

In the last few years, we have given encouragement to Indians - and financial assistance where needed - to improve existing houses or to build new homes.

Since 1945 well over 8,600 new houses have been built on Indian reserves and nearly 18,000 houses repaired.

Some of this housing has been provided out of welfare funds voted by Parliament, but a considerable part of it has been financed by the Indians themselves through their Band funds, or by individual Indian veterans under the Veterans Land Act.

At the present session of Parliament the Government is proposing amendments to the Indian Act and the National Housing Act to provide additional facilities to enable Indians to finance new homes and improvements of existing homes.

Our experience has been that Indians who get new houses or improve their old houses like to keep them in good condition, to furnish them nicely and to look after their homes in the same way their neighbours do off the reserves.

And the need for higher incomes to support better homes is usually the strongest incentive to the Indians to seek and to keep regular employment.

The improvement of Indian housing is a nationwide problem.

But the problem of ensuring new kinds of employment for the Indians is not a single nationwide problem. It is a series of local problems - problems which vary greatly from one region of Canada to another, and even from one Band to another within the same region.

In some of the more settled parts of Canada, particularly in southern Ontario and western Quebec, most Indians work away from the reserves at a great variety of urban occupations.

That is also true in the Vancouver area in British Columbia.

In the more settled parts of the Prairies, many of the Indians are showing an increasing interest and a growing aptitude for farming the lands of their reserves.

On the Pacific coast, the Indians are among the leading fishermen, and an increasing number of Indians are engaged in various types of forestry and lumbering.

In New Brunswick a considerable number of Indians have been employed in the development of the great new military camp at Gagetown.

In the North it is not so easy to find new forms of employment, though more and more Indians are being employed in the construction of defence works, including the early warning lines, in logging operations, in mining, and in the construction of pipe lines, roads and railways.