

#### HOSTELS FOR PUPILS

One of the features of northern and Indian education has been the school residence. Changes are coming here too. (I will speak later about Indian education and am confining myself for the moment to the situation in the northern territories.)

Of the 1,500 children who must go where the school is, rather than have the school come to them, 303 are under 13 years of age....

We must operate hostels and we shall have to do so for the foreseeable future at least for the higher grades of education. There can be no escaping the fact that it is not possible to provide high-school classes in the small, remote settlements of the North. It is a fact of education that the needs of today require extensive plant equipment and facilities which simply cannot be provided in settlements and small villages. Furthermore vocational training must provide a wide number of options, and this requires a pupil population sufficient to allow for grouping up of students for some subjects and dispersal for others in numbers large enough to justify the facilities required for each trade or branch of learning.

However, we are going to be out of the business of housing small children in large hostels. Wherever we can, we are building small residences in small communities so that the children do not have to travel great distances, and so there will be but a few pupils in each residence under the direction of house mothers. These small residences are working well. The children prefer them and the families prefer the children to be in them. By 1971, there will be sufficient small residence accommodation in the North to care for all the children under 13 years of age who must be away from their homes for one reason or another....

#### INDIAN EDUCATION

Much of the operation of northern schools will devolve eventually on the territorial government. As this change takes place and the education of Indian children is more and more provided by provincial schools, the Department will become a resource for expert assistance in cross-cultural education. It will be an agency to assist individual Indian and Eskimo young people in finding an effective role for themselves in the world of today. It will be able to devote the energy and attention required by the problems of training and re-training the older Indians or Eskimos, who often face problems and difficulties unlike those of most trainees.

It is the objective of the department to have 80 per cent of Indian students in provincially-operated schools by 1973. When this goal is reached, equality of opportunity will be closer at hand and Indian people will be freer to make their own choices. There will be more bridges of understanding between the Indian people and the Canadian community.

Chief Dan George of the Burrard Indians has said that when the Indians of old wanted to fit two pieces of wood they rubbed one against the other until they got a perfect fit. Each piece of wood was worn down a little, but each retained its purpose, they

fitted together in a watertight joint and taken together they made a powerful whole. Chief George says it is the same with two cultures; they must rub against one another until a perfect fit has been achieved. This is the primary reason for bringing Indian children into the same schools as those their contemporaries attend. The two cultures can rub one against the other, neither having to give more than the other, but each adapting enough to fit comfortably and well.

The enrolment of Indian students in school has increased by 160 per cent since 1949. Since that time enrolment in federally-operated schools has risen by 30 per cent and enrolment of Indian students in non-federal schools has gone from 1,537 to 34,635; it is up many times over. There are now 64,986 Indians enrolled in schools - 53 per cent in community, unsegregated schools.

One of the problems of Indian children is that many lag behind other children in their age-groups. We are extending kindergarten programmes to offset this lag (said to be two-and-a-half years), for we believe it is largely based on factors which exist when the child enters school. By September 1971, we shall have sufficient kindergarten places to accommodate all the five year-olds in the Indian community.

The next step is to create places for the four year-olds. We believe that two years of kindergarten will reduce the age-grade gap, and this will help in keeping Indian students in school....

#### KEEPING PUPILS IN SCHOOL

So many Indian and Eskimo people see their youngsters with two or three times the number of years in school that they have had themselves that they believe this to be sufficient education. This attitude will change over the years but, in the meantime, young scholars will need help, they will need to have their will to stay with education reinforced both by the schools and the Indian community.

Changes will have to be made and they are in the process now. By September of this year, most of the residential schools will have the administration of the hostels and the administration of the teaching function separated, so that the educational part of the operation will be the full-time concern of an educator, while the care of the youngsters will be in the hands of those whose special field this is. This will overcome some of the objections to these institutions. By 1969, all residential schools will be operated this way.

The future of residential schools will be that of hostels for young people who attend community schools with their contemporaries. Some of the plant is beyond its useful life, and if still required will be replaced with living accommodation near good school facilities.

#### TRAINING FOR ADULTS

But not all the problems of education are those of the young. The special training and retraining requirements of Indian and Eskimo adults will require knowledge and experience which are not yet available. This is the most serious problem in the future of Indian and Eskimo education.