

INDIAN HOUSING PROJECT

The Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Mr. Jean Chrétien, opened on March 21 a new Indian community of 106 housing units, provided by his Department, at the iron-mining town of Schefferville, 575 air miles north of Quebec City.

The \$2.5-million project, begun in the summer of 1970, will provide homes for about 700 Indians; 56 families of the Montagnais of Sept-Isles and 49 from the Fort Chimo Band of Naskapis.

The Montagnais and Naskapis hunted and trapped in the Schefferville area before the establishment of mining operations in 1955, at which time they occupied the John Lake Settlement, three miles north of the iron ore townsite.

The new community will be known as the "Village of Matimekosh" — Village of the Little Trout — a name which derives from an Indian legend of a miraculous catch of trout from Matimekosh Lake many years ago, which enabled Indian bands to eat and stock up enough food for the annual caribou chase.

TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

Twenty-two buildings, nine containing six row-type housing units and 13 with four, have been completed at a total cost of \$2,557,552.47, under a contract awarded in June 1970 to the construction firm of

Richard and B.A. Ryan Limited of Montreal. They will be ready for occupancy this month. Each two-storey unit will have either two, three or four bedrooms in addition to a living room, kitchen, a dining area off the kitchen, a three-piece bathroom and utility space.

Exterior walls are finished in a new material that has the appearance of aluminum, but has the insulation and handling qualities of hardboard. All units are oil heated.

Existing hydro, water and sewer services in Schefferville have been extended to the new 37-acre site located within the town's southern boundary, and a road from Schefferville has been extended into the development.

Houses have been allotted by band councils according to individual family needs, and occupants will contribute in relation to their income, either in cash or the equivalent in labour or home improvement.

More than 70 Indians are employed on a full-time or part-time basis at the Iron Ore Company of Canada. With the opening of the mine, the Montagnais Indians turned from their traditional livelihood of fishing and hunting to work in the mine and settled permanently at John Lake. The Fort Chimo Indians moved to Schefferville in 1955 when their fur, fish and game resources were almost totally exhausted.

BANKRUPTCY TRUSTEE PLAN

A program to help people with small incomes who are deeply in debt was recently announced by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Mr. Robert Andras.

The program, which begins on June 1, will provide, at a nominal cost, the services of a public bankruptcy trustee to individuals who cannot afford to pay for a private trustee, but who seek the relief available under the bankruptcy law.

Employees of the Federal Government, specially trained and licensed to administer bankrupt estates, will operate the service, for which debtors will be asked to pay \$50 to cover essential administrative costs. Licensed trustees in the private sector ask for fees ranging from \$300 to \$700, usually payable as a deposit from debtors at the start. The size of this fee prevents many small debtors from obtaining the services of a trustee, and they are thereby excluded from the protection afforded by the Bankruptcy Act.

"This is an insurmountable barrier to many low income debtors and they need an inexpensive method of declaring bankruptcy," the Minister said.

The Superintendent of Bankruptcy, some of

whose staff will be appointed as public trustees, already has regional offices in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, and initially, the scheme will operate in these cities.

Excluded from the plan are corporations, self-employed individuals and persons who may be considered able to afford to pay a private trustee. "This service is for persons who, in a practical sense, are denied the law's relief, which is available to the more fortunate debtors," Mr. Andras said.

"We can all gain much, both socially and economically, if hopelessly debt-ridden persons can be given a fresh start in life," he added.

The program will require special licences to be issued to federal employees trained in the administration of bankrupt estates. The public trustee will also help the debtor rehabilitate himself, and may direct him to social agencies providing advice on financial guidance and counselling.

Mr. Andras said that the initial phase of this program would make these services available in urban areas holding about 35 per cent of the total Canadian population. He added that the program should be extended gradually to other areas of the country as soon as feasible.