

Indian Act

May I say that habits of health and sanitation are two of the things that come immediately to my mind in that regard. On the other hand, if a child is going back and forth to his own home while he is in contact with these other rules of health and other methods of sanitation, he becomes a missionary for those better ways of life.

The attendance of Indian children at school should commence at the same age as the attendance of white children, if the schools are available to them. I believe I know something about the psychology of teaching young people, and to my mind one of the greatest tragedies I see in the residential schools throughout the country is to find a boy at an advanced chronological age doing the simple work of the primary grades. It is something in which they have no interest. I say it is a tragedy, and I mean just that. The Indian children will have to start school at the same age as we start our own children, at the stage where the chronological age, may I say, fits the social surroundings. I believe that my meaning at least is clear, even if the term is not perhaps the most suitable. We have that sort of tragedy in schools other than Indian schools but it is found often in Indian schools, because when these children have to be sent away from home the parents are not willing to allow them to go until they are past the age at which we send our children to school.

The system of education, whatever it is, of Indian children has not been too successful in the past, even if I have granted that it is on the mend. This is a sad reflection on our education of the Indians. In 1945 only 71 Indian children were registered in Grade IX. It is true that there were 219 in 1949, and that is an improvement, but that is very few for the whole of Canada. I am speaking now, of course, of high school education. In that same year, 1949, only 65 children were enrolled in the three grades X, XI and XII. I have no figures as to whether they were successful in those courses, but at least they were enrolled in them.

The residential schools, in which most of these people in high school grades were enrolled, are not as efficient as they might be. The main reason for this is lack of funds. Too many children, for example, who are attending these schools are paying for their education, in many cases in the form of work. I have no fault to find with work. Work is a part of a person's education; I believe those children should be allowed to work, but—note this—only when that work is a part of the educational process. Where you have children in a boarding school away from their parents and there is a lot of work to be done around the school farm, there is room for abuse. The temptation is to allow those

children to get on with the job of making the place nice, cultivating the garden and so on, so that when the inspector comes everything will look well. As I say, there is room for abuse in that system.

Another thing I have noticed about the Indian schools is the lack of playground equipment. These Indian children take naturally to sports, and sports could be used as a medium for their instruction, for moral uplift and for inculcating in them a sense of fair play and honesty. It could be used to teach them to be modest winners and good losers. For some of these ideas which I have expressed, I am indebted to Dr. S. R. Laycock, who is a prominent educationist and psychologist in my own province. He is nationally known, indeed internationally. In 1950 he was chairman of the school and education committee of the Canadian home and school and parent-teacher federation. This organization presented a brief, I believe to this government but at least to the minister, over Dr. Laycock's signature. The brief was dated November, 1950, and recommends many valuable things. I should like to conclude my speech by putting those recommendations on the record of this house where they may be available for all the members to study. The recommendations are as follows:

1. That the federal government increase the funds available for the building of schools among the Indian people and the proper conduct and maintenance of these schools. This is in accordance with the recommendation of the former director of Indian affairs, Mr. Hoey, who, we understand, recommended to the joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons that a minimum sum of twenty-five millions annually for twenty to twenty-five years would be necessary to rehabilitate the Indian.

2. That whereas it requires \$300 a year adequately to feed and house a child in a residential school, and whereas Indian children are entitled to as good care as other children in Canada, the federal government increase the annual per capita grant to all residential schools for Indian children to at least \$300 per child and exercise such supervision as will ensure that the total grant so made is used for its intended purpose.

3. That provision be made to provide adequate facilities for manual arts and home economics in the Indian day schools.

4. That adequate playground equipment be provided for all Indian schools.

5. That the Indian Affairs Department instruct its branch in each province to obtain from the provincial federations of home and school or parent-teacher associations, literature concerning the aims of home and school or parent-teacher associations and to forward copies to interested parents of children in Indian schools and that all authorities of the Indian Affairs branch be instructed to encourage the formation of home and school associations in Indian schools.

I submit these recommendations, Mr. Speaker, to the consideration of the minister and of the hon. members and of the government.