

Although the Council is of a purely advisory character its recommendations reflect the considered opinions of senior health administrators and scientific workers across the country and have had very considerable influence on the development of public health administration in Canada. The recommendations frequently have led to an early combined approach by federal and provincial governments which might otherwise have been achieved only after long periods of negotiation. It has taken an active part in the development of the National Health Program and, in addition to advising on the general operation of the program and on situations developing in different provinces, has played an important role in such combined federal-provincial projects as the National Sickness Survey. Through the arrangements made by the Council for the production and distribution of ACTH and cortisone for use by clinical investigators throughout Canada it has been estimated that the clinical assessment of their value was advanced by at least two years. In the same way the Council was able to facilitate arrangements for the production of gamma globulin and later of Salk vaccine.

Subsection 3.—Provincial and Municipal Health Activities

Provincial health functions commonly include central planning and administration; the operation of laboratories and of special programs affecting the entire province in such fields as cancer, mental health and tuberculosis; consultant service to local authorities; and either supervision or administration of local services.

At the local level responsibility for services varies widely but municipalities in most provinces provide basic services and participate in the cost 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. These units provide a generalized program that includes public health nursing, sanitary inspection, communicable disease control, child and maternal health and school hygiene and health education. Financial and administrative responsibility usually is shared by the provincial and the local authority. Municipalities outside fully organized health-unit areas usually appoint part-time medical officers and other personnel while the provincial authorities assume responsibility in the areas lacking municipal organization.

Newfoundland.—Health services in Newfoundland are administered largely by the Province and include provision of public hospital and medical care in large areas of the Province.

General Public Health Services.—A preventive service is operated in St. John's through public health nurses. Dietary supplements such as orange juice and cod liver oil are distributed throughout the Province. Environmental health services are administered through an inspection service in St. John's and regional offices at Corner Brook and Grand Falls. The Division of Laboratories administers a public health laboratory, the St. John's General Hospital laboratory and a blood bank. Routine diagnostic work is being decentralized through the employment of combined laboratory and X-ray technicians in outpost cottage hospitals.

Hospital and Medical Care.—The Department of Health provides prepaid medical and public ward hospital care to almost 50 p.c. of the population through its Cottage Hospital Plan; free medical and hospital care to indigents wherever facilities are available; and, under a program introduced in 1957, free public ward hospital care and out-patient diagnostic services for all children under 16 years of age. It operates a large general hospital at St. John's as well as 18 cottage hospitals and seven nursing stations distributed along the coastline, and also pays private physicians and non-governmental hospitals for the care of patients covered by the three public programs. In northern areas, responsibility for service has been delegated to the International Grenfell Association and the Notre Dame Bay Memorial Hospital Association, where community prepayment plans have been integrated into the Cottage Hospital Plan.