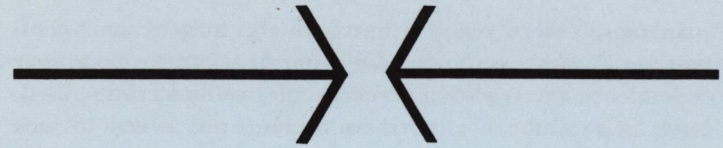


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THE INDIAN > IN < TRANSITION

INDIAN EDUCATION





INDIAN EDUCATION

Introduction

Centuries ago in Canada, education was measured by a knowledge of the forests and streams, of the traditions and crafts of a people; success by proficiency in the hunt.

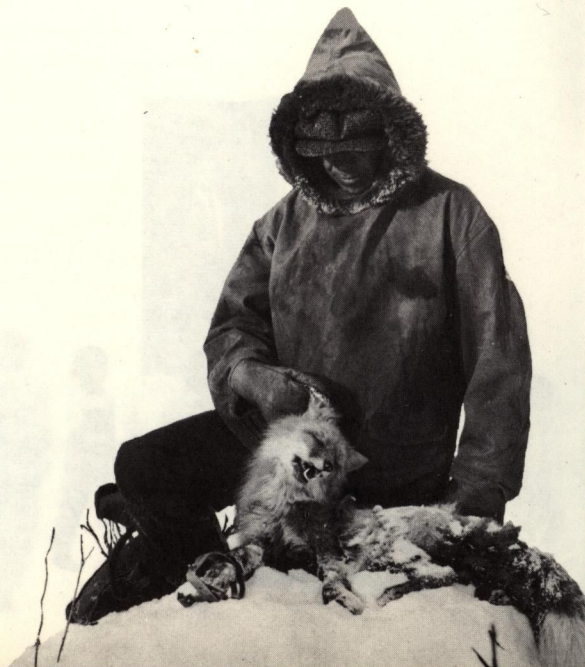
It was education essential to survival.

For a proportion of Indians today it is still a vital form of education and a way of life. But, for a growing number, a broader foundation of knowledge is essential.

It is not difficult to find the reason. Canadian expansion has proceeded westward and northward; technology has changed the economy. Roads now traverse once isolated areas; planes crisscross a continent.

While the Indian population, because of improved medical and social welfare measures, has increased in recent years, the wildlife population, on which many depended, has decreased. Meagre prices for furs, because of competition from synthetic fabrics and style changes, have also added to the economic woes of the native inhabitants. The result has been that, for some time, Indians have been in a race between the vanishing way of life of the hunter and trapper, and the new economic opportunities which a modern era has provided.

White settlement and industrial progress first affected Indians living near southern, urban areas. Their adjustment to it was oftentimes painful. They were bewildered by the complexities of the non-Indian world. Life on reserves and in remote areas had not prepared them for the changes they were forced to make.



In more recent years, it has been the turn of their compatriots in what were once far distant regions to have their dependence on traditional means of livelihood imperilled. Now, more and more, northern Indians are forced to seek wage employment.

To compete in this new field, unfamiliar to so many, they require education — academic, technical, social and cultural. The question is: What type of education will best serve their interests?

A Federal Responsibility

Education of Canadian Indians is a federal responsibility. In nine provinces and the Yukon, it is undertaken by the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration; and in the Northwest Territories, the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources looks after the education of both Indian and Eskimo children. There is some over-lapping in this arrangement. For instance, Indian schools at Moose Factory and Fort George have a number of Eskimo students, while the Eskimo school at Great Whale River has an Indian student minority. Indian education in Newfoundland is a provincial responsibility although the federal government has granted the tenth province some financial assistance to improve the living conditions of the Indian population.

It is the aim of the Indian Affairs Branch to raise the standard of living of Indian people and to furnish them with skills and education to enable them to integrate fully, if they so desire, in off-reserve life.

Its plan is three-fold: to provide Indian children with the opportunities for academic, social and economic progress that are available to non-Indians; to make available to adults other forms of education — literacy classes, vocational courses, leadership training, and club work; to help both Indians and non-Indians to integrate socially and economically.

Policy implemented

This is a course which was recommended in 1948. A Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons, having

heard many witnesses on the subject of the Indian Act, suggested a revision of the educational sections so as "to prepare Indian Children to take their place as citizens". The Committee specifically recommended that "Wherever and whenever possible Indian children should be educated in association with other children."

