

## Section 1.—Federal Health Activities

Federal participation in health matters is largely centred in the Department of National Health and Welfare, with certain important programs being administered by: the Department of Veterans Affairs, which provides medical and hospital care to veterans chiefly for disabilities resulting from war service (*see* Part IV of this Chapter); the Department of National Defence, which is responsible for the health of the Armed Forces; the Medical Division of the National Research Council, which administers grants for medical research; and the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, which undertakes the collection and compilation of health statistics. The Department of Agriculture has certain responsibilities in connection with food production.

Under the Department of National Health and Welfare Act of 1944, the Department is responsible for the administration of certain statutes, for research in health matters, for the carrying out of international health obligations undertaken by Canada and, in co-operation with the provinces, for the preservation and improvement of public health.

Under the Quarantine Act, the Department maintains a maritime and aerial navigation quarantine service to exclude infectious diseases. It advises on the administration of sections of the Immigration Act dealing with health and conducts, in Canada and overseas, the medical examination of applicants for immigration; provides care for sick mariners as required under Part V of the Canada Shipping Act; and has certain national and international responsibilities with regard to the pollution of boundary and other waters.

Under the Food and Drugs Act, the Proprietary or Patent Medicine Act and the Opium and Narcotic Drug Act, the Department is responsible for the control of the quality of food and drugs, the registration, preparation and sale of proprietary or patent medicines, and control of the import, export and distribution of narcotic drugs.

The Department passes on the visual eligibility of applicants for blind person allowances and co-operates with the provinces in the provision of remedial services for recipients of these allowances; it is responsible for supervision of health conditions for persons engaged on federal public works, as provided under the Public Works Health Act, and maintains a program for the conservation and promotion of the health of civil servants and other Federal Government employees. Medical advisory services are provided to the Department of Transport in all matters pertaining to the safety, health and comfort of air crew and passengers.

**The National Health Program.**—The National Health Program, which was announced in May 1948, provides for the payment of federal grants to the provinces. The provision of these grants represented the first stage in the development of a comprehensive health insurance plan for all Canada. The program has three basic purposes: to assist the provinces in surveying their health facilities and services; to assume part of the cost of new hospital construction over a period of years; and to make annual grants to improve and strengthen provincial services in particular health fields.

Since the inception of the program the provinces have steadily increased their utilization of the grants for the development of all types of provincial health services. In the first year (ended Mar. 31, 1949) the provinces spent 25.8 p.c. of the funds