

# Canada to Spend Millions To Improve Indian Housing, Etc.

(From The Whitehorse Star)  
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A massive Indian reserve improvement program to cost the Federal Government \$112,000,000 in the next five years was announced today by Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Arthur Laing.

"Under the program Indians will receive assistance to provide better housing, safe water supply, sanitation facilities, electrification of homes and improved roads in their communities," Mr. Laing said.

A comprehensive study of housing conditions on reserves, completed in February 1965 confirmed the need for 12,000 new homes over the next five years together with the necessary facilities and community services.

The situation was discussed with the National Indian Advisory Board which met in Ottawa January 10th-12th. The Board called for an accelerated program to eliminate the problem in the shortest time.

## BUILD 12,000 HOMES

Under the accelerated program the objective is to build 12,000 homes in the next five years. The cost will be met from personal and band fund contributions and about \$75,000,000 in public funds.

Mr. Laing said, "The program will be flexible to meet the wide variety of reserve conditions across Canada, but will recognize four general areas of need." First, for the widowed, aged, indigent and disabled, suitable housing

will be provided largely at public expense.

Secondly, for Indian families living in marginal economic areas, help will be provided for homes of minimum standards. Thirdly, Indian families living on reserves where economic conditions and prospects are favorable, who are able to contribute to the cost of their homes, will be provided with assistance to acquire a higher standard of home.

Fourthly, Indian families wishing to relocate off reserves to obtain employment will be provided with financial assistance to enable them to take advantage of normal lending facilities.

In addition to housing a rural electrification program will be undertaken using existing public utilities wherever possible. "Progress on many reserves has been seriously hampered by the lack of power. It is necessary to provide electricity to the reserves," Mr. Laing stated. The cost of this program over the next five years is expected to be \$7,000,000 and will be directed mainly to communities where Indians lack band funds necessary to extend facilities.

On many reserves adequate sewage systems are non-existent and vast improvements in this field are required if Indian people are to have the amenities enjoyed by the majority of other Canadians. Some \$10,000,000 will be spent for this purpose.

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# *Canada Housing.*

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## **ROADS TO EMPLOYMENT**

In order to provide access to and from reserves for school children, employment opportunities, and economic development, adequate roads are necessary. To this end \$17,000,000 will be spent in co-operation with Indian band councils and other levels of government.

To co-ordinate the reserve improvement program, community planning has been undertaken on a number of reserves and scores of other communities will be examined as the needs and priorities are set by the Indian communities.

To carry out this ambition plan the services of other agencies, particularly the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, will be utilized to the fullest extent. Of particular importance is the total involvement and participation of Indian band councils and the Indian people.