Expenditures on Indian education by the Indian Affairs Branch, increased enrolments, and more integrated schools, testify that this path is being followed. In the 1950-51 fiscal year, expenditures on Indian education amounted to \$7,394,147; in 1960-61 they had soared to \$27,746,859.

It is difficult to estimate the per capita cost of Indian and non-Indian education for there is a lack of uniformity in the way the provincial authorities report expenditures. Some include debenture costs, while others do not. It is clear, however, that the per capita cost of educating an Indian child is higher than that for a non-Indian. Maintenance of pupils and transportation costs greatly increase the cost of Indian education.

In the last ten years Indian enrolment in schools has mushroomed. For the fiscal year ending March 31, 1951, enrolment stood at 26,903; in 1961, it was 43,115 (in addition to 2,363 pupils attending non-Indian schools for whom complete information was lacking.) More students than ever before are attending universities and are taking other special training — nursing, food service, farming techniques, auto mechanics, etc. In no other segment of Canadian education has enrolment increased as rapidly as it has in Indian schools.

Today every Indian child on a reserve or Indian community can receive the education he desires and from which he is capable of profiting, and the federal government will pay the total costs — if necessary — right through university. Not all Indian parents, however, appreciate the new opportunities. Where schools are aloof from communities, where school committees do not exist and where parents themselves lack education, the function of learning in the lives of children sometimes is little understood or appreciated.

Then, too, many Indian parents place more emphasis on parental education than on school instruction. They resent

the fact also that their children return with non-Indian ways, unfamiliar with the traditional pursuits of hunting and fishing, that they are sometimes scornful of their parents' viewpoints, and of Indian culture.

Integration of Indians and non-Indians is a voluntary process. It cannot be forced. It cannot be hurried. There are bound to be setbacks and frictions — for instance, — when Indian children, trained in the non-Indian world, return to homes traditionally Indian in outlook.

To be successful and lasting, integration must proceed at a pace, and in a manner, acceptable to Indians and non-Indians alike. Desire and need on both sides are prerequisites; isolation and wide gulfs in economic circumstances are gaps to be bridged. One cannot force people to associate with one another, if they are averse to such contacts. The most that one can do is to persuade and to encourage such association.

The school, the church, the trading post, and social organizations provide the best means of linking the world of the Indian and the non-Indian. Integration usually proceeds most slowly in isolated regions where there are few social and commercial contacts among peoples, and most rapidly in urban centres where there is integrated schooling and constant association in daily living.

Problems of Indian Education

Education cannot be limited to mere instruction. While it must provide the basic knowledge required for academic, professional and vocational courses, it must also encourage self-development. It must find expression in leadership in many types of community activities. It is this broader meaning of education that is described in this booklet.

To accomplish such objectives in the lives of Indian children — and adults — many problems must be solved.

The Indian population of 185,000 is scattered throughout the country; bands are at widely different stages of development. Some live in remote settlements; some in urban areas.

There is a multiplicity of dialects. In British Columbia alone, eleven different Indian dialects are spoken. Many Indians do not know either the French or English languages.

A number of children leave remote settlements at an early age and are educated in central institutions — with the emotional upheaval such changes entail.

A new way of life must be taught. Some pupils have never before seen water flowing out of taps, experienced central heating of buildings, or encountered electric lighting. Planes are familiar to many but not cars, trains or bicycles. As one teacher discovered, it was even difficult to convince her pupils that hens laid eggs. "Everyone knows that eggs come to the Yukon in a box," one Indian boy affirmed scornfully. "We get our eggs at the store and they cost a lot of money. But imagine people keeping big birds to lay eggs!"

A new philosophy is encountered. To the non-Indian, time waits for no man; to the Indian, time waits for all men. Each reacts accordingly.

It has often been said that the Canadian Indians are a neglected race. There were grounds for such accusations in the past — but not now so far as education is concerned. The education budget is increasing every year. For many older Indians, unfortunately, the assistance comes too late.

Many of the problems which Indian children still face arise out of their background. One major hurdle is that the textbooks are written in what is to nearly all of them a foreign language.

How fast would any non-Indian child progress if he had to learn his lessons in Cree or Ojibwa? If the teacher wrote on the blackboard "netam" would a non-Indian recognize in that word "my dog", or if he were asked in Kwakiutl, "masis, uksukw dakwa?" would he understand that she had said, "What are you doing?"

