

expenditures from Indian trust funds must now, with few exceptions such as assistance for indigents, be authorized by the band council concerned. A band may now be given complete control over its own lands and band revenue money. Also when an individual Indian leases land to another party the lease money may now be paid locally. Heretofore, under the Consolidated Revenue and Audit Act, it was necessary for the money to be sent first to Ottawa.

The system of elections for band councils, which correspond in a general way to the councils in a rural municipality, has been modernized. Under the old Act only males 21 years of age or over were allowed to vote in band elections. Under the new Act the vote has been extended to women in elections and in all matters in which a vote of the band is required.

The right of appeal to the civil courts in registration of band membership matters is provided for. A similar right is also provided in connection with the estates of deceased Indians administered by the Minister, when the amount involved exceeds \$500.

Revolving Fund loans which formerly assisted Indians in the purchase of farming and fishing equipment, seed grain, live stock and similar essentials, may now be granted also for the purchase of farm vehicles, fencing materials, gas and oil, and repairs and wages.

Restrictions on trade with Indians in the Prairie Provinces have been modified. The requirement for departmental consent to such transactions hitherto necessary may now be removed from any band or individual Indian. In this and various other ways the rights and liberties of the Indians have been extended.

Changes have also been made in regard to education and, while the school system on the reserves will not be changed and the present residential school arrangements will continue, provision is made for the children of Indians living off reserves. Special schools may be established in some cases and, in addition, agreements may be entered into with provincial authorities, local school boards and other bodies for the education of Indian children in association with other Canadian children.

As in the old Act, provision is made for the enfranchisement of Indians—either by entire bands or as individuals—the effect of which is to remove all legal distinctions between such Indians and other members of the community. Enfranchised Indians, accordingly, are no longer subject to the provisions of the Indian Act. A provision has been included permitting the Department to make arrangements with a province or municipality to provide financial assistance to support indigent, infirm or aged persons of an enfranchised band.

Indian Welfare.—The extension of the provisions of the Old Age Security Act to all Indians 70 years of age or over was the most important welfare development during 1951. Formerly, Indians 70 years of age or over were paid, subject to a means test, the sum of \$25 per month which was provided for in welfare appropriations of the Indian Affairs Branch. Also during 1951 the registration was undertaken of needy Indians in the 65-69 age group for benefits under the Old Age Assistance Act.