

INDIAN AFFAIRS

In the House of Commons on March 5, Mrs. Ellen Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, reported on steps which are being taken to improve conditions for the Indian population of Canada.

Mrs. Fairclough said: "...The 1959-60 main estimates for Indian affairs show an increase of \$6,563,652 over 1958-59. The major portion of this increase is attributable to two basically important fields, namely education and welfare of Indians.

"The total increase in operating costs for education is \$2,928,886 and for welfare \$2,322,104. This envisages the employment of 42 additional teachers at day schools and 32 at residential or a total increase in teaching staff of 74. There is an increase of \$350,000 to further assist in the education of Indian children in association with non-Indians and an additional amount of \$765,499 to finance the operation and maintenance of residential schools. The programmes of residential school construction calls for an additional amount of \$795,300 over 1958-59. The increase in the welfare appropriation is largely due to increased requirements to meet relief costs and the care of indigents.

"In the all important field of education, good progress has been made. For example, in the 1958-59 fiscal year the unrevised figures show a total enrolment of 38,836 Indian pupils in all schools. This includes 8,429 pupils who attend non-Indian schools, universities, teachers' colleges and commercial or trade schools and represents an increase of 1,099 over the previous year. The estimates presented for consideration visualize a further increase in numbers and further participation by Indian pupils in higher education.

"In the past academic year we have had about 2,500 students taking post-elementary school training. There were but 200 in 1948 and it is my hope that this tenfold increase will gather momentum with each year. To this end, a system of scholarships offers further incentive to Indian students to continue their education. These scholarships, representing a total value of \$25,000, are offered in addition to the normal assistance given at post-elementary school level. Thirteen awards were made in the current year.

"In both Indian day and residential schools and practical arts courses such as home economics, woodwork, sheet metal work, etc. enrolled 5,898 students. For this programme, 48 instructors were employed for classes enrolling 2,683 boys. For the girls 63 teachers were employed to give instruction in home economics to over 3,215 students.

"It is planned to construct 88 classrooms together with other necessary construction including teachers' residences. In line with the

efforts being made to educate Indian children in association with non-Indians, provision is made for contribution towards the construction of 11 joint schools.

"The residential school construction programme, designed to take care of children of northern migratory Indians and those from broken homes, shows an increase. It includes two hostels for children attending elementary and high schools in Whitehorse and a start on the replacement of one old school, namely St. Mary's residential school, New Westminster agency, British Columbia.

"In the field of Indian housing, the appropriation was doubled in 1958-59 when the amount of \$2 million was provided. This has made possible an expanded programme of housing construction and an improved standard of housing, as well as an increased number of cost sharing agreements with bands with sufficient funds to participate in such undertakings. During 1958-59, a survey of housing was undertaken which will have an important bearing on the building programme in future. The emphasis on financial assistance to Indians in northern and remote areas will continue.

"In 1959-60 it is proposed to maintain the expenditure at the same level of \$2 million and it is estimated this will cover the financing in whole or in part of close to 1,000 housing units. On the average for every dollar expended from public funds in recent years, there has been an equal or greater amount provided from personal contributions by the Indians themselves in the form of labour, cash and materials, band funds, and Veterans Land Act grants available to Indian veterans.

"During the debate on the departmental estimates in the last session of this House, the question of the quantity of relief supplied on behalf of Indians in need was raised by some hon. members opposite. I said at that time that this subject was under constant review. As a result of a thorough and careful study, improved standards and revised procedures of relief administration on behalf of Indians are being introduced throughout the country on April 1 next, in order that Indians in destitute circumstances may receive, as nearly as possible, the same treatment and assistance available for non-Indians in need, in Canadian communities generally.

"As I informed hon. members last year, the Department in 1957 embarked upon a limited experimental programme in the payment of relief in cash and in dollar value orders, replacing relief in kind according to a ration scale. This experiment has proven to be successful and on the basis of this experience and following a comprehensive review of scales of assistance and procedures in effect in various provinces and non-Indian communities

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