

“My wife has been nursing a grouch all week!”
“Been laid up, have you?”

† † †

There is a foolish corner in the brain of the wisest man.

—Aristotle



Dr. Andy Bainbridge



Dr. Fergus Kennedy

International Hospital Federation

Members of the International Hospital Federation visited in Canada from June 15 to 19th, 1986. Edson Hospital was one of the hospitals visited by some of this group on June 19th.

The members of this Study Tour in Canada came from many countries — Nigeria; Netherlands; Basuto; Egypt; Denmark; Bristol, England; Stockholm, Sweden; Copenhagen, Denmark; Montreal; Indonesia; Hong Kong, and Australia.

The group also visited Devon Civic Hospital, Stony Plain Civic

Hospital; Hinton Hospital, and Seton Hospital in Jasper. They were the guests of St. John's for dinner after which they proceeded to Hinton and Jasper where they stayed overnight before leaving for Expo '86 in Vancouver.

The IHF Tour previously visited in Edmonton and Calgary and other points. Before leaving our visitors expressed their pleasure and complimented St. John's Staff on a well-run, extremely clean hospital.



December 4, 1985 — Volunteers at Edson Nursing Home are, left to right: Dionne Lind, Tammy Barford, Teresa Andrews (coordinator), Elanor Norman, adult volunteer.

Picture courtesy of The Edson Leader



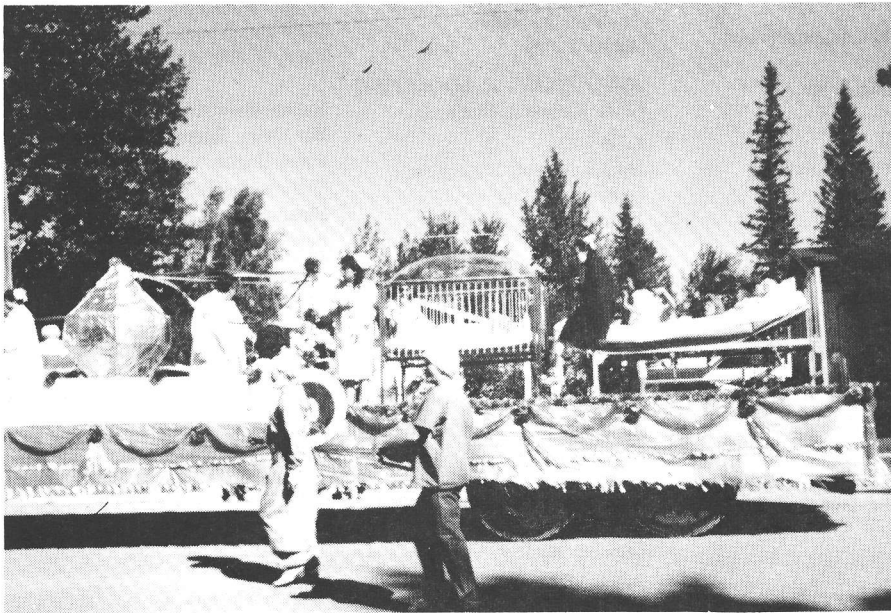
A Valentine's Party, complete with clowns, provided entertainment to party-goers at St. John's Nursing Home.



Residents of St. John's Nursing Home enjoying a sunny day outside.
(NOTE: Of the first eight residents admitted to the Nursing Home, Mrs. Bessie Corser is the only one who is still a resident.)

So long as we love we serve; so long as we are loved by others I would almost say that we are indispensable; and no man is useless while he has a friend.

—Selected



St. John's Hospital float won second prize in the group category in the 1986 Rodeo Parade.



Sister Allen was greeted by a "Red Rooster" during the 1986 Rodeo Parade.

1986

ADMINISTRATION

Les Halliwell, Administrator
Lloyd Sommers, Assistant
Administrator — General Services
Irene Mathers, Executive Assistant
Shirley Lagore, Secretary

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Walter Fowler, Chairman
Ron Linford, Vice Chairman
Sister Kathleen Allen
Mrs. Dorothy Cooper
Bill Goode
Dick Corser
Jim Jensen
Norm Crossfield
Dr. Trevor Morgan, Chief of Staff

NURSING

Sister K. Allen, Assistant
Administrator — Patient Services
Ann Fyfe, Nursing Supervisor
— Active Treatment

Judy Antonello, NA
Lorraine Askew, RN
Maria Bals, RN
Marcy Beddome, RN
Diane Blasko, RN
Sandra Block, RNA
Adrain Danker, NA
Karen Feser, RNA
Denise Fossheim, RNA
Pat Frayne, RN
Kathy Geroulis, RN
Debbie Gideon, RN
Lynn Grumetza, RN
Yvette Hawryluk, RNA
Bev Hersak, RN
Betty Hicks, RN
Carol Huggins, RNA
Margaret Lambert, RN
Denise Larson, RN
Jane Lee, RNA
Linda Lerohl, RN
Lynn Lewis, RNA
Jenny Lewis, RN
Barbara Ludwig, RNA
Edith Poltorak, RN
Margaret Regnier, RNA
Sue Schmidtke, RN
Karen Scott, RN
Mel Shankoff, RN
Joanne Stern, RN
Linda Sylvester, RNA
Helen Taulien, RNA
Elizabeth White-Macdonald, RN
Helen Woodman, NA
Diane Wylie, RNA
Rita Lavalley, RN O.R.
Jean Bossert, C.S.R.

