

An outline of the welfare work being carried on by the Dominion Government and by each of the Provincial Governments follows. Details and statistics under each heading are presented later.

Section 1.—Dominion and Provincial Welfare Services*

Subsection 1.—Dominion Welfare Services

As pointed out at p. 799 general relief and public welfare in Canada remained with the provinces until relatively recent times.

The earliest entry of the central government into the sphere of welfare work was coincident with the earliest days of British rule, the welfare of the Indian inhabitants as accepted wards of the Government having been at first the concern of the military authorities and, after 1845, of the central civil government. Statistics regarding the administration of Indian and Eskimo affairs are given in the Miscellaneous Administration Chapter of this volume. The Dominion Government extended its responsibilities in the welfare field after the War of 1914-18, when it was found necessary to supplement the earlier schemes of re-settlement, limited to land grants or scrip in lieu thereof, by the establishment of a Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-establishment, which looked after the welfare of ex-service men and fitted them into the general economic scheme. With the general ageing of the ex-service men and the outbreak of the present war, welfare services have been developed as outlined in the succeeding paragraphs. Also, the severe depression in the early 'thirties, with the consequent drain upon the financial resources of the provinces and municipalities, forced the Dominion Government into the relief field and finally led to the establishment of a nation-wide plan of unemployment insurance.

Family Allowances.—The Family Allowances Act, 1944, was introduced for the purpose of equalizing opportunity for the children of Canada. The allowances are paid monthly to mothers and must be spent exclusively towards the maintenance, care, training, education and advancement of the child. If it is satisfactorily shown to the authorities that the money is not being spent for this purpose, payment can be discontinued or made to some other person or agency on behalf of the child. It is further set out in the Act that if any person is dissatisfied with a decision as to his right to be paid an allowance or as to the amount of an allowance payable to him or as to any other matter arising under this Act, he may appeal against such decision to a tribunal established for that purpose.

All children under sixteen years of age are eligible for an allowance, including Indians and Eskimos. To be eligible, children must have been born in Canada or have lived in this country for three consecutive years except the children of men or women who have served in the Armed Forces. Children of members of the three Armed Services are eligible even though born outside the country. A further important clause in the eligibility regulations concerns education. The allowance is not payable to a child who, being above the age of six years and physically fit to attend school, fails to do so or to receive equivalent training.

* The material in Section 1 is based on information and statistics obtained from the Dominion and Provincial authorities responsible for the administration of the various welfare services.