

CHAPTER VI. — PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY

CONSPECTUS

	PAGE		PAGE
SPECIAL ARTICLE: The Development of Public Health, Welfare and Social Security in Canada	224	SECTION 2. FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL PROGRAMS	262
Part I.—Public Health	229	Subsection 1. Old Age Assistance....	262
SECTION 1. FEDERAL HEALTH ACTIVITIES	230	Subsection 2. Old Age Pensions Act 1927.....	264
SECTION 2. PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL HEALTH ACTIVITIES	232	Subsection 3. Allowances for the Blind.....	265
SECTION 3. INSTITUTIONAL STATISTICS	240	Subsection 4. National Physical Fitness Program.....	268
Subsection 1. Statistics of Public Hospitals for Acute Diseases.....	243	Subsection 5. Training Programs....	269
Subsection 2. Statistics of Mental Institutions.....	247	SECTION 3. PROVINCIAL PROGRAMS	269
Subsection 3. Statistics of Tuberculosis Institutions.....	248	Subsection 1. Mothers' Allowances..	269
Subsection 4. Statistics of Federal Government Hospitals.....	250	Subsection 2. Welfare Services.....	271
Part II.—Public Welfare and Social Security	254	Subsection 3. Workmen's Compensation.....	277
SECTION 1. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS	254	Subsection 4. Care of the Dependent and the Handicapped.....	277
Subsection 1. Family Allowances....	254	Part III.—National Voluntary Health and Welfare Activities	277
Subsection 2. Old Age Security....	256	Part IV.—Veterans Health and Welfare Services	281
Subsection 3. Unemployment Insurance and National Employment Service.....	258	SECTION 1. THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS	281
Subsection 4. Prairie Farm Assistance.....	258	SECTION 2. MEDICAL, DENTAL AND PROSTHETIC SERVICES	281
Subsection 5. Welfare Services for the Indian and Eskimo.....	258	SECTION 3. PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES	282
Subsection 6. Government Annuities.....	260	SECTION 4. REHABILITATION OF VETERANS	284

NOTE.—The interpretation of the symbols used in the tables throughout the Year Book will be found facing p. 1 of this volume.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY IN CANADA*

Evolution of Provincial and Municipal Administration.—Public health and welfare, traditionally and constitutionally, have been regarded as matters primarily for provincial and municipal action. While the British North America Act does not clearly or specifically refer to public welfare or social security, the references therein to such matters as eleemosynary institutions, hospitals, asylums, public charities, etc., have fixed in the minds of most authorities the principle that, under the Canadian constitution, the provinces rather than the federal authorities have constitutional responsibility in the health and welfare field. The Federal Government, however, is specifically assigned jurisdiction over “quarantine and the establishment of marine hospitals”

Many of the earliest welfare undertakings were initiated not by provincial or municipal governments, but by voluntary organizations led by public-spirited citizens. It was voluntary citizen initiative in most of the early Canadian communities that led to the establishment of orphanages, hospitals, homes for the

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