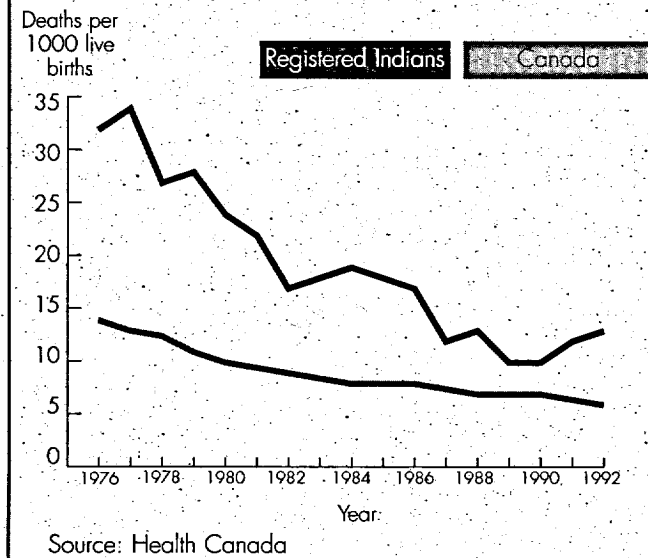


INFANT MORTALITY, INDIAN AND CANADA 1960 - 1991



Aboriginal people are now responsible for administering more than 80 per cent of the annual budget of the Indian and Inuit Affairs Program of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Today, the department is primarily a funding agency providing transfer payments to allow Aboriginal peoples to deliver community services more suitable to their memberships.

BUILDING A NEW PARTNERSHIP

Aboriginal people and the federal government continue to work together to build a new partnership and a better future for Indian, Inuit and Métis people. The commitments set out in *Creating Opportunity: the Liberal Plan for Canada* are providing a framework for these efforts. Meeting these commitments will result in a better standard of living for Aboriginal people, stronger and more self-reliant Aboriginal communities, and more effective Aboriginal governments that are accountable to their people.

Since October 1993, the Government of Canada, working in partnership with Aboriginal people, has undertaken a number of initiatives to fulfil the commitments set out in *Creating Opportunity*. For example:

- The Government has stated that it will act on the premise that the Aboriginal people of Canada's inherent right of self-government is an existing Aboriginal or treaty right within the *Constitution Act, 1982*. A national discussion process has been undertaken on how this should be implemented. At the same time, the Government continues to support initiatives across the country

that will help move Aboriginal people toward self-government.

- The Government has begun the process of dismantling the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in favour of transferring responsibility, authority and accountability to First Nations. In December 1994, a far-reaching framework agreement was signed with First Nations in the province of Manitoba to begin to dismantle the department's regional operations and recognize the authority and accountability of First Nations governments in the province. This agreement marks the beginning of a fundamentally new relationship between the Government and Manitoba First Nations.
- As part of its effort to develop a comprehensive national Aboriginal Health Policy, the Government has taken steps to address the most severe health and social problems that are currently afflicting Aboriginal communities. Through the *Building Healthy Communities* strategy announced in September 1994, the Government is providing a total of \$243 million in additional funding over the next five years to address priority needs in the areas of solvent abuse, mental health and home-

SPECIFIC CLAIMS AND TREATY LAND ENTITLEMENTS

As previously noted, 10 comprehensive land claims have been settled, most within the past three years. Comprehensive claim negotiations have advanced to critical stages with a number of groups, and several more settlements are anticipated in the near future.

"Specific claims" are another type of Aboriginal claim accepted by the Government of Canada. Most specific claims allege improper or unlawful administration of Indian lands by the Government, and they may be based on events that occurred more than 100 years ago. As of April 1993, the Government of Canada had received 584 specific claims. By December 1994, 312 of these had been resolved. Of this number, 127 were resolved through settlements and 185 were concluded by other means, including the rejection of claims where no lawful obligation could be established.

Outstanding progress has also been made in resolving "treaty land entitlements" especially for 27 First Nations in the province of Saskatchewan. Treaty land entitlements are based on the fact that certain Indian bands in the western provinces have never received the full allotment of land due to them under their treaties. At the current settlement rate, it is expected that all claims of this nature in the western provinces of Canada will be resolved by the end of 1998.