

3.2.3 Native peoples

3.2.3.1 Indians

The federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is responsible for meeting statutory obligations toward the Indian people registered under the Indian Act and for programs approved specifically for them.

The department's Local Government Branch assists with the physical development of Indian communities which involves planning, housing, water, sanitation, electricity and the construction and maintenance of roads on reserves. Indian participation in these activities as well as in services such as school maintenance, fire and police protection and local government is increasing as the concept of band management is extended. In 1975-76, \$52.4 million was provided for capital investments in community improvements, and \$9.0 million for operating expenditures. On May 25, 1976 the Joint Work Group on Housing, comprised of departmental officials and National Indian Brotherhood representatives, presented its Technical Report to the Minister of IAND. The department undertook preparation of a Treasury Board submission and consultation with CMHC, Manpower and Immigration, and DREE to obtain the necessary approvals.

The role of the federal government in programs for Indian people is changing from direct program management at the local level to an advisory and consultative capacity as the Indian people assume responsibility for managing their own affairs. Emphasis is placed on the definition of needs and priorities with the department and Indian bands working jointly, and on the development of close consultation in both policy and administrative matters.

Under agreements with the federal government, provincial Indian associations receive funds to administer community development programs planned jointly with government officials, but administered by the associations themselves. These programs are intended to help Indian people to improve social, economic and cultural conditions in their communities.

Since the first such agreement was concluded with the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood in 1969, others have been entered into with Indian associations in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, the Yukon Territory and the Northwest Territories. In 1975-76 these associations handled over \$5.4 million in community development funds.

The Indian-Eskimo Economic Development Branch, to raise the economic status and increase the independence of individuals and bands, assists in the creation of business and employment opportunities in service and secondary industries and in resource utilization and land development, including the development of mineral resources on Indian reserves. Many programs are conducted in cooperation with other federal departments, provincial governments and private organizations. Assistance is in the form of loans, grants and contributions, loan guarantees, technical and management advice, and specialized training. The loans are provided from the Indian Economic Development Fund, capitalized at \$70 million for the five years ended March 31, 1976. During 1974 a new guaranteed loan fund of \$30 million was established. In addition the Indian Economic Development Fund has appropriated \$27 million during the past six years in grants and contributions to encourage economic activity through the provision of basic infrastructure and professional and technical services. For the fiscal year ended March 31, 1976, the fund provided \$46.3 million in loans, guarantees, grants and contributions.

The Lands and Membership Branch is responsible for ensuring that treaty obligations with respect to lands and memberships are met and that statutory responsibilities under the Indian Act with respect to membership and the administration and management of Indian lands are fulfilled. The branch also assists bands in obtaining maximum benefits from mineral resources on their own reserves.