

Department of Indian and Northern Affairs

7.2.2.1

As of December 31, 1976 there were 288,938 registered Indians in Canada, and approximately 4,252 Inuit living in far northern areas. Registered Indians, organized in about 500 bands, are entitled to special protection and support from the federal government under the Indian Act. It does not cover non-status Indians and Métis.

Education of registered Indian and Inuit children is an obligation of the Indian and northern affairs department. The minister is authorized to maintain schools for Indian children directly or provide education services through a provincial government, the commissioners of the Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories, a public or separate school board, or a religious or charitable organization.

On Crown lands and reserves, the federal government owns and operates 264 schools. Attendance is compulsory from age 7 to 16 and children must attend the school designated by the minister. The minister makes regulations on matters such as buildings, inspection, teaching and discipline. Transportation and maintenance costs at residential schools are paid by the department. In recent years the policy has been to transfer control to native bands; 62 now manage their own schools.

About half the native children attend provincial public schools. The federal government reimburses the provinces, either by paying tuition or contributing to the school's capital costs. Most children of secondary age attend public schools. Indian representation is increasing on local provincial school boards — approximately 90 are now formal school board members in various provinces. In the Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories, Indian and northern affairs co-operates with territorial departments of education to educate native children. The last school there to be administered directly by the federal government closed in 1969.

In 1976-77 the department spent \$196.6 million on education. Indian enrolment at the elementary level in federal schools was 33,187 and in non-federal schools 38,530, for a total of 71,717 pupils. Students in universities and post-secondary non-university institutions numbered 3,577; another 6,170 were taking vocational training.

Counselling units are maintained in Ottawa and Winnipeg to assist northern native students in southern Canada to attend high school, technical school, college and university. These units were established in the mid-1960s and have worked with an increasing number of students each year. In recent years the Ottawa unit has been involved with about 140 northern students and the Winnipeg unit with about 40 students. The dropout rate has been less than 5% and most students complete the program in which they enroll.

Department of National Defence

7.2.2.2

The defence department maintains schools for dependents of service personnel at military establishments in Canada and overseas. The policy is to avoid building schools wherever the children can attend existing institutions. Provinces are reimbursed on a per-pupil basis for armed service dependents in public schools. Federal and provincial governments share construction costs of new public schools according to the proportion of each category of student expected to enroll. The curriculum in such schools follows that of the province where they are located. There are 11 overseas schools in Belgium, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany. The elementary curriculum in these schools is a composite of various provincial programs; grades 7 to 13 follow the Ontario pattern.

Financing the elementary-secondary system

7.2.3

In 1976-77 total expenditures on the elementary-secondary level were an estimated \$10 billion or about 66% of all education spending.

Financing elementary-secondary education was traditionally a municipal responsibility, local real estate taxes paying most of the cost of basic education. School boards determine their budgets and therefore the taxes required. In most cases municipalities levy and collect taxes for the boards. Where there is no municipal organization the boards have these powers. Taxes on real estate are still a vital element of elementary-secondary finance but the municipal share has declined in recent years. It represented 22.4% in 1970-71, but 18.7% in 1976-77.