

3.5.5 Native peoples

Indians. The federal Indian affairs and northern development department is responsible for meeting statutory obligations to Indians registered under the Indian Act and for programs approved specifically for them.

The department's community services 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 and in services such as school maintenance, fire and police protection and local government is increasing as band management is extended. For more than 10 years the department has assisted Indians to develop the expertise to manage their communities. Under departmental programs, capital and operating funds are provided to bands. In 1978-79 Indian and Inuit councils administered the expenditure of approximately \$232.5 million in public funds and more than \$177.9 million in band funds on a variety of community services projects. Along with capital, operation and maintenance funds, the department provides core funds to band councils. Core funds are based on total band membership and are used to finance items such as band offices and associated operating costs, support staff, salaries, professional advisory services and honoraria, and travel costs for chiefs and councillors. Additional funds to administer various programs are provided at levels negotiated for each activity.

The role of the federal government in programs for Indians has changed from direct program management at the local level to an advisory and consultative capacity as Indians assume responsibility for managing their own affairs. Emphasis is placed on definition of needs and priorities with the department and Indian bands working jointly, and on 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 Indians to improve social, economic and cultural conditions in their communities.

Since the first such agreement with the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood in 1969, others have been made with Indian associations in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Yukon and Northwest Territories.

The Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council (DOTC) was founded in 1974 by seven bands in southwest Manitoba to establish a legally constituted forum. Their objective was to improve local control of services by phasing out the DIAND service centre in Brandon and not only administer the services and program delivery of departmental activities but also plan and implement programs relevant to their community needs and aspirations.

Since 1975 the DOTC has provided advisory services previously administered by the department in such areas as band finance, housing inspection, fire prevention, community counselling, band economic development and student counselling. Negotiations were started with the department for taking over responsibility for membership, social development and post-secondary education.

In Alberta the Indian Association receives funds to monitor, assess and provide input into existing or projected programs. Some bands were negotiating with the Indian affairs department to turn over certain programs and personnel resources for administration by the bands themselves.

British Columbia's provincial government was collaborating with Indian associations toward tripartite agreements with the federal government. Agreements were signed between the associations and the BC region of the Indian and Inuit program, to facilitate research and recommend courses of action.

Establishment of the Indian Economic Development Fund (IEDF) in 1970 was a landmark in Indian economic development. The fund formed a financial base for the department's mandate to assist Indians to develop income opportunities and create employment. Capital was provided to Indian businessmen and businesses and basic management skills and technical expertise were made available. From the outset, an important provision of the fund was that Indians be involved in the design and delivery of economic programs.