

Section 2.—Provincial and Municipal Health Activities

Health services in the provinces are administered in different ways but provincial functions commonly include central planning and administration; the operation of special programs affecting the entire province in such fields as cancer, mental health, tuberculosis and laboratories; consultant service to local authorities; the administration of regulations governing local services; the provision of basic services in areas without municipal organization; and participation in the work of local health units in areas where that type of administration has been developed.

At the local level, responsibility for services varies widely, but municipalities in most provinces provide a range of basic public health services and participate in the costs of hospital care for indigents. In recent years there has been a rapid growth of health services in smaller centres and rural areas through the organization of health units with full-time staff serving counties or other combinations of local government areas. This type of organization, which concentrates on a generalized health program that includes public health nursing, sanitary inspection, communicable disease control, child, maternal and school hygiene and health education, has been introduced in most provinces; financial and administrative responsibility is shared by the provincial and local authorities involved. Despite a trend towards greater provincial participation in these local units, many remain under local administration as do the highly developed health departments found in the larger cities. Outside of fully organized health-unit areas, municipalities usually appoint part-time medical officers and other personnel while the provincial authorities assume responsibility in the areas lacking municipal organization.

Newfoundland.—Health measures in Newfoundland are centrally administered by a Department of Health. Its main functions include the operation of tuberculosis and communicable and venereal disease control programs, nutrition and sanitary inspection services, and the provision, on a prepayment basis, of medical, hospital and nursing care in certain regions.

The Provincial Tuberculosis Dispensary at St. John's provides free diagnostic and treatment services and acts as the centre for tuberculosis control. The Province subsidizes separate tuberculosis control programs conducted in the northern areas by the International Grenfell Association and the Notre Dame Bay Memorial Hospital, and assists the Newfoundland Tuberculosis Association, which maintains a sea-borne X-ray unit, with surveys in other areas.

Free treatment services and drugs for venereal disease are available throughout the Province through full-time and part-time district medical health officers and public health nurses. A school health program includes educational work and such activities as the distribution of chocolate milk-powder and cod-liver oil.

The Department operates a general hospital, a tuberculosis sanatorium and a hospital for mental and nervous diseases all at St. John's and has recently opened a new provincial sanatorium at Corner Brook. Hospitals operated by voluntary agencies receive per diem payments for departmental cases and, in certain outlying areas, substantial provincial grants.

The "cottage hospital" scheme operates on a voluntary prepayment basis and is designed to provide hospital service to approximately 150,000 and domiciliary medical care to about 100,000 of the population of outlying areas. Services are provided through 17 small provincially operated hospitals with a total capacity of about 430 beds and equipped in most cases with laboratory and X-ray facilities.