

## PROGRESS IN THE NORTH

Accomplishments of the last few years in the fields of education and health and welfare on behalf of the residents of Canada's Northwest Territories were reviewed by Mr. Gordon Robertson, Commissioner, at the 12th Session of the NWT Council held last week in Ottawa.

Mr. Robertson said that an arrangement has been worked out under which the education of all children--whether Eskimo, Indian, of white parentage, or of mixed blood--is handled on a common basis. The Mission schools, which have in the past done so much for the education of Indian and Eskimo children, are gradually being replaced, with the complete agreement and co-operation of the Churches, by a publicly operated system of schools. This, he said, will do a great deal to reduce the difficulties--which are inherently great enough--of providing education to the sparse and scattered population of the Territories. It will also have the advantage of removing any element of distinction on the basis of race. All schools will be for whatever children happen to live in the locality or can be brought to it for education.

### LARGE DAY SCHOOLS

In general, Mr. Robertson continued, the policy is to establish schools in all settlements where there are enough children for the duration of a school year to justify providing a single room and a teacher. This policy has already been carried a good distance forward. Priority is being given to the areas in which it appears that there will be the earliest need to have the people educated in a way that will enable them to take up employment in the Canadian way of life. The areas where life can continue in its traditional fashion--such as many areas in the Arctic Islands--will be left until last. For the people in those areas, formal education is least essential.

There are now, however, and will continue to be, many children who do not live in settlements at all--or in settlements too small for a school to be established, the Commissioner said. To a good number of these education must be given to fit them for a new type of life. The Church boarding schools have ministered to them in the past. In the future, they will be brought to selected centres for education in large day schools. They will be housed in hostels, built by the federal government, paid for on a proportional basis by the federal and territorial governments, and operated by the Churches. Such hostels and schools are now under construction at Fort Smith and Fort McPherson. Construction of two hostels and a large school will begin this year at the new Aklavik. Besides the above, there will also be a hostel at Yellowknife operated by the Department of Northern Affairs. Architectural plans will be undertaken this year for two

hostels and a new school at Fort Simpson. The hostel for Eskimo children at Chesterfield Inlet, recently built but not fully completed by the Roman Catholic Church, will be taken over by the government and completed in 1958. Architectural plans will also be started for a new hostel and school at Frobisher Bay. Through these hostels and schools it will be possible to bring education to many children who could not, in any other way, be afforded the basic training that they will require in future years.

Continuing, Mr. Robertson stated:

"With all of these measures, there will still be a number of children who will not receive anything like a full, formal education for many years to come. For most, if not all, of these the lack of formal training will not, as I have said, constitute too serious a disadvantage since they are people who lead, and will in some numbers continue to lead, a nomadic life of hunting and trapping. However, for them too some elements of primary education are desirable. Several methods are used to meet this problem. One is exemplified by the itinerant teacher who operates out of Cape Dorset. She visits a number of Eskimo camps, she spends a few days teaching at each camp, and then leaves the children sufficient work to keep them busy until she can correct it and give them new work. Another method is the tent hostel at Coppermine. Here children are brought during the spring and summer months. For five months they live in tents and are taught at the Federal Day School along with the children of the settlement. The hostel, which is administered by the Anglican Church, is proving an interesting and successful experiment. A third method is the establishment of summer schools in settlements where the summer influx of population for two or three months warrants it but where the winter population does not. Such schools were operated last year at Lac la Martre and Wrigley, and more will be operated next year.

"Some measure of the success of the efforts to extend school education by these various means is shown by the attendance figures. Pupils at all schools in the Northwest Territories in 1951 totalled 1,240. In 1956 they totalled 2,713. Year by year the number of children attending school can be expected to increase.

### VOCATIONAL TRAINING

"In addition to general education, an important and urgent requirement is the provision of vocational training both to young people and adults. This is handled in a wide variety of ways so as to take advantage of as many opportunities as possible. The new school at Yellowknife to which I have already referred will be for both high school and voca-