

Reading a Quarterly Return

What is the NCTR?

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) is the permanent safe home for all statements, documents and other materials gathered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). The Centre works with a network of partners and supporters to continue to expand this collection and promote ongoing research and learning about residential school history and its legacy.

What is the NCTR archive?

The NCTR has a collection of more than five million items including statements from Residential School Survivors, families and others from sharing circles and TRC hearings, as well as documents from government departments and church entities.

The full collection at the NCTR contains police files, RCMP files and Indian Agent files; hospital and medical records; transportation records; memos and invoices; letters; student records; newsletters; cemetery and death records; photographs; religious records; and 2,500 physical objects such as artifacts and art pieces.

What is a Quarterly Return?

A Quarterly Return is a financial document that lists all the students in a Residential School for that quarter. Residential School staff completed these forms four times per year and sent them to the Government of Canada to keep track of the number of students attending each Residential School. This information would help determine how much funding a school received.

Funding received from the government was expected to be used to pay for maintenance, salaries and expenses (food, clothing, etc.) for the school. The Residential School system operated on low grants because it paid staff poorly, relied on donations from missionary societies, and relied on labour from the students themselves.

How do I access a Quarterly Returns?

You can access these records by visiting the NCTR database.

NCTR database: <https://archives.nctr.ca/>

Quarterly Returns: <https://archives.nctr.ca/Quarterly>Returns-1>

There are 2,901 Quarterly Returns available on the NCTR database. Most of the Quarterly Returns are from Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario.

How do I read a Quarterly Return document?

The design of a Quarterly Return can differ depending on the time-period.

A Quarterly Return typically has a front page with instructions of how the residential school staff were to complete the document.

It will also include the school's name, date of the end of the quarter, the principal's name, the date the document was completed, the name of the Indian agent who received it, and the date and location it was received.

The remainder of a Quarterly Return's pages is devoted to the list of students in the school for that quarter. There are columns to document their student / registration number, name, age, sex, band or reserve, class or study, standing in class, trade or other industry and how many days spent at the trade, the date they were entered into the school, the number of days in residence and in class and finally, remarks related to progress and reasons for absence.