Then, there is the problem of figures. The Blackfoot Indians, for instance, have no numerals.

Texts also incorporate symbols and a way of life foreign to Indians from isolated areas. Indian pupils are familiar with hunting equipment but not with vacuum cleaners; they know about caribou but are unfamiliar with escalators. They do not understand the subtleties of children's stories or the reasoning about real estate or interest rates.

And what could be more embarrassing to an Indian child

than to have his race depicted in school texts or on television as savages with no culture and few morals, to arrive at school poorly clad and with an unattractive lunch! Some children have been taunted so much by their fellow pupils that they have dropped out of school.

Conditions in many Indian homes make it difficult for pupils to do their homework. This is especially true when whole families live in one or two-room dwellings, equipped with only a limited amount of furniture, and a student's ear is assailed by a cacophony of crying children, blaring radio programmes and adult conversation.

Such conditions are not unknown in non-Indian homes. They make it difficult for children to concentrate on their studies. The result is that often pupils are absent from school rather than face the consequences for neglected homework.

Low standards of living and limited education of parents often result in children leaving school at an early age. Uncertainty about job opportunities — even with education — also make a student feel that there is little reason for him to continue studying.

Indian children lack a competitive nature. They are products of a civilization which respects skills needed in a nomadic way of life; which does not value highly material possessions. They are traditionally generous. The Indian's code also requires conformity and respect for the decisions of elders. He is extremely proud, sensitive, and easily hurt. He cannot stand ridicule and is himself extremely considerate of the feelings of other people. He is shocked by the non-Indian's blunt way of speaking.

It has been no easy task, therefore, to provide facilities satisfactory to all Indian families — and to the educationists.

Indian Schools

The four main classifications of Indian schools are: Day Schools, Residential Schools, Seasonal Schools, and Hospital Schools.

Indian Day Schools: These are schools on Indian reserves, and settlements operated in much the same way as non-Indian

public schools. Children attending classes live at home and attend school daily. Of the 43,115 Indian pupils enrolled in school during the 1960-61 fiscal year, Indian Day Schools had an enrolment of 19,829. In addition there were 1,263 non-Indian students — children of government employees, Metis, and others living in areas where no other educational facilities were available. Also, 393 children were boarded in neighbouring hostels and attended Indian day schools.

Residential Schools: These are boarding schools for children unable to attend day schools, either because of isolated homes or family problems. There are 65 such schools, including eight hostels which accommodate pupils attending non-Indian institutions nearby. Approximately 12 percent of the boarders at Residential Schools attend non-Indian schools.

Historically the churches have had a long and fruitful association with Indian education. In fact, a century ago, the churches provided the majority of schools. Today, Canada's Indian Residential Schools are operated by four religious denominations, Roman Catholic, Anglican, United Church and Presbyterian.

In the 1960-61 fiscal year, Residential Schools had 8,907 boarders and 2,173 day pupils. In addition, 1,656 youngsters lived in the Residential Schools while attending other schools.

A number of Residential Schools also provide part-time instructors for athletics and sports, and teacher-counsellors who not only assist students with their studies but also help them to adjust emotionally and socially to school life.

Seasonal Schools: These are for children whose parents follow a nomadic way of life, dispersing to fishing grounds or along traplines at certain seasons of the year.

Many children who do not enter Residential Schools receive their education at seasonal schools established at points where bands usually congregate for periods ranging from a few weeks to several months. In the 1960-61 fiscal year, 698 Indian children were enrolled.

The trend is for seasonal schools to evolve into day schools. At present seasonal schools can give children only a limited

education, but pupils are able to maintain contact with their traditional way of life while they are acquiring at least a smattering of education. As parents learn to appreciate the value of formal education, it is expected that they will take more interest in their children's attendance at school.

Hospital Schools: As the name suggests, these provide instruction for children confined to hospitals or sanatoria. This supervision includes not only academic study but also instruction in handicrafts — leather work, copper tooling, bead work and weaving.

Such instruction prevents pupils from falling too far behind their classmates in their studies, and thus becoming discouraged. It has also a therapeutic value, enabling shut-ins to pass their time more interestingly and profitably. In 1960-61, 293 Indian children received instruction in hospital schools.

