

Subsection 5.—The Fitness and Amateur Sport Program

The federal Fitness and Amateur Sport Act, which was passed on Sept. 25, 1961 and proclaimed on Dec. 15, brings new impetus to the development of fitness in Canada and to efforts to raise the levels of participation and proficiency in competitive and non-competitive sports. The legislation provides for an annual allocation of \$5,000,000 "to encourage, promote and develop fitness and amateur sport". The program operates through three main channels: through grants to national organizations to assist national and international aspects of the program; through grants to the provinces to develop and extend community effort; and through federal co-ordinating and developmental work conducted by the new Fitness and Amateur Sport Division of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

The major task to be undertaken is the building up of training courses for leaders, coaches and other professional personnel at the national, provincial and community levels; the new Act bolsters and enlarges the training programs already in operation in some provinces. Also under the Act, research on such matters as the different aspects of physical performance, the effects of activity on different age groups, and physical development resulting from different types of activity may be greatly extended; knowledge of testing processes may be refined; and surveys of resources, facilities and personnel may be assisted. The urgent need for new and much more extensive informational material for both the professional and the public has long been recognized and under the new program, such instructional material suitable to Canadian needs can be developed through the co-operative efforts of experts in the field.

An important provision of the Act makes possible the award of scholarships, fellowships and bursaries to assist persons undertaking professional studies in physical education, recreation and the medical aspects of fitness. This aid should assist the programs that have already been undertaken by some provinces to overcome acute shortages of trained personnel. Provision is also made for the recognition of achievement in fitness and amateur sport activities through awards and citations.

Because of the ease with which they may be implemented, the provisions of the Act dealing with the promotion and development of Canadian participation in national and international sport competitions received early attention. By the end of the program's first fiscal year, fairly substantial aid had been given to assist such participation. Aid had been given also to the application being made to the International Olympic Committee for the holding of the 1968 Winter Olympic Games at Banff, Alta.

Under the Act, aid may be given to the construction of sports and recreational facilities. In view of the high costs involved in such construction and the almost unlimited demand for new facilities, it is possible that this type of assistance, for the most part, will have to be restricted to the building of national or regional training centres serving wide areas of the population.

Administrative responsibility for the program is vested in the Minister of National Health and Welfare who is advised from the point of view of the private citizen by a National Advisory Council on Fitness and Amateur Sport consisting of thirty persons appointed from across Canada, and from the point of view of the governments directly concerned by a federal-provincial committee of persons at the deputy minister level. Committees of experts advise on technical matters. Thus, a partnership of governments, important non-government agencies and the general public has been formed to develop a truly Canadian program of fitness and amateur sport participation which will embody the views of all.

Section 3.—Provincial Welfare Programs

General assistance and social allowances, including mothers' allowances, with the various welfare services associated with these forms of aid, services for the aged, and child care and protection are major welfare programs governed by provincial welfare legislation.