

## NEW INDIAN ACT IN EMBRYO

Indian Affairs Minister Arthur Laing said recently that work is far advanced on the preparation of a new Indian Act. "Working papers which will guide the legislative drafting people in the Department of Justice have been discussed with the National Indian Advisory Council and are now being reviewed by an inter-departmental committee," the Minister said. "When the final review has been completed, the Act itself will be prepared and representatives of the Indian people will be consulted further."

Mr. Laing said that the Act was being given priority both in the Department and by the Government but that there was a long-standing commitment to consult the Indian people, which had inevitably slowed-down the process a little. "The Indian people have a right to examine the Act and to play a part in the formulation of the final version," the Minister said.

When the legal version is drafted it will provide Indian bands with much more scope for development. An outstanding feature of the suggested new Act will be the provision that bands may incorporate and manage the affairs of their reserve community independently. Mr. Laing said that this would provide a flexibility which was lacking in the old statute. It would enable each band to choose the level of management best suited to their needs and permit them to progress at their own speed, he said. Canada's first federal Indian Act was passed in 1868 and has been reviewed and amended many times since. The greatest changes came in 1951 following hearings by a joint Senate-Commons Committee that held extensive hearings in 1947-48. The new Act will make many radical changes in the legal position of the Indian people but will continue to protect their land holdings from alienation. Land will still be held in trust for future generations, but development for the benefit of the Indian people will be encouraged.

### MANAGEMENT OF ASSETS

The provisions for devolution of responsibility and the assumption of management will enable the bands who choose to do so to assume full management of their assets. The Minister has said on a number of

### CENTENNIAL RUGBY

Nearly the whole of the English Rugby Football Fifteen and its reserves for last season are visiting Canada on a special tour of games to mark Canada's centennial. Twenty-two players from a large number of English clubs and counties are making the tour, accompanied by two managers. Their first match is against Alberta at Calgary.

With the English team are the president of the English Rugby Football Union, Mr. R. Locker, and the vice-president Mr. J.T.W. Berry. The manager is Mr. M.R. Steele-Bodger, Chairman of R.F.U.'s Selection Committee. Mr. A.E. Agar is assistant manager.

occasions that the old paternalistic policy had outlived its usefulness and that the Indian people must be encouraged to make their own choices from the many options available to them.

It is proposed to delete the sections of the existing Act which cover questions of liquor, as well as other discriminatory provisions that work against Indian people.

### BAND MEMBERSHIP

There is some controversy among Indians about those parts of the Act which govern membership in a band. Decisions have yet to be made on the question of membership and adopted children and those born out of wedlock. The status of Indian women who marry non-Indians is also contentious. At present, bands can contest membership for illegitimate children if they believe the child's father to be a non-Indian. The present law provides that Indian men who marry retain their membership and bring their wife, whether she was of Indian status or not, into full membership, while an Indian woman marrying a non-Indian automatically loses her status as an Indian.

These points are meeting with mixed views. Some Indians believe that men and women should be treated the same, while others believe that band membership should be limited and that a distinction is necessary. While some bands accept all the children of their womenfolk as members, others have in the past protested the applications of unwed mothers as a matter of principle.

Decisions on these and other points will have to be made after the Indian people have had a full opportunity to discuss the points at issue.

Mr. Laing said he believed that the development provisions of the proposed new Act and the clauses covering management of band assets were generally acceptable to the Indian people. "This section of the Act appears to meet the needs as they have been represented to us," he said. "We want to make sure that there are no restrictive clauses which hold back the Indian people. It will be a completely new document which will meet the needs of today and the years immediately ahead. There will be no artificial barriers to the Indian people as they seek their place in the world of tomorrow."

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During their two-week visit, the English side will play five games. After the Alberta contest, they will meet British Columbia at Victoria and their third encounter is with an all-Canadian side at Empire Stadium, Vancouver. The fourth match is against Ontario in Toronto and the final game is against Eastern Canada at Ottawa on October 7.

The tour will mark the first time that an overseas team of international calibre has played rugby in Alberta and Ottawa.

With one exception the English players are those from whom the English Fifteen was drawn which beat Ireland and Scotland last season, but lost to Australia, France and Wales.