

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT SPENDS TO UP INDIAN STANDARD OF LIVING

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By BETZI WOODMAN

A number of forward steps have been taken this year to improve the low standard of living in many Indian communities in Canada.

More than \$6 million have been spent in the last six months to better conditions on Indian reserves (reservations), according to Indian Affairs Minister Arthur Laing.

This is the beginning of the five-year \$112,000,000 reserve improvement plan designed to hit hard at the low standards of living in many of the communities.

"The Indian people want more and better quality houses, with electricity and proper plumbing," Laing said. "This is what our program is here for—to bring the standard of living of every Indian on every reserve in Canada up to the level enjoyed by other Canadians."

(Note: In Canada, The Indian Act—now in process of being updated—provides only for Indian peoples. Programs for Eskimos, who do not live on reserves, comes under different legislation.)

More than three quarters of the \$6 million has gone for housing. So far this year, 580 houses have been built and another 1,178 are under construction.

Electricity has been extended to 991 Indian houses at a cost of \$274,198. A total of \$357,693 has been spent to install pressurized water in 330 homes and to provide another 232 with sewers or septic tanks.

Indians in several areas now get to and from schools and employment centers easier because of 170 miles of new roads. Another 170 are being constructed, bringing total cost to \$602,403.

"We are spending more and more money each year on this program," the Minister said, "to make our goals realities, and we shall keep spending this sort of money until they have been reached."