

have done. We are often told to abolish them. We have never yet been told what to put in their place. We are also often told by Indian people that the happiest days of their life were spent at the residential school, and many of the Indian people who have been most successful in forging ahead in the Canadian community are graduates from one or another of these schools.

LOSS OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

Perhaps the greatest problem we face with our educational system is that of the loss of cultural identity of the Indian people. Past practices have often seemed to trample upon the Indian's sense of the value of his "Indian-ness". He has come to feel that he is a man whose people have no past. Now this is wrong. It is not only wrong, it is extremely damaging.

A man must have a sense of belonging to a worthwhile continuum. He must feel the roots of the past and have a sense of posterity. He must have both these things. The most damaging thing the Europeanization of North America has done is to ignore this basic requirement of its aboriginal people. We must repair this defect. We must awaken a sense of the value of the Indian way of life, its appropriateness for its time and circumstances and of the value of its art forms and skill.

With over half the Indian children attending provincial schools, we shall have to work through the general school curriculum, as well as within the Indian community. I have asked my staff to investigate the suggestion that a set of classroom aids be prepared for general use in classrooms throughout Canada, where the provincial departments of education are willing to make use of them, which would illuminate the values of the Indian background. I imagine that such kits would include pictures for the students and visual aids for the teacher and might even extend to films and such. I believe these kits would have to comprise a total package and I don't believe the answer is simply to make a couple of short movies and tell ourselves we have done the job.

This is another area where the advice of you people may be very useful. Many of you work in areas where old cultures are being pressed by new ways. How do you preserve the values of the old ways, without appearing to resist the inevitable coming in of newer modes?

Canada is an immense country made up of many elements. Each of the provinces has problems to solve; each seeks its own solutions and joins with others to find ways around the inevitable problems of stubborn geography, regional differences and local conflicts.

Canada is an amalgam of many different peoples. It is like a tapestry of intricate design and many colours. The various threads represent the ethnic and racial patterns which vary so widely from part to part. Underlying this highly-coloured overlay are the two major colours representing founding peoples; the British and the French. Each speaks its own language. Each has its own folklore, its own special attitudes to life and society. They do not always agree and there is no reason why they should.

ROLE OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

It is the role of the Federal Government to provide the leadership to maintain the fabric of the tapestry un torn. This leadership has been given over the years by a succession of governments. Our first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, had as his principal policy the object of maintaining the essential communication between the two basic elements, the English- and the French-speaking peoples. For the most part he was singularly successful in this. He recognized, as have most of his successors, that besides the problem of keeping the country whole, all else faded into relative insignificance.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the great Canadian Prime Minister of the 1890s and the early years of this century, followed the same policy. Recognizing that if Canada means anything at all, it means that a multiracial, bi-language country can persist and prosper, he pursued his goal to the end of his years.

William Lyon Mackenzie King, the great leader of the wartime years, followed the same course. Our present Prime Minister recognizes the necessity which must override all other considerations - that Canada is one country, one united Confederation with two basic elements of English- and French-speaking, with two official languages, English and French, with equal partnership between these two founding peoples and with all other racial groups fully and completely equal with all other Canadians.

The essential respect for each other's natural pride in the collective past and in separate cultures and traditions is part of Canada's heritage. As the Minister responsible for the administration of both Indian affairs and government services to the Eskimo people, I am deeply conscious of the necessity of preserving the elements of their native culture which are essential for the self-pride, without which no man is whole.

RECORDING ESKIMO CULTURE

To maintain that self-pride, we are recording the Eskimo culture, devising an Eskimo alphabet so that Eskimo legends can be recorded in their original form, and doing many other things to preserve the Eskimo's sense of the past. We are encouraging the development of the Eskimo people's natural artistic urges and talents so that their self-expression may give rise to further development of their culture.

We are seeking ways to do more than we have so far been able to do for the Indian people in Canada. There are over 200 Indian dialects spoken and this presents problems. In some parts of Canada the old ways were almost gone before the necessary steps were taken to stop the decay of Indian culture and start the rebuilding of it.

There are only a few Eskimos and 225,000 Indians. The job of preserving and rebuilding the cultural identity of such groups is considerable. It has been undertaken as a policy because we believe that no people can take its proper place in the world without a strong sense of pride in its roots....
