

not be included in any tabulation of health, welfare or social security expenditures, it may safely be estimated that the total of federal, provincial and municipal expenditures in these fields stands currently at not less than \$1,300,000,000 annually. Under some tabulations, in fact, the figure is shown to be as high as \$1,500,000,000 annually. Expressed in another way, health, welfare and social security expenditures in 1952 will amount to not less than 20 p.c. of total expenditures made by all governments—federal, provincial and municipal.

These formidable figures of current expenditure contrast sharply with the modest amounts expended only a generation ago for the same purposes. In 1871, four years after Confederation, Canada, with a population of approximately 3,700,000, spent around \$1,000,000 on public health and welfare programs. This amount had risen to not more than \$15,000,000 in 1913 when the population numbered about 7,530,000. Even allowing for the fact that present population exceeds 14,000,000 and that price levels have risen with the post-war inflation, current amounts spent are still striking. They are evidence of the increased importance which governments generally have attached to meeting the social needs of the people.

Expenditures under the 1951 Legislation on Old Age Security, Old Age Assistance and Blind Persons' Allowances.—The inauguration of the new old age security program at the beginning of 1952 added almost \$225,000,000 annually to the Federal Government's continuing commitments in the field of social security. Annual costs under the Old Age Security Act, by which monthly pensions of \$40 are provided free of means-test to all persons over the age of 70 with 20 years' residence in Canada, are expected to commence at a level around \$320,000,000 annually—about the same as for family allowances. Within a few years, however, because of the rapidly ageing population, expenditures under the Old Age Security Act are expected to outstrip family allowance expenditures, thus making the old age security program Canada's most expensive social security undertaking.

In addition to payments under the Old Age Security Act to persons over the age of 70, provision was also made beginning Jan. 1, 1952, under the Old Age Assistance Act, for sharing with provincial governments the cost of old age assistance payments provided on the basis of need to persons between the ages of 65 and 69. Costs under this program, shared on a fifty-fifty basis by the Federal Government and the provinces, are expected to reach a level of \$40,000,000 in the first year of operation, and to rise in a relatively short time to an annual expenditure of \$60,000,000 or more.

The third related legislative development which took effect at the beginning of 1952 was the passage of the Blind Persons Act under which provision is made for continuing the cash assistance, previously paid under joint federal-provincial auspices to blind persons through the Old Age Pensions Act, on an extended and somewhat more generous basis and related exclusively to the needs of the blind. Under the new Blind Persons Act the Federal Government will reimburse the provinces for 75 p.c. of the cost of blindness allowances paid to eligible blind persons between the ages of 21 and 69. Allowances under this legislation are paid on the basis of need, the maximum amount payable being \$40 monthly as in the case of old age assistance and old age security. Blind persons reaching the age of 70 give up the allowances received under this legislation and become eligible for the old age security benefit on a basis free of the means-test.