

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

children reside in northern Ontario and Quebec. These are the children with whom we are primarily concerned at the present time, because it is a challenge to the department that there should be even this number of children for whom no educational facilities are available. However, at the present time 90 per cent of the children of school age are in schools and the total number, as the hon. member will realize, has diminished rapidly in one year. I hope that when the figures are available for this year we shall find that a similar decrease has taken place.

I was asked to say a word about Indians in senior positions; those who had come up from the reserves and achieved senior positions in the department. Those who are either superintendents or assistant superintendents on the field staff, number 15. There are also 11 in clerical and administrative posts on the field staff. Perhaps I might give the committee the other figures, because they are interesting. I do not remember whether I gave them earlier today or not, but I will repeat them, if I did. In addition, there are 37 caretakers, 11 stenographers and typists and 21 in other categories. And, as I said earlier, there are 123 teachers. This brings the total to 255, the figure I quoted earlier.

Mr. Benidickson: Those are very interesting figures but, of course, they have to be related to something. I was wondering if the minister could indicate whether there has been some advance in this particular respect? Could she, perhaps, indicate what percentage relationship they bear to the total staff in the categories listed? Second, would the hon. lady be able to say how this situation compares to the situation a year ago? If she does not have that information now, perhaps the committee could have it at another time.

Mrs. Fairclough: It is a little better than 10 per cent. I am afraid I have no comparison to give for previous years.

I was interested in the hon. member's allusions to the good intentions of the former minister with regard to Fort Frances. I am sure the hon. gentleman's intentions were good, as they always were in this department, but one of the things he neglected to do in 1957 was to make any allowance for the Fort Frances school in the estimates of that year. Consequently it is only this year we are making that allowance. We started with an appropriation of \$150,000 with \$720,000 planned for next year. We hope we can replace this school, which is certainly not our pride and joy.

Mr. Benidickson: The minister had promised me in the spring of 1957, at the end of

the fiscal year, that the planning would commence immediately in connection with this school, and I am sure the planning did commence, even under the new government. There has been a delay in getting the work under way.

Mrs. Fairclough: I hardly think that on reflection the hon. member would say there has been too much delay, because he knows from his experience in government that these things sometimes take a good deal of time. One has to allow for plans to be drawn up and approved by the various departments of government which are concerned with building—so much has to be done before the stage is reached at which tenders can be called. Even when tenders have been called we sometimes encounter delays, but we hope to get on with this particular project this year.

Mr. Pickersgill: Can the minister say whether the Fort Frances school was part of the billion dollar program announced at the beginning of February, 1958?

Mrs. Fairclough: At the beginning of February, 1958 I was not charged with responsibility for this department, so that is knowledge which is beyond my ken.

With reference to Red Lake I should tell the hon. member that we are very concerned about the situation there. Within the course of a very short time—a week or two—I think we shall begin a conference with the Ontario municipal affairs department to see what can be done with respect to this deplorable situation.

Some comment was made by the hon. member with reference to child welfare problems and I should like to say at the outset that we are very grateful for the co-operation we have received from the children's aid society in the matter of the care of Indian children. Partly as a result of one case in the Fort Frances agency which the hon. gentleman has discussed with us, and partly because of a few other cases where circumstances were somewhat similar, the department is now authorized to provide educational and welfare assistance as a humanitarian measure to children of Indian origin in residence on the reserve in addition to other categories described in my announcement to the house on April 8, 1960. Principally, these benefits are extended to women of Indian origin who have lost Indian status through enfranchisement or marriage and who have no alternative but to return to friends or relatives on the reserves for various reasons such as the death of a husband or serious illness in the family.