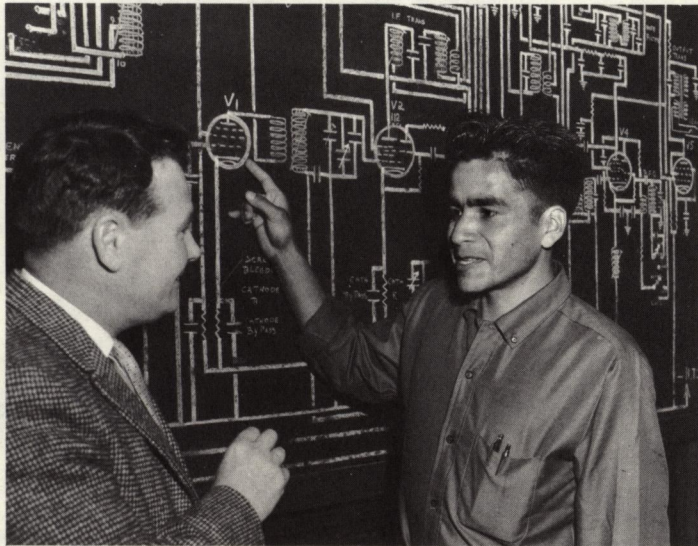
A pupil who was admitted to the Brandon sanatorium with tuberculosis in 1949 was encouraged to continue his education. By the time he was ready for his discharge, he had his junior matriculation. Since he was anxious, by that time, to continue his education, he was allowed to remain at the institution for another year and a half as an orderly and interpreter. He soon acquired his grade 12 standing. With the aid of bursaries from the Indian Affairs Branch he took normal training and became the first Saulteaux in Manitoba to become a teacher.

