

available to other Canadians in the province where they live; to increase Indian participation in the design and operation of social service programs; to strengthen family life and facilitate increased independence; and to facilitate the provision of social services by other government and private agencies to Indian people in their jurisdictions who request such service.

The department's social assistance program provides basic household essentials (food, clothing, shelter, fuel) to the needy. Scales of assistance and eligibility conditions are comparable to those of other residents of the provinces. Administration of this plan, as with other social services, is handled by departmental employees on some reserves, by employees of the band council on others.

Indian residents are subject to the child welfare legislation of the province in which they live. The aim of the federal department's child care program is to ensure the welfare of neglected, dependent, or delinquent Indian children living on reserves. In conformity with federal-provincial child welfare agreements, the department finances maintenance and protection services to Indian children in the Yukon Territory, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and British Columbia. In provinces where child care services are provided on a voluntary basis, the department pays administrative costs and per day rates for Indian children receiving care from foster homes or other agencies.

The department furnishes maintenance and care in homes for the aged and in other institutions for physically and socially handicapped adults. Indian recipients of benefits such as Old Age Security or the Guaranteed Income Supplement in amounts insufficient to meet their basic needs may get additional assistance from the department.

With departmental financial support, a growing number of bands now administer their own day care centres and senior citizens homes. The department also operates a rehabilitation program designed to prevent development of social problems. It attempts to reduce the effects of physical disabilities and emotional difficulties.

A work opportunity program was established in 1971 to give jobs to physically able social assistance recipients. Funds which would otherwise be spent on direct financial aid are used to provide native communities with facilities such as roads, and services such as day care, that they may lack. Each project is financed by a reallocation of social assistance funds amounting to the equivalent of what the participants would have been given had they remained in receipt of social assistance, plus funds from other sources (regional appropriations, provincial revenues, band revenues).

The program is an example of the transfer of social service administration from the government to the native people. Approval is granted only to projects that are planned, designed and operated by band councils or groups empowered by them. Bands are expected to contribute to the cost of projects in accordance with a schedule worked out on the basis of the band's annual revenue. Project approval is also contingent on employment of those without jobs who are receiving or are likely to need social assistance. Bands operating projects are expected to pay reasonable wages and to meet other employer requirements such as coverage for unemployment insurance and worker compensation.

6.10 Veterans programs

The legislation known collectively as the Veterans Charter is administered by the veterans affairs department and four affiliated independent agencies — Pension Review Board, Canadian Pension Commission, War Veterans Allowance Board and the Bureau of Pensions Advocates.

Changes in legislation through the years have endeavoured to keep pace with the changing economic and social circumstances of veterans, particularly in the areas of pensions and allowances. So too have the programs administered by the department which include medical treatment, housing, educational assistance, counselling and other services.

The work of the department is carried out through a network of regional and district offices across Canada.