

## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR REGISTERED INDIANS AND INUIT

Financial assistance to aboriginal people for education and training beyond the secondary level began in the 1950's but at that time did not extend beyond vocational and skilled trades training. In 1964 (when there was still no specific program of post-secondary education assistance for aboriginal people), there were approximately 60 aboriginal people enrolled in post-secondary programs.<sup>1</sup>

In 1968, the Department introduced a new program of financial assistance for the training needs of aboriginal people at a vocational level because of difficulties experienced by aboriginal people in gaining access to programs from the Department of Manpower & Immigration. In addition, this program for the first time provided direct assistance to Indians and Inuit resident in Canada, who were enrolled in post-secondary programs at a university or college level.

By the end of the program's first year of operation (1968-69), approximately 247 students were being funded under this program for post-secondary studies.

In 1972, the Department received authority from Treasury Board to transfer funds to individual bands for the administration of the program in accordance with federal policy.

At this time, the Department also began seeking authority for post-secondary education assistance separate from vocational program assistance. A report performed under contract for the Department (the DPA report) states that although Department staff believed that a separate, definitive policy and set of administrative procedures would minimize implementation inconsistencies across the country and encourage use of the program, this approach was not supported by the representatives from the native Indian community.<sup>2</sup>

Until 1975, post-secondary education assistance and vocational and other programs continued to be covered by the same Treasury Board authority (#683951). Then in 1975, an interim set of guidelines were approved by Treasury Board specifically for post-secondary education assistance. These interim guidelines would ultimately form the basis of the