MEDICAL STAFF

Dr. T. Morgan
Dr. Fergus Kennedy
Dr. Andy Bainbridge
Dr. Brian Willis
Dr. R.J. White (Locum)

(NOTE: Negotiations are at present being made to increase the number of medical doctors to eight, in September 1986.)

Dr. J.T. Mason, Consulting Radiologist
Dr. S. Hanson & Assoc., Laboratory Services
Dr. D.W. Irving, Cardiologist

DENTISTS

Dr. G. Lagasse, D.D.S.
Dr. James Mergaert, D.D.S.
Dr. R. Mazurat, D.D.S.
Dr. N. Mazurat, D.D.S.
Dr. Lawrence, Seve, DDS

PHARMACIST

John Switzer

AMBULANCE SERVICE

Sandy Joy

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Robert Joy

X-RAY

Marie Palmer, Supervisor
Lynne Beck
Colleen McDavid

PHYSIO

Sue Friend, Supervisor
Marie Jonasson
Office Supervisor
Leslie Ovens, Accounting
Shelley Pearson, Accounting
Pat Austin, Admitting
Helen Chwyl, Admitting
Olga Mushtuk, Admitting
Amelia Sieben, Admitting
Claudette Steeves, Admitting

MATERIAL MANAGEMENT

Tim Roehr, Material Manager
Sandy Zierl, Supervisor
— Housekeeping & Laundry

MEDICAL RECORDS

Barb Devuyt, Supervisor
Karen Crawford
Lorraine Dalzell

DIETARY

Frances Hogg, Supervisor
Dellene Bouchard
Dorothy Desjardins
Bernice Folk
Dianna Frith
Roni-Lea Iwanciwski
Connie Jackson
Shirley Juhasz
Sheryl Knight
Gail McNaughton
Barbara Minter
Cherielyn Mullin
Eve Reimer
Alice Sabourin
Carol Shelton
Millie Tkachuk
Shirley Wagner
Norma Yanos

CONSULTING DIETITIAN

Laverne Southern

LAUNDRY

Suzanne Fossheim
Maureen Preece
Margaret Sparks
Irene Yurkewich

HOUSEKEEPING

Johanna Dozorec
Ann Hamm
Helen Koppang
Donna Koprivnak
Stella McDonald
Evelyn Miller
Geraldine Moore
Marlene Schroeder
Marie Tailby

ACCOUNTING & ADMITTING

Clare Bampton, Business

LAB

Joan Solverson, Supervisor
Josee Bouthillier
Joan Easton
Jane King
Janet Lindsey

HOSPITAL LADIES AUXILIARY

Mrs. Carol Caston, President
Rose McLeod
Evelyn Paulson
Ann Bawol
Kay Wilson
Laraine Maffret
Grace Reinsma
Nellie Knoop
Diane Bernacki
Corrie Halliwell
Olinda Larson
Cherryl Wall
Hazel Hillstead

EDUCATION

Emilie Booth, Education Coordinator

SEAMSTRESS

Mrs. Joan Preece

PLANT OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

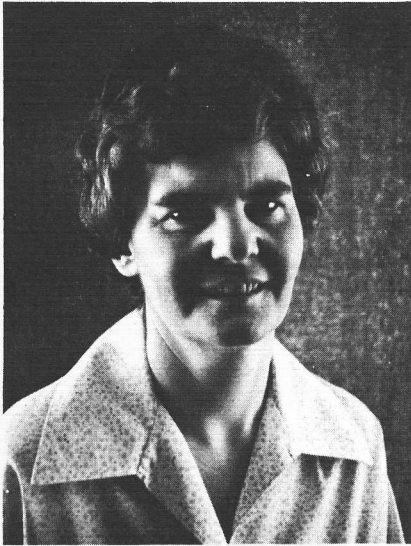
Darryl Catton, Supervisor
Alan Boarer
Garry Banack
Marcel Plante

Nursing Home NURSING

Norma Harbour, RN, Nursing Supervisor — Nursing Home
Christine Bell, NA
Brenda Costall, NA
Karen Court, NA
Kathy Davidson, NA
Josephine Delaney, RN
Mary Flamand, RNA
Mary Hawryluk, RNA
Mary Johnson, NA
Penny Johnston, NA
Betty Kurth, RNA
Colleen Lamoureux, NA
Penny Langlois, NA
Petra Longshaw, RNA
Penny Morrison, NA
Linda Peet, NA
Judy Robinson, RN
Estelle Sabourin, NA
Hulda Schmid, NA
Linda Serdiak, NA
Kathleen Wilson, RN
Gerry Wolfe, RN

Recreation/Diversional Activities

Bev Oyler, Recreation Supervisor
Joyce Heglin
Shirley Hostland
Eleanor Norman
Beverly Strong
Bonita Symes
Sharon Willows



Sister Anita Hartman



Sister Kathleen Allen



Sister Dorothy Daley



Sister Irene Profit

Epilogue

There has been no attempt to include all who have helped to make St. John's Hospital what it is today. But you know — and we all know — all our friends over the past sixty years.

We have used pictures which are only representative of many others that could have been included, and those used have been culled from the records and resources on hand.

Whereas everyone's participation is different, but according to their talents, we thank most heartily all who have shared in our endeavours.

It is with some of Father Daly's enthusiasm that now Phase V is about to be born.

This brochure has been compiled and photos selected by Sister Evelyn Tunney, S.O.S., and Trail Printing, Ltd., Edson.



Sister Evelyn Tunney

