

appearing is not in accordance with facts. Before they were subjected to the degenerating effects of European civilization and the devastating results of the many colonial wars, the numbers of the Indians were undoubtedly larger, but any reliable information as to the aboriginal population during either the French or the early British régime is non-existent, and there is no adequate basis for a comparison between the past and present aboriginal populations. An interesting sketch of the progress of the Indians of Canada since Confederation will be found in the Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, 1927.

Administration.—Indians are minors under the law, and their affairs are administered by the Department of Indian Affairs under the authority of the Indian Act. This Department is the oldest governmental organization in the Dominion, dating back to the time of the conquest. It was originally under the military authorities, and did not become a part of the civil administrative machinery until 1845. By section 5 of the British North America Act, 1867, the Indians of Canada and the lands reserved for them came under the control of the Dominion Government, and in 1873 an Act of the Canadian Parliament (R.S.C., c. 81) provided that the Minister of the Interior should be Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs and as such have the control and management of the lands and property of the Indians in Canada. The aim of the Department of Indian Affairs is the advancement of the Indians in the arts of civilization, and agents have been appointed to encourage the Indians under their charge to settle on the reserves and to engage in industrial pursuits.

The system of reserves, whereby particular areas of land have been set apart solely for the use of Indians, has been established in Canada from the earliest times. It was designed in order to protect the Indians from encroachment, and to provide a sort of sanctuary where they could develop unmolested until advancing civilization had made possible their absorption into the general body of the citizens.

Reserves have been set aside for the various bands of Indians throughout the Dominion, and the Indians located thereon are under the supervision of the local agents of the Department. The activities of the Department, as guardian of the Indians, include the control of Indian education, health, etc., the development of agriculture and other pursuits among them, the administration of their funds and legal transactions and the general supervision of their welfare.

The local administration of the Indian bands on the reserves scattered throughout the Dominion is conducted through the Department's agencies, of which there are in all 116. The number of bands included in an agency varies from one to more than 30. The staff of an agency usually includes various officers in addition to the agent, such as medical officer, clerk, farm instructor, field matron, constable, stockman, etc., according to the special requirements of the agency in question. The work of the agencies is supervised by the Department's inspectors, each inspector having charge of a certain number of agencies. Expenditures upon destitute Indians are made by the Dominion Government, either from public funds or from the tribal funds of the Indians themselves.

The Indian Act provides for the enfranchisement of Indians. When an Indian is enfranchised he ceases to be an Indian under the law and acquires the full status of citizenship. In the older provinces, where the Indians have been longer in contact with civilization, many are becoming enfranchised. Great discretion, however, is exercised by the Government in dealing with this problem, as Indians who become enfranchised lose the special protection attached to their wardship, so that it is necessary to guard against premature enfranchisement.