

The Indians have to be encouraged and helped to prepare themselves for enfranchisement so that, when they are enfranchised and on their own, they will be able to hold their own on reasonably equal terms with other Canadians.

And that, unfortunately, far too many of the Indians could not do today. Far too many of the Indians in Canada have a standard of living below that of most of the rest of the population.

And, what is even more serious, the traditional means of livelihood of the Indians have not expanded as fast as the Indian population.

Indeed, these traditional means of livelihood are not capable of much expansion and, in some areas, far from expanding, they are actually contracting.

That is true even in the North where the Indians do not usually live on reserves but are still mainly nomadic, and where their customary livelihood is derived almost entirely from hunting, trapping and fishing.

Only a limited number of people can make a living from these occupations, even in huge areas.

That is why we have to face the problems of finding alternative means of livelihood for part of the growing population of Indians in the North unless we are prepared to let these Indians become mere pensioners of the Government.

I certainly hope no one is going to be satisfied to have a large proportion of our Indian population living on relief, even for part of every year.

When the means of earning a livelihood are not available, relief must be provided, and it must be provided on a reasonable scale, and I don't believe most Canadians object to paying the cost of that relief.

But we do not want to contemplate a continuing state of relief and dependency for the Indians.

And our experience is that the Indians themselves - most of them - really want to work for their living, though in many cases they cannot see much sense in going on working to earn extra money after their ordinary needs and wants have been met.

In seeking new occupations for Indians, there are two problems to be met.

One is to find useful and gainful employment for the Indians who can no longer make their living in traditional ways: and the other is to give the Indians the incentive to work regularly and continuously when work is available.

The only way I know to meet both problems is to encourage the Indians to improve their standard of living.

Even in the more settled parts of Canada, Indian housing, speaking generally, is far below the average level of housing of the rest of the population, and housing perhaps is the most accurate of all indexes of living standards.