

NEW PATTERN FOR INDIANS

we found and perhaps much older." He stressed that this summer's discoveries were only the beginning of a new era in the history of the Indian people.

The age-old pattern of Indian employment in hunting, fishing, trapping and farming, though it is still important, is changing before the demands of Canada's growing industrialization. "The Indian News" reports:

Today, singly or in groups, Indians may be found in any one of a hundred occupations. Opportunities offered by vast resource development and defence projects -- especially in the far north and other remote regions -- are hastening the new ways.

The Indian himself realizes that times have changed, that the traditional economy of the reserves cannot meet the needs of a rapidly increasing population, alert for a constantly improving standard of living.

This realization is expressed in an increasing demand for more vocational and trades training, a more extended general education and for opportunities to meet and mingle with non-Indians in the community generally.

MAKING TRANSITION

Those Indians living in the more southerly and more settled parts of Canada have already made great strides in the transition to regular seasonal or year-round work in the woods industries, in mining, in agriculture off the reserves, in construction and in industrial employment. Many live and work in towns and cities alongside their non-Indian neighbours. Some have earned enviable reputations in the learned professions.

Nomadic Indian Bands, some virtually un-reached by modern life, have now been awakened to a new day by the roar of airplanes, the grunt and roll of bulldozers and the machine-gun clatter of the riveter's hammer.

Indian and non-Indian, employer and employee alike are learning about each other. Each, they realize, needs to understand the other. Non-Indian employers are finding that, given training and a chance, the Indian workman can be industrious and reliable. Sometimes, his aid is vital.

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTS

Indians find their skills and labour are marketable commodities in a host of ways. For two years in a row, Indian labour has saved the sugar beet crop in southern Alberta. This year some six hundred Indians, accompanied by their wives and families, voyaged to the beet fields from all parts of Alberta and many parts of Saskatchewan. Last year, 350 worked on the beet crop.

At one time last autumn, nearly 400 Indians worked on the Mid-Canada Radar Line. Last mid-summer, of 343 Indian workmen, 53 were classed as semi-skilled, of whom 8 were foremen and 5 were truck drivers.

This summer, 250 Indians from the Norway House, Nelson River and The Pas Agencies in

Manitoba were employed as axemen and general laborers at the Moak Lake-Mystery Lake base metal mining development. They cut survey lines, cleared brush roads and prospective sites for camp buildings.

At present, 100 Indians from Norway House are in the "brush" as fire-fighters. Another 120 come from the Clandeboye Agency near Sellkirk. Hundreds more are hired annually for the fire season in the other timber-rich provinces and territories of Canada. The Indian's reputation as a forest fire fighter is high.

VARIETY THE KEYNOTE

In Ontario, variety is the keynote. From the Sault Ste. Marie Agency alone, 245 Indians have been employed on such work as railway right-of-way maintenance and bridge repair, in various lumber yards and mills, on power-line work, in mining and in industry.

Last summer, nearly 400 Saskatchewan Indians were engaged in commercial fishing operations, returning to the traplines for the winter.

Seventy Indians are currently employed in the iron ore industry at Seven Islands, Knob Lake and other points in "New" Quebec.

Maritime Indians work in the woods, in pulp mills, and in the intensive berry and potato harvest at home and across the border in the United States. Basket-making, especially for garden produce, employs many the year round.

British Columbia's broad industrial base provides a variety of opportunities in lumbering, mining, commercial fishing and canning and industry generally. This spring, some 225 Indians -- some from Alberta -- worked on the West-coast Transmission Line, another 250 in the hopfields.

In the past, these large-scale movements of labour and many others have been handled by the Agency Superintendents, assisted by the Regional Supervisors, working in close cooperation with the National Employment Service. This will still, to a large extent, be true.

But the need to fit the Indian more closely to the job, to secure longer-lasting employment for him, and to keep in touch with prospective employers has resulted in a new employment service being set up by the Indian Affairs Branch. This service does not take the place of any existing agencies, it merely supplements them, with special regard to the Indian and his problems.

NEW PLACEMENT PROGRAMME

Indian Placement Officers, as they are known, have been appointed in Vancouver, Edmonton and Toronto, with a fourth scheduled soon for Winnipeg. Other major centres will have their officers later. In charge of the organization will be a Chief Placement Officer soon to be appointed.