

Policy

Our policy is to make school facilities available to every Indian child. This is not as simple as some may think in remote areas and in view of the migratory habits of some of the northern bands. Officials of the Branch consistently encourage parents to send their children to school when they reach six years of age. Too often in the past, parents in some areas waited until their children were quite a bit older before sending them to school. Children are also encouraged to stay at school as long as possible and to go on to high school if they show aptitude and application in their studies.

Statistics show that this policy is bearing fruit. In the school year 1948-1949, 23,285 Indians attended school; during this past year there were 38,836. The increase has been steady and one of the highest of any school system in Canada. In the same period, the number of Indian students attending high school classes more than trebled, from 611 in 1948-49 to 2,100 in the last year.

Integrated Schooling

While our policy is to foster Indian education we endeavour, at the same time, to build as few new Indian schools as possible. In this apparent paradox lies the real progress of Indian education in the last decade - the growth of integrated schooling. The Indian Affairs Branch encourages integrated education in full realization of the benefits the Indian child gains by close association at an impressionable age with non-Indian children. Ten years ago only 1,406 Indian children attended provincial public or private schools. By the last school year this number had soared to 8,186 and continues to grow. Integrated schooling is most advanced where Indian children live close to municipal schools, for example, at Parry Island in Ontario, where it has been possible to close the school on the reserve. Children from this reserve attend schools in the town of Parry Sound. In the same agency the Gibson reserve school has also been closed as the Indian children attend classes in Bala. This pattern is beginning to emerge everywhere in Canada. In Nova Scotia, the Millbrook reserve school was shut down and children now attend Truro schools. In New Brunswick the Eel River reserve school was closed and the pupils entered Dalhousie schools. The St. Clair Indian school in Sarnia was closed also, as was the Protestant Indian school at Whitehorse when the children were enrolled in public schools. In Dawson City we were able to close the doors of the Moose Hide School. At Hazelton in British Columbia three successive agreements were negotiated with the Hazelton Public School Board to allow the entry of Indian children. These are just a few examples. For many years, in remote parts of northern Ontario, the children had been attending classes and boarding at the Shingwauk Residential School at Sault Ste. Marie. Three years ago an agreement was signed with the Public School