

In former days, as you all know, these peoples - Indians and Eskimos - passed a relatively uncomplicated existence. They gained their livelihood by subsistence hunting and fishing; and though their resources were meagre, and the struggle hard, they managed to strike a balance with the wild game around them and generally derived a considerable amount of happiness from their manner of life. But this old existence has gone forever and their economy is now in a transitionā stage. The introduction of firearms and of fur trading, the coming of T.B. and other diseases, and the encroaching influences of our industrial civilization have destroyed the bases of the original economy and of native society.

For many of our Canadian indigenes, unfortunately, these "civilizing" influences have brought as yet no tangible benefits. The fur trade alone cannot provide them an adequate livelihood, and the caribou on which they once depended for food and clothing have greatly diminished in number. There is not yet either enough wage employment for all the natives who would gladly work for wages, nor are there enough natives sufficiently well educated and trained to fill some of the positions that already exist. In consequence, far too many of our Indians and Eskimos have been reduced to a condition of abject impoverishment. This is the real tragedy. Instead of being better off, many - perhaps most - have become worse off. Instead of gaining new hope and a brighter prospect for the future many have lost hope and in some cases have no future. Even the dignity that characterized them in the days of their economic independence sometimes fails them, as it has failed many war refugees in the relief camps of Europe.

Let us not lose sight of the fact that our Indians and Eskimos are more truly Canadian than we are, and that they are entitled just as much as ourselves to an equitable share of Canadian prosperity.

Ladies and gentlemen, our kind of civilization is moving rapidly northwards and it is moving into the Canadian North to stay. The Government is alert to the need for positive action. It is doing everything in its power to ease the plight of those natives who are suffering. It is striving, with equal determination, to educate them as rapidly as possible, to absorb them into a viable wage economy. It has accepted the challenge of raising their standard of health; of creating opportunities for honorable and steady employment; of providing them with an opportunity to become an integrated, fully adapted and prosperous part of the Canadian family, able to employ their special talents in the development of our North.

The Government is aware that the economic growth of the North will vitally affect their lives, and with great initiative it is preparing them for the change. But it is private enterprise that must follow up this government lead as it moves in to develop the physical resources of the