

Supply—Citizenship and Immigration

Indians in the hinterland, however, benefited from many of the new developments in the northern areas and will participate in them to an even greater extent in the future.

In carrying out the various administrative programs of assistance the department has not overlooked the vital importance of research to meet the needs of tomorrow. An economist was appointed in October, 1960, as an economic development officer, to initiate surveys and studies and to co-ordinate activities of this nature carried out on our behalf or independently by other agencies. Several economic surveys are now in the process of being organized.

In introducing Indian affairs estimates last year I mentioned that a record total of 1,465 homes had been built on reserves and that 228 units had been started. Final records are not yet available for the current year but it is clear that we can expect another very successful year. Members will recall that to help meet the shortage of houses on many reserves and to provide employment during the winter months an additional sum of \$200,000 was provided for this purpose in the supplementary estimates passed by the house on December 20 last.

I think hon. members will be particularly interested and pleased to note provision of \$100,000 under the heading of loans, investments and advances to make possible housing loans to individual Indians on reserves. The purpose of this relatively small sum is merely to launch the program which will be introduced as soon as possible in the fiscal year 1961-62 in a few pilot areas. The purpose of these funds is to make loans available to Indians who earn a sufficient income to assume such obligations but who cannot secure credit from other lending institutions because of restrictions upon the use of real property situated on reserves as security.

The appropriation for housing is maintained at the same level as in previous years, which as members will recall this government doubled in 1958. These funds will provide grants and subsidies in addition to loans for families whose income is not sufficient to enable them to meet their housing requirements from present or future income.

In regard to welfare assistance, it will be recalled that the former ration system was discontinued in April of 1959. The change in procedure and the increased scale of benefits provided placed a good deal more responsibility upon Indian bands and upon individual members of these bands. Since I last reported to the house on this subject the number of bands whose needy members receive assistance by cheque has increased from 20 per cent to 40 per cent. A particularly interesting

development this year has been the negotiation of an agreement with the province of Manitoba. Under this agreement the federal and provincial governments share in the costs of a community development program which the province has launched in an effort to improve the social and economic standards in a number of communities with both Indian and Metis populations.

I should like to comment also, as a matter of general interest, upon the fact that 16 bands representing 74 per cent of the Indians in southern Ontario and 10 bands representing 13 per cent of the Indians in northern Ontario are now administering their own welfare assistance programs on exactly the same basis as municipalities in Ontario. This has been possible through amendments to the Ontario general welfare assistance act and the application of section 68 of the Indian Act.

All persons in these reserves apply to the band welfare administrator in non-Indian municipalities. Assistance is provided by this administrator from funds established in the band bank account. An 80 per cent subsidy, 50 per cent of which represents the federal share under the Unemployment Assistance Act agreements, is paid direct to the bands by the province. Under this program bands administer their own program, pay the normal municipal share of the costs, and deal directly with the province.

This progressive measure is being energetically pushed forward by the province of Ontario in co-operation with the Indian affairs branch. Discussions with other bands in the province are now under way, and it is expected that this program will be extended in the near future. Much has been and is being accomplished in works of a capital nature designed to improve the economy and conditions on populated reserves.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this program has been the extensive construction of roads which are needed, not only for the development of Indian community life but are most essential in providing the Indian population with access to neighbouring municipalities where advantage may be taken of the opportunity for employment and the means of earning a better livelihood. The importance of roads to the educational program, especially on the larger reserves, must not be overlooked. It is only by the provision of better roads that greater use of school bus transportation can be made to ensure that more Indian children attend classes regularly in the schools operated by the department as well as municipal schools where such arrangements are in effect.

It is interesting to note the co-operation received from provincial governments by the branch in its roadbuilding program in many