

"Meanwhile, there have been other encouraging developments. Wage employment of Eskimos at the North Rankin Nickel Mines has proved most successful and the management is well satisfied with the work of the some 100 Eskimos employed in the mining operation. At Frobisher Bay, commercial char fishing which was begun last summer on an experimental small-scale basis will be expanded next season. Market research is continuing in an effort to enlarge the demand for Eskimo handicrafts and stone carvings. The Eskimo Rehabilitation Project at Frobisher Bay is also developing along very satisfactory lines and should assist an increasing number of Eskimos in preparing for employment and other income opportunities."

Mr. Robertson went on to speak about education in the Territories which, he said, was one of the keys for all our northern people, of whatever blood.

He continued:

"Last September I had the pleasure of opening the new High and Vocational School and hostel at Yellowknife. These institutions have since been named after two men whose exploits are part of the early history of the Yellowknife area - Sir John Franklin and his Indian colleague, Akaitcho. Anyone who has seen this fine modern school and hostel would find it difficult to believe that a short dozen years ago there was not a single government school anywhere in the Northwest Territories.

"Today, there are no less than 48 government operated schools containing 140 classrooms serving the Northwest Territories and the Eskimo population of northern Quebec. There are also 6 non-government schools with 36 classrooms in which children of the Northwest Territories are educated. In addition, there are 22 part-time mission schools.

"While government participation is a post-war development, education in the Northwest Territories is as old as Canada itself. The first school - a mission residential school staffed by the Grey Nuns of Montreal - opened its doors at Fort Providence in the year of confederation, 1867. In the Eastern Arctic the first mission day school was established at Little Whale River in 1876 by an Anglican missionary who a few years later started another school at Blacklead Island. Sixty years later, in 1939, a handful of southerners, who had settled in Yellowknife during the two previous years, established their own school district, exercising a right which had existed since 1870 but had not been exercised in the Territories since 1905, that is, not since Alberta and Saskatchewan "seceded" and the Territories assumed their present dimensions.

"Tribute should be paid to the churches who introduced and maintained education during the long period when there was no interest on the part of either the federal or the territorial government. Limited by dollars but unlimited

in devotion, the churches did a magnificent job within the extent of their resources and pioneered the way for the developments that were to follow many years later.

"There was a time when education did not seem to be important to the lives of the native peoples of the North. Nearly all of them were able to earn their livelihood by hunting, fishing and trapping; and there did not appear to be good reason to think that they could not continue to do so. Furthermore, there did not for many years seem to be much prospect that other ways of living, for which education would equip them, would be available for more than a very few.

"The fact is, however, that from the first introduction of fire-arms, which unbalanced the delicate equilibrium between man and nature, a gradual but inexorable change has been taking place. The very work of the churches themselves - which has done so much to prevent suffering and death by fostering principles of Christian charity - has had a profound effect on the native peoples of the North. For better or for worse, the coming of the white man and the impact of his ways have altered for all time to come the pattern of life for the men and women who were the original inhabitants of the Canadian North. They have made necessary a reorientation to completely changed circumstances.

"During the past few years, the process of change has been greatly accelerated. The rate of population growth among the Eskimos and Indian people has gone up substantially - largely as the result of improved health care and the effect of family allowances in providing the children with a more stable supply of food and clothing. The population increase has placed a greater demand on the supply of game and fur-bearing animals, making it increasingly difficult for the native peoples to earn a livelihood in their accustomed way. At the same time, the sharp decline in fur prices and in the volume of the catch have further aggravated the situation.

"Fortunately, at the very time when changing conditions were making it progressively harder for the native populations to rely on their traditional ways of life, other sources of income were becoming available - but only for those individuals equipped to take advantage of them. Increased defence activity and more intensive economic development offered opportunities for employment of Indians and Eskimos. The declining life on the land made action imperative - and the new developments provided new prospects. The clear requirement was for action by government to carry over into a new era the work of the churches in providing education and to make a start in the field of vocational training.

"It was not until 1946 that an Order-in-Council (P.C. 2993 of July 18, 1946) was passed designating education as a subject within the legislative authority of the Com-

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