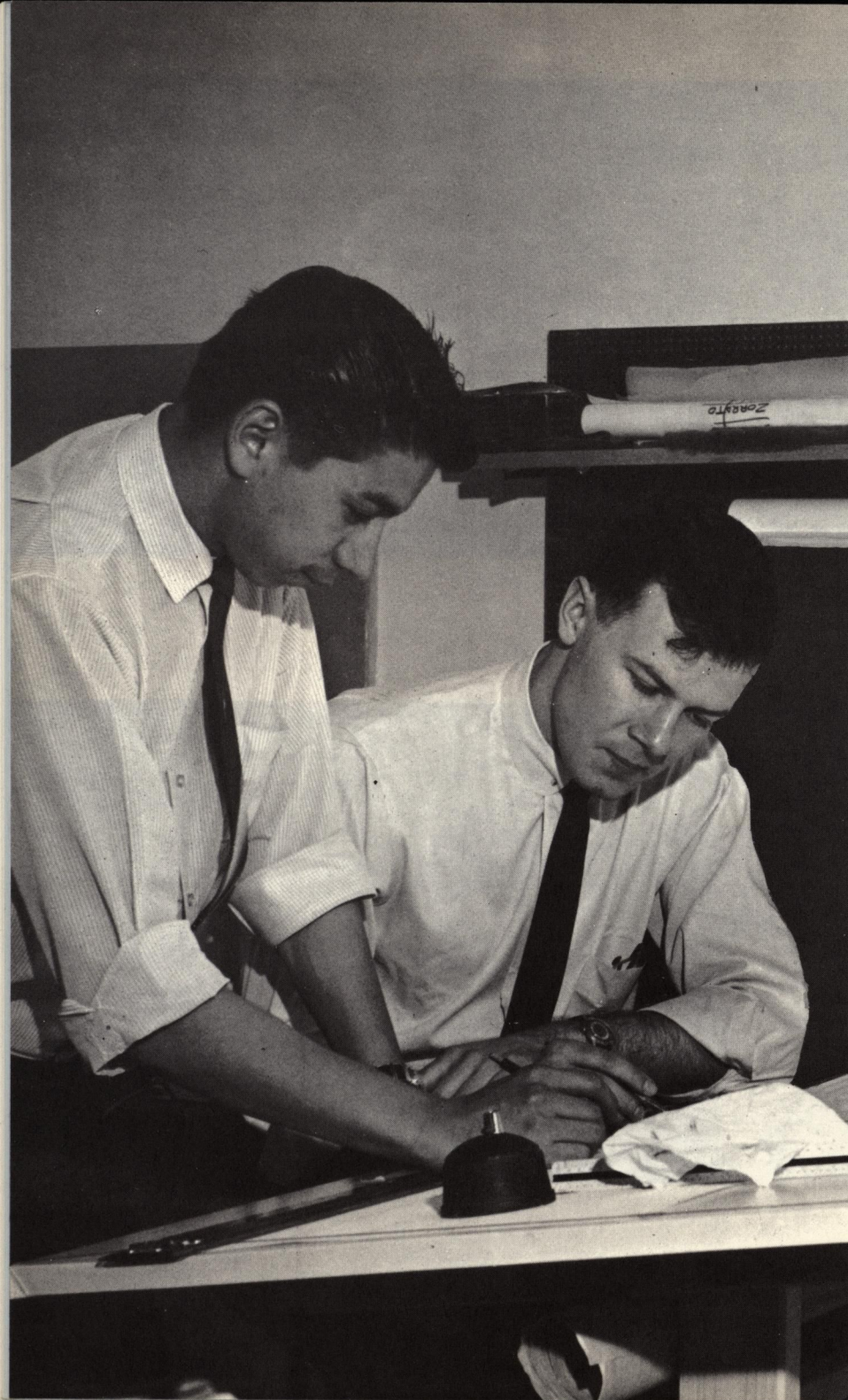
Curriculum and Staff

In Indian schools, instruction is in English or French to provide a common language for the pupils, and to make their integration into non-Indian schools and employment easier. Because so many Indian children speak only their own tongue, it is often necessary for teachers to give added training in language instruction.

The courses of studies followed are those prevailing in non-Indian schools of the various provinces. Yukon follows the B.C. curriculum and the Northwest Territories follows the Alberta courses. Wherever possible, courses in industrial arts and home economics are also provided. These follow closely the programmes prescribed by the various provinces, but they







are flexible enough also to enable teachers to give instruction especially useful in certain areas. For instance, one Residential School, Moose Fort, offers a course in trapping. Students are given traplines and are taught to prepare and market furs profitably. They are also taught conservation of resources. Such courses supply them with a limited amount of pocket money, and are consequently popular.

Industrial Arts programmes generally include training in woodwork, carpentry, sheetmetal work, drafting, motor mechanics, welding and farming. At Inuvik the Industrial Arts teacher is preparing students for vocational courses at Yellowknife.

The Home Economics course includes all phases of home-making — home management, good grooming, child care, cooking and sewing.

Teachers of these practical arts are employed in all the residential and larger day schools where a sufficient number of junior high school pupils are enrolled. Where there is adequate registration, specialist teachers are employed; where registration is limited, part-time instructors are hired.

In addition to teachers who engage in purely academic work, there are also welfare or community teachers. The latter not only teach school but also perform various other tasks such as registration of births and deaths, payment of Family Allowances, dispensing of medicines and the organization of various community activities. For this extra-curricular work they receive extra pay.

During the 1960-61 fiscal year, 1,354 teachers were employed in Indian schools. Two-thirds of the total were women; 121 had Indian status — an increase of 45 in five years.

The majority were trained teachers. Ninety percent of those teaching in Indian day schools, 87 percent of teachers in residential schools, and 87.5 percent of seasonal school instructors were qualified school teachers. Approximately ten percent of the teachers in day, residential and hospital schools were university graduates.

The Indian Affairs Branch provides classroom supplies, and loans textbooks. School libraries provide reading material for pupils and adults alike. During 1960-61, some 40,000 library

books were distributed, and some 600 school magazine subscriptions supplied. The Branch also provides playground and sports equipment and has outfitted several gymnasias. Where possible, audio-visual aids to teaching are provided. Movies — even more than still pictures — play an important role in the education of children from remote areas. In northern centres many of the movies which students see in the day time are shown to the parents in the evening.

Some schools also have bands. The Branch helps to supply the instruments. For instance, the St. Joseph Mission Indian School in British Columbia has an all-Indian girls' pipe band. They were trained by a Scot — and equipped with tartan uniform.

Integration

The ways of life of the Indians and non-Indians are as basically different as their cultures and viewpoints. But integration of peoples, mutual understanding and goodwill is bridging the gap between them. In the cases of other ethnic groups, association of children in schools has fostered rapid integration. Young people, in their turn, have then helped their elders. The same advantages appear when Indians and non-Indians are in the same classrooms and clubs. As one little Indian girl expressed it: "We girls felt shy when outsiders first came to our school but now we are glad they are here. There doesn't seem to be much difference between us at all."

