

Administration.—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 administrator of the affairs of the Indians, include the control of Indian education and health, the development of agriculture and other pursuits among them, the administration of their lands, community funds, estates 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 98 in all. The number of bands contained in an agency varies from one to more than 30. The staff of an agency usually includes, in addition to the agent, various officials such as medical officer, clerk, farming instructor, field matron, constable, stockman, etc., according to the special requirements of the agency in question. The work of the agencies is supervised from headquarters at Ottawa and, in the field, by the Department's inspectors, each inspector having charge of a certain number of agencies; in British Columbia the supervision of the Indian agencies is under the direction of the Indian Commissioner for British Columbia. Expenditures for the assistance of destitute Indians on reserves are made by the Dominion Government, either from public funds or from tribal funds of the Indians.

The Government has undertaken a number of special projects for the various sections of the Indian population in accordance with their needs, including fur development enterprises in selected areas; the promotion of Indian handicraft; and planned agricultural operations.

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 provided by the Indian Act, so that it is necessary to guard against premature enfranchisement.

Treaties.—In the older eastern provinces, the history of the Indians has been one of slow development with that of the community. In Western Ontario, the Prairie Provinces and the Territories the situation has been different. There, the rapid spread of civilization made it necessary to take prompt and effective measures to protect the moral claims of the Indians, which are recognized by the Government. Accordingly, treaties were entered into with the Indians whereby the latter ceded to the Crown their aboriginal title and interest in the country. In consideration of such cession the Crown agreed to: set aside adequate land reserves; make cash grants; provide per capita annuities; give assistance in agriculture, stock-raising, hunting, trapping, etc., as particular circumstances might require; provide education for the Indian children; and otherwise safeguard the interests of the Indian population. These treaties were made from time to time as occasion arose and as new territories were opened up. No treaty has been made with the Indians of British Columbia, except in the Peace River Block, but their welfare has received no less attention from the Government on that account.