

In many of these activities, the Indians have proved to be more dependable workers than workers brought in from other parts of Canada, because the Indians are at home in the North and are used to its rigours and hardships.

Indian labour can make an increasing and a substantial contribution to the stabilization of logging, lumbering and mining operations in northern areas where it is often difficult to attract workers from more settled parts of the country.

I now make it a practice, whenever employers from any part of the country come to see me for assistance in securing immigrants for particular kinds of work, to ask them if they have tried to use Indians.

I have found that the first response is, quite often, surprise at the question, but that in most cases that response is quickly followed by a constructive interest in the possible use of a new supply of labour ready to hand, right here in Canada.

Now, of course, we in the Indian Affairs administration recognize just as much as employers do that it is not going to be easy for adult Indian workers to adapt themselves to new and strange types of employment, but we believe that the young people coming out of school can be trained just as effectively as other Canadians, and it is for the growing numbers of young Indians that we have the most pressing need to find a new place in our economy and in our society.

But no matter how rapidly we find new avenues of employment for our Indians, it is of the utmost importance to preserve for the Indians the trapping, hunting and fishing areas so many of them depend on for their living.

Despite all the new employment that has been offered in these post war years, more than half the Indians of Canada still depend on trapping for all or most of their cash income, and on game and fish for much of their subsistence.

And that will probably continue to be true for a good many years.

For the past seventeen years, the Indian Affairs Branch has conducted, in co-operation with the Provincial Governments which were willing to participate, a programme of rehabilitation of trapping areas and conservation of fur-bearing animals, which has given some measure of economic security to the trappers in those Provinces.

But I think we have to face the fact that, so long as the Indian population continues to grow, some northern Indians will have to move southward if they are to be self-supporting and to contribute to the economy.

Now it is usually pretty hard for the Indians to move in one single generation from nomadic life in the North to industrial employment in large urban areas.

We are seeking, therefore, to find a transitional stage.