

INDIAN PLACEMENT

Mrs. Ellen Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, told the House of Commons August 28, of the progress that the Government has made in placing Indians in a variety of occupations in non-Indian communities.

Mrs. Fairclough said, in part:

"I am pleased to say that the economic development programme which has been established by the Indian Affairs Branch is being vigorously pressed forward and that substantial progress has been made during the past year in assisting and encouraging the employment of Indians in a variety of occupations in non-Indian communities.

"Additional placement officers have been appointed and there are now six regional placement officers and a senior placement officer at headquarters to carry on this important work. The placement officers are largely concerned with the problem of selection of suitable Indians for employment in urban centres. Rural placement has not been overlooked and the fur supervisors employed by the Branch were recently reclassified as field officers with the added responsibility of assisting in placement work in rural areas.

"Up to the present, emphasis has been placed on careful selection of Indians where individual placements are concerned and this policy necessarily should continue for some time to come. In other words, we have emphasized policy rather than the quantity of candidates placed on the grounds that they must prove their worth to employers as well as their adaptability in the non-Indian communities so that those who come after may find ready acceptance by the employer and the community generally. In addition, it has been necessary to develop procedures to recruit and train staff and to establish liaison with employment agencies and employers generally.

"From April, 1957 to July, 1958 there is a record of 150 Indians successfully placed in permanent urban employment, of whom 117 were in skilled trades. Our records also show group placements of 788 Indians in agriculture, construction, road-clearing and lumbering. These figures represent only the employment achievements of the new programme in its first year of operation. It should be understood that a large number of Indians continue to find work on their own initiative and through the assistance of the Indian Agency Organization in the field and are not included in these figures.

"I should mention that the Education Division of the Indian Affairs Branch has been instrumental in providing vocational training and in arranging on-the-job training, and that the results of courses in carpentry and other technical trades have been encouraging. For example, of 29 graduates from the Vancouver Vocational Institute referred for placement,

26 were successfully placed in permanent employment. The practice of developing the educational standards and technical skills of Indians to fit them for employment in trades which provide greater opportunities will be continued and expanded as time goes on.

"I should like to refer briefly to a few group placement projects which will illustrate the progress made in this field. For several years there has been an influx of Indians to southern Alberta to assist in the cultivation and harvesting of beet crops. The numbers have increased each year. Last year approximately 600 were employed and this year the objective is to recruit 1,000 Indians, not only from northern Alberta but from Saskatchewan. Arrangements were carried on through liaison with the National Employment Service which was responsible for the actual movement of the Indians.

"Last winter through co-operation with the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources and the Department of Public Works the Indian Affairs Branch supervised the clearing of 24 miles of right of way between Fort Rae and Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories. One hundred and twenty Indians were employed at one stage or another and earned a total of \$58,000. This was of great assistance in reducing the number of relief recipients in the area. In addition, 250 Indians were employed by a private contractor in clearing work in the same general area. In both cases the Indians' work performance was reported to be very satisfactory.

"Substantial numbers of Indians are employed in the International Nickel project at Thompson, Manitoba and an Indian community has grown up at Schefferville, Quebec, the centre of the important iron ore project there. Elsewhere Indians continue to be employed in mining operations, both above and below ground, and in railway construction and maintenance, as well as in many urban occupations.

"Employment opportunities are of course dependent to a considerable extent on the general level of business activity and we look forward to an increase in the number of Indians employed off reserves during the forthcoming year. The goodwill and support of employers are most important in expanding the placement programme. In this regard I feel I should mention a letter received a few days ago from a mine manager in the province of Quebec who, on the basis of successful employment of Indians in his mine, has asked our assistance in referring to him an Indian who could be trained for a supervisory position in that mine. This is only one instance of the results which can be expected through confidence gained from satisfactory experience with Indian labour. It is anticipated that as this programme develops there will be increasing