Further evidence of progress is to be found in Indian employment in such widely diverse fields as radio, construction, medicine and professional hockey; in those who have achieved eminence in the "non-Indian" world — Dr. Gilbert Monture, internationally-known mining engineer and world expert on mineral economics; Ethel Brant Monture, noted authority on Indian culture and traditions; the late Brigadier O. M. Martin, an Ontario magistrate; Senator James Gladstone; George Clutesi and Gerald Feathers, painters of renown; Archdeacon Spence and Dr. Peter Kelly, Anglican and United Church ministers; and other noted Indian-Canadians.

Non-Indian Schools

In the past decade integrated education has moved forward rapidly due to many factors; the examples of other schools where integration has worked well; genuine desire on the part of Canadians to help Indian progress; satisfactory arrangements for financing the education of Indian pupils; the ease with which Indian and non-Indian children integrate; the campaign against discrimination coupled with the growing realization of its basic injustice; and finally, healthy public criticism of Canada's treatment of the Indian population.

Ten years ago, 2,032 Indian children were attending school with non-Indians; in the 1960-61 fiscal year, the number had risen to 10,822 — one out of every four Indian children attending school. This was in addition to the 2,363 Indian students noted previously who were reported attending non-Indian schools but for whom complete information was lacking. Of 2,663 Indian children enrolled in grades 9 to 12 inclusive, 1,999 were attending non-Indian schools.

There are two ways in which integration is worked out with local school boards. Where local schools have room in their classrooms, and are agreeable to the arrangement, Indian pupils are enrolled. But, where classroom space is limited, formal "joint agreements" solve the difficulty. The Indian Affairs Branch not only pays the local board a tuition fee for each Indian pupil enrolled, but also contributes to the capital costs of construction of extra classrooms. The amount is based on the ratio of Indian to non-Indian students.

Special Courses

In addition to academic courses available in Indian and non-Indian institutions, Indian children receive other forms of training and education. Blind and handicapped pupils are enrolled in special schools, usually operated under provincial auspices. Where facilities are not available for certain courses in the North, students are transported to schools in southern Canada. These young people have thus received training in commerce, teaching or nursing. Many have been placed in a variety of trades where they learn useful skills while working —

oil well drilling, equipment operation, mechanical maintenance, carpentry, and domestic work. During their training period, their wages are subsidized.

Financial Aid to Students

Every Indian child living on a reserve or Indian community, no matter what the circumstances of his parents, or where they may live, can obtain an education nowadays. As long as a student shows satisfactory progress — and requires financial assistance — he is assisted by the Indian Affairs Branch.

This aid varies from the payment of tuition fees to full maintenance costs — including fees, books, transportation, room and board (according to the merit of the students and the financial circumstances of the families.)

Such assistance is not limited to elementary and secondary school children. It is available also to those who want to go on to university, teachers' college, nursing or other vocational schools.

In 1957, a system of scholarships, established on a regional basis, was instituted. These scholarships are awarded to outstanding students for nursing, teacher training, drama, art and music, technical, agricultural and university courses. They range in value from \$250 to \$1,750.

In 1961-62, twenty-six scholarships were awarded: nine for university work, four each for nursing, teaching, and vocational training, two for commercial courses, and one each in the fields of art, music and drama.

During 1960-61, sixty-one Indian students were enrolled in various university courses. For the first time, too, Indian students graduated from the Ontario Agricultural College, and the University of British Columbia law school.

Adult Education

A survey undertaken in 1956 revealed the fact that a considerable number of Indians, particularly those in northern and remote areas, were illiterate. On 25 percent of all reserves, one-half of the adults could neither read nor write. It was noted also that many bands needed assistance in learning how to conduct their own affairs — and encouragement to do so.

The result was an adult education programme designed to aid the Indian population in various ways.

The basic aim is the teaching of the "three Rs", followed by a continuation programme for those who need additional education in order to enter trade, technical, or similar courses. There is also a practical vocational training programme to help men earn a better livelihood and women to improve home conditions. Courses have been given in carpentry, agriculture, motor mechanics, handicrafts and homemaking. Courses in prospecting and ore identification have proved particularly popular. The primary objective is to provide the Indian with a remunerative skill, particularly useful to a hunter or trapper. They also qualify him for guiding with survey parties.

In the 1960-61 academic year, 1,590 adults took these courses.

