

The Deputy Minister of Resources and Development is Chairman of this Committee which includes representatives of the Department of National Health and Welfare, the R.C.M.P., the Anglican missions, the Roman Catholic missions, and the Hudson's Bay Company. At about the same time, an Eskimo Research Section was created in the Northern Administration and Lands Branch of the Department of Resources and Development to study Eskimo problems and to work in conjunction with the Committee which I have just mentioned.

I should like to mention, also, that eighteen months ago Parliament enacted legislation to enlarge the Northwest Territories Council to include three members elected by residents of the Mackenzie District, and to specify that the Council should hold one session a year in the Territories. The first three elected members are now serving the interests of their constituents. The Council has little direct connection with Eskimo problems, which are a federal responsibility, but it does have jurisdiction over regulations concerning the trapping of fur-bearing animals. This has a most important bearing on the welfare of Eskimos as well as Indians, since fur trapping is their principal source of revenue. Furthermore, the fact that there is on the Northwest Territories Council an elected representative from Aklavik, an important Eskimo settlement, is a further assistance to the Administration in keeping in touch with Eskimo problems.

Conclusion

In closing this speech I would like to speak briefly about Eskimo education. This is a vital matter, because education is the main ingredient in whole formula designed to help the Eskimo to adapt himself to changing conditions. In the past, the education of the Eskimo was entirely in the hands of the missions, who have done yeoman service. To supplement their work, the Government, since the end of the war, has built eight schools primarily for Eskimo children. These schools are spread across the top of the continent from northern Quebec to the Mackenzie Delta.

There isn't time available now to describe to you our detailed plans for improving Eskimo education, but in broad terms our intention is to bring the schools to the Eskimos rather than the Eskimos to the schools. In the past it has been the custom in many cases to teach the children at residential schools. Because the Eskimos are essentially nomadic people this often meant that these children were separated from their families for several years at a stretch. As a result they found themselves unaccustomed to their native way of life when they returned to it. It's now the intention that, where the children have to go to residential schools, they should return to their families for several weeks each year.

In some cases we contemplate changing the time of the school term so that it will coincide with the period when the Eskimo families are normally in the vicinity of the settlement. We have given thought to the possibility of housing the Eskimo children in tent hostels instead of wooden houses, so that the conditions under which they live will not be too different from their normal way