



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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TRENDS IN INDIAN EDUCATION

An address by Mrs. Ellen Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, to the Canadian Association of School Superintendents and Inspectors on September 15, 1959, at Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

May I say what a pleasure it is to be with you and to be able to express my appreciation to those of you who visit our Indian schools as part of your work. You fulfill a most important function in Indian education. If we are to build up and maintain high standards we must remain in close contact with the provincial school systems. The Indian Affairs Branch also finds it helpful when outside people make fresh appraisals and suggestions for the improvement of Indian school programmes.

Before going into details on the more important aspects of Indian education, let me re-state that the fundamental aim of the Government's policy towards Indians is the gradual integration of our country's fastest-growing ethnic group into the Canadian community.

The administration of Indian Affairs tends to help the Indians to become self-supporting and responsible members of Canadian society. Obviously, this is a long-term objective. But year by year it is encouraging to observe that the Indians are making forward strides. I was deeply impressed in the course of my recent visit to Indian reserves in Western Canada with measures that are being taken to improve housing, schools, farms, roads, sanitation and employment opportunities. No longer is the Indian to be considered a depressed and helpless Canadian. He has indeed much to offer to our society through his intelligence, his knowledge and love of nature, his quiet humour, his kindness, his tolerance and patience.

The Government is stepping up its efforts to help the Indian change his employment habits from seasonal occupations to steady, year-round work which can ensure a more stable family economy. Our placement programme helps young people from the reserves to obtain urban jobs. An increasing number have the educational and trade qualifications to meet the demands of employers in business and industry.