

programs, and for carrying out special morbidity or epidemiological investigations. For example, the Division of Epidemiology receives weekly telegraphic reports from the provinces on cases of poliomyelitis during epidemic periods and is prepared to render practical assistance in establishing control measures or in co-operating in the investigation of unusual epidemiological features. The National Health Grants Program includes specific grants for venereal disease and tuberculosis control, the latter being apportioned to provinces on a formula based on 50 p.c. for population and 50 p.c. for the average number of deaths from tuberculosis in the previous five-year period. A variety of other communicable disease control programs or research studies are assisted under the General Public Health Grant and the Public Health Research Grant. In considering the justification and approval of such projects, the Department relies to a great extent on information regarding incidence acquired through the notifiable diseases reporting system.

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics compiles and publishes weekly and annual reports on the incidence of notifiable diseases. It also supplies the provinces with weekly report forms and Notification of Venereal Infection forms. The weekly summary published by the DBS shows data for the current week, previous week (adjusted for reporting of delayed cases and change of diagnosis), five-year median, cumulative number of cases from the beginning of the calendar year, and the weekly number of cases for certain diseases reported in the United States. Generally speaking, the figures refer to new cases reported at the place where first diagnosed. The printed reports are released on Thursday of each week, 11 days after the end of the report week (Saturday). This amount of time is necessary to allow for the transmission and compilation of the reports from the local level to the provincial and federal departments. These weekly summaries are issued to provincial departments of health and other health agencies in Canada and abroad.

The postal regulations permit the free transmission through the mails of notifiable disease reports, collected by provincial departments, which are also intended, by agreement under Section 9 of the Statistics Act, for the use of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. This means that all reports of a statistical nature can be forwarded by the Post Office Department from the field through provincial departments to the DBS free of postage. A free supply of report forms to the physicians and their free transmission through the mail are important steps toward removing obstacles to complete reporting.

Monthly epidemiological reports, showing reported cases and deaths, were sent to the League of Nations, Geneva, from 1924 to 1940. Current weekly reports and corrected annual figures are supplied to the World Health Organization, Geneva, and the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, Washington, D.C.

Through the courtesy of the United States Public Health Service an exchange of data on notifiable diseases was instituted in January 1942 between the United States and Canada. This service consists of the exchange of the Weekly Communicable Disease Summary and the Weekly Morbidity and Mortality Report of the National Office of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, D.C., for similar reports of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

The limitations of data on notifiable diseases are well known to those in the field and are being taken into consideration: they are mainly, incompleteness of reporting, particularly in regard to certain diseases, and variations of reporting practices and procedures. Nevertheless, the figures have always been valuable as indicating the trend of occurrence of these diseases.