

## Administration

Since in every respect they are full citizens, the Eskimos enjoy the same rights and bear the same responsibilities as other Canadians -- for example, in regard to the franchise, federal, provincial and territorial law, taxation, land ownership and social services. Although the Inuit were excluded from the Indian Act, a Supreme Court decision of 1939 held that the term "Indian" as used in the British North America Act included them and that the legislative responsibility for the Inuit was a federal one. The special federal jurisdiction nevertheless represents an extra service, not an alternative to normal citizenship.

Present Government policy towards the Inuit is basically one of equalizing their opportunities while enabling them to retain as much of their culture as they wish, so that, as a group, they may make a distinctive contribution to Canada's multicultural society. To this end, the Federal Government, either directly, or indirectly through the government of the Northwest Territories, is involved with the Inuit in the programs discussed in the following pages.

## Government

Constitutional development in the Northwest Territories has been consistent with the federal purpose of furthering the evolution of self-government. The first step was taken in 1969, with the creation of the government of the Northwest Territories, which took over functions of a provincial type from the Department of Northern Affairs and other federal departments. The goal of the Northern Affairs Program is the establishment of fully representative and responsible government in the North.

In 1975, two bills were introduced for the purpose of giving the North greater representation at the national level -- Bill C-9, to provide the Yukon and the Northwest Territories with a seat apiece in the Senate, and Bill C-59, to provide the N.W.T. with a second seat in the House of Commons. The life of the Territorial Council was extended from three to four years in 1970 by amendments to the N.W.T. Act. In 1974, another amendment established a fully-elected Council of 15 members and a Speaker to preside over it. In 1975, two elected Council members were appointed to the Executive Committee for the first time, one of whom was an Eskimo. Elections held in March 1975 resulted in the first native majority in the Council -- nine members, of whom six were Inuit. With regard to services of a provincial type, the transfer of responsibility for housing was completed in April 1974.