Provision was also made for programmes of a community nature. These projects covered a wide range of activities from physical fitness classes to Home and School Associations. The leadership courses which were held in various centres throughout Canada proved popular. They provided those attending with useful information and inspired them with confidence enough to try to solve some of the problems encountered on the reserve.

In northern Ontario a training course for Chiefs and Councillors was held, for the first time, in 1960. It was planned to help young leaders develop skills and knowledge for community development. Participants learned how to conduct meetings, the workings of committees, the duties of officers and effective ways to deal with such problems as welfare, recreation, roads and education.

In the Maritimes, "folk schools" are held. Sessions are devoted to fundamental educational and health problems in Indian communities, questions of employment, vocational training, band council government, group leadership and programme planning.

Role of Indian Parents

It is only a minority of Indian parents who fail to realize the great opportunities that education offers to their children. The majority recognize the progress being made in this field.

They are beginning to understand that there are certain advantages in being bilingual and bi-cultural. This is important in the North where economic expansion has created unprecedented opportunities, and expanded educational facilities opened many types of semi-skilled and skilled work to the residents of the area.

These advantages, however, are of limited value unless they are utilized. If children are to progress satisfactorily, they need to develop an appreciation of their opportunities. This they can absorb most readily from their parents.

Example is the great teacher. Parental participation in civic and educational work — on school committees, in Homemakers' clubs, on band councils, or in literacy, vocational or leadership courses — is bound to inspire emulation in the younger generation.

If, in addition, school children have suitable home and school environments — including proper areas for study, wholesome meals, as well as sufficient rest and exercise — and are required to attend classes regularly, they should progress rapidly and develop the pride in their ancestry which so many leading Indian-Canadians have advocated.

Role of School Committees

School committees might be described as embryonic school boards. As such they can — and do — serve a very useful function. Members understand the problems connected with Indian education in their particular areas, and can advise the Department wisely on matters of local educational concern such as transportation of pupils, and the attitude of parents towards integrated education. They often plan after-school activities for children.

Since they are responsible for school attendance, these committees can ascertain the causes — and very often find the remedies — for student absences from classes. Often, they have

reported, the reasons for absenteeism range from lack of proper clothing to lack of motivation.

By maintaining liaison with committees in non-Indian communities, school committees acquire useful assistance in common problems, and establish bonds of friendship based on mutual interests.

The majority of school committees very wisely enlist as much support from the communities as they can muster, and rotate the membership so that as many individuals as possible have an opportunity to serve in anticipation of the not-too-distant day when Indians will perform most of the administrative functions now discharged by non-Indians on their behalf.

Role of the Non-Indian Community

In many areas of Canada there is an increasing appreciation of the Indian-Canadian heritage. Such appreciation has been long overdue.

Indian-Canadians have made a tremendous contribution to the life of this country. Indeed, people could not have lived on this continent for some thousands of years without developing artistic values. Because Indians in the north were constantly on the move theirs had to be entirely an unwritten culture — songs, legends, dances and handwork. Where their people led a more or less settled existence, as in the southern parts of the continent, and on the Pacific coast, their artistic talents found more tangible expression in totem poles, carvings, masks, ceremonial baskets, and weaving.

Thousands of Indian names designate thoroughfares, provinces and cities. The names of the nation itself, its federal, and three of its provincial capitals, and four of its provinces, are all Indian designations.

After centuries of indifference, the desire of non-Indians to help Indian citizens is finding expression in the establishment of Friendship Councils and similar organizations, in a campaign to eliminate from textbooks biased references to Indian history and to substitute an interpretation of the Canadian story from the Indian, as well as the non-Indian, point of view. Perhaps, in time, there may even be university courses in

Indian-Canadian history.

More and more Canadians are beginning to realize that many of the troubles of early days were generated by non-Indians who dispossessed the native inhabitants of their ancestral lands, and decimated their food supplies.

Appreciation and good will, however belated, are welcome steps forward. Much remains to be done, nevertheless, if the Indian-Canadian is to take the place in Canadian society that is rightfully his.

The first essential is a warm welcome — to non-Indian homes and associations, to the opportunities of the business world. Indians are generally too shy to make the first gesture. It is up to the non-Indian to do so.

