

To carry out Canada's obligations under the International Sanitary Conventions, the Department of National Health and Welfare maintains quarantine measures for ships and aircraft entering Canadian ports and provides accommodation and necessary medical care for persons arriving in Canada who require quarantine (see p. 268).

The Department is responsible for the enforcement of requirements governing the handling and shipping of shellfish under the International Shellfish Agreement between Canada and the United States and, at the request of the International Joint Commission, participates in studies connected with control of pollution of boundary waters between Canada and the United States as well as with problems caused by atmospheric pollution. Other international health responsibilities include the custody and distribution of biological, vitamin and hormone standards for the World Health Organization and certain duties in connection with the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the United Nations.

Section 2.—Provincial and Local Health Services

Provincial and local health services may be grouped into several broad categories: general public health services, primarily of a preventive nature; services for specific diseases or disabilities combining prevention and treatment; services related to general medical and hospital care; and rehabilitation services for disabled persons.

Subsection 1.—General Public Health Services

Provincial and local governments co-operate closely in providing community public health services. The autonomy of the provinces and their social, economic and geographic diversity make for some variety in legislative provisions, in financial arrangements and in the detailed division of functions between provincial health departments and local and voluntary agencies. Each province, however, offers all or nearly all of a basic range of public health services which includes environmental health, occupational health, communicable disease control, maternal and child health, dental health, nutrition, health education, and public health laboratories.

Environmental Health.—The control of factors in the environment that are harmful to physical health is a rapidly expanding area of public health activity. For many years, much of the work in this field was related to inspection duties long associated with community health sanitation, such as maintenance of pure milk, water and food supplies, supervision of plumbing and sewage disposal systems, and provision of general sanitary conditions in public areas. Increasing industrