

For them, as for other orphan children, adoption into good homes would be much preferable to even the best of institutions.

But for Indian children - and they are the majority - whose parents are living together in good homes, we believe the children are happier in day schools, and we believe, too, they will be better able to face the adult world if they have enjoyed normal family life during their school years.

We are convinced that, wherever circumstances make it possible, it is better for Indian children to attend the same schools as other Canadian children, and to associate with other Canadians in the same classrooms and on the same playgrounds.

We already have a great many agreements with local school authorities to have Indian children educated in the ordinary schools under Provincial auspices.

In 1949 there were 1,300 Canadian Indians enrolled in non-Indian schools.

The number is now over 4,800 about one-eighth of all the Indian children attending school.

I am pleased to say that next month I am meeting with the Minister of Education of Ontario to discuss a province-wide extension of the education of Indians in the ordinary Provincial schools in Ontario.

In recent years there has been a very gratifying increase in the number of Indian children attending secondary schools and vocational schools.

Indeed, I was told when I visited the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford that a higher proportion of Indian children from that Reserve were attending high school than was the case in the surrounding rural townships.

And I would like to see the standard of education of the Six Nations today become commonplace tomorrow among Indians in all parts of Canada.

We are placing increased emphasis at all stages of Indian education on vocational training, and that will become steadily more important if Indian children are to be prepared for new types of employment.

Education appears to be the main key not only to useful employment but also to the eventual integration of the Indians.

But during the period of transition, which will be a long one and will be full of difficulties, the existing rights of the Indians must be upheld, and we believe the Indians should be consulted about all changes in policy and law and persuaded of the advantages of the changes before they are made.

Before the Indian Act was revised in 1951, my predecessor, the Honourable Walter Harris, invited representative Indians from all across the country to meet with him and officials of the Department in Ottawa to discuss the proposed changes.