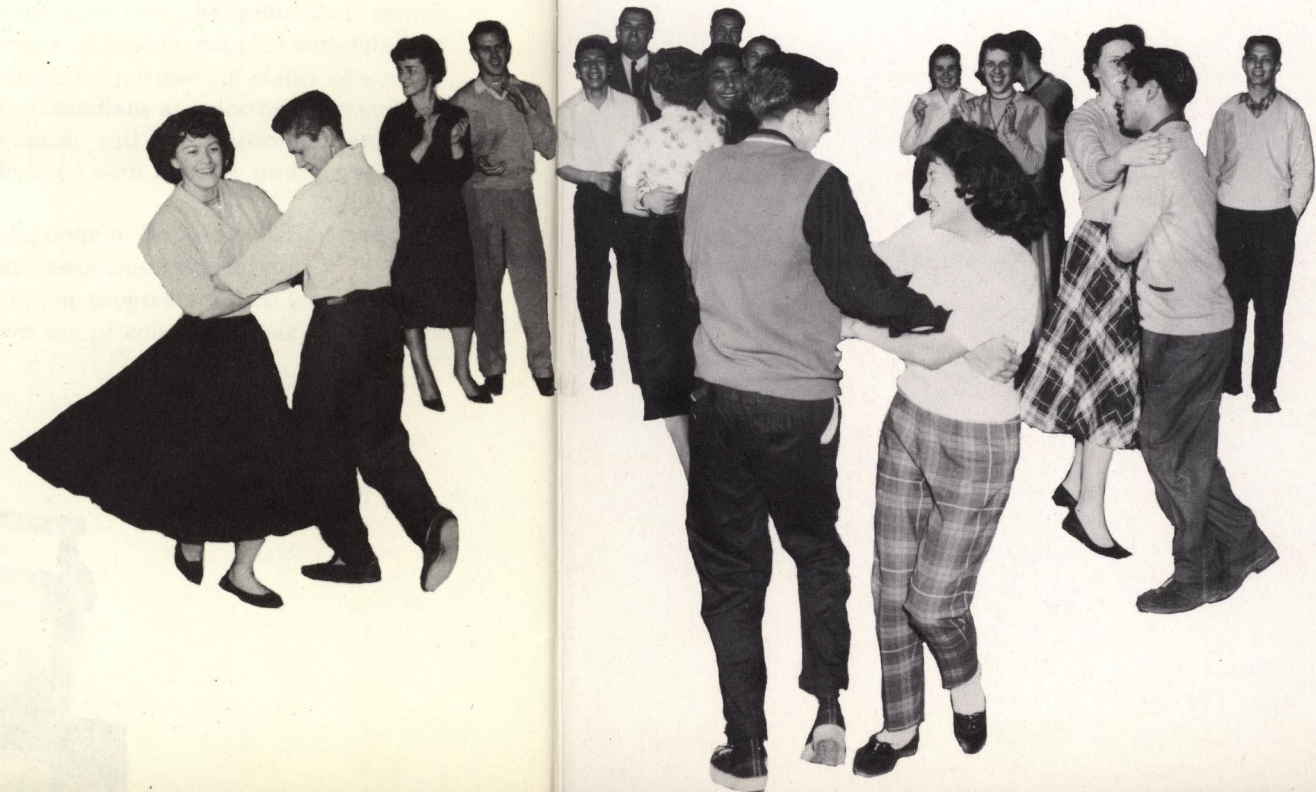
Transition

More integration of the Indian and non-Indian worlds has taken place in the past few decades than occurred in previous centuries of contact. For this progress Canada is indebted to the efforts of thousands of interested citizens and to a score of organizations.

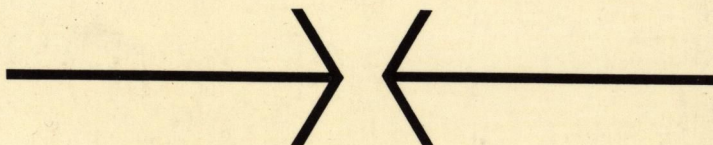
Perhaps most important have been the tremendous contributions made by the integrated schools, coupled with financial assistance to Indian students for purposes of higher education. More and more, Indian-Canadians are electing to remain in the non-Indian community, and those who do return to ancestral reserves are imbued with a richer understanding of Canadian life.

So much remains to be done to bring the Indian and non-Indian worlds into closer association and harmony! But one may take inspiration from the progress that has been achieved in recent years, and from the promise, too, that this progress holds for the future.






DEPARTMENT OF CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION



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