

examination of specimens for diagnosis of communicable disease, and pathological special services. Each province maintains a central public health laboratory and most provinces have established additional branch laboratories. Recent trends in some provinces include efforts to co-ordinate public health and hospital laboratory services, special measures to bring laboratory facilities to rural areas, and devices to reduce the direct cost of clinical laboratory procedures to the individual.

Services for Specific Diseases or Disabilities.—Each province has developed special programs to deal with health problems of particular severity and prevalence, many of which are chronic or long-term in nature. The services and facilities provided are generally similar across the country.

Mental Health.—Major developments in provincial mental health programs have included the expanding and modernizing of mental hospitals, the training of various kinds of psychiatric personnel and the extension of community mental health services outside mental institutions. Assistance to patients in securing employment and in social adjustment following discharge from mental hospitals—a relatively new field of rehabilitation—is being promoted by voluntary groups and government agencies in several provinces.

With the exception of the municipally owned local institutions in Nova Scotia and hospitals in Quebec that operate under religious or lay auspices, most mental institutions are administered by provincial authorities. A great part of the cost is borne by the provincial governments, though a charge, according to ability to contribute, may be made for care in some provinces. Newfoundland and Saskatchewan provide complete free care; Manitoba assumes a minimum maintenance cost for all patients; in Nova Scotia the provincial hospital gives free care to patients requiring active treatment; and in Ontario and Prince Edward Island mental institution treatment is included in the hospital care insurance plan.

Most public mental institutions provide care and treatment for all types of mental illness; as facilities expand, it is becoming possible to segregate those under intensive treatment from those receiving long-term care. Some provinces maintain separate accommodation for certain categories of the mentally ill. For example, in British Columbia and Alberta, homes for the senile aged are an integral part of the mental institution system. Quebec has separate institutions for epileptics. Seven provinces operate schools for residential treatment and education of mentally defective persons and one of the three other provinces, New Brunswick, enacted legislation in 1958 authorizing the government to support the maintenance of mentally retarded children in approved homes. Increasing numbers of local day classes, usually sponsored by parent organizations, offer training opportunities for mentally deficient children in the community.

As the needs of patients are more fully understood and better methods of treatment develop, the daily routine of the mental patient is becoming less restrictive, as is shown by the increasing number of persons coming voluntarily for treatment. Custodial care and locked doors are giving way to open wards where patients may have unrestricted access to grounds, occupational and recreational areas.

One of the greatest changes in the past decade has been in the extension of community mental health services outside mental institutions. General hospitals have expanded their psychiatric services in both in-patient and out-patient departments. About 30 general hospitals have organized units where psychiatric treatment is provided by professional staffs. Out-patient clinics where mental illness may be treated at an early stage and guidance services given to children and parents also play an important part in the treatment of mental illness outside mental institutions. Fewer than 20 mental health clinics existed in 1948. Groups active in the subsequent large expansion include provincial health departments, municipalities or health units, mental institutions, general and allied special hospitals, school boards and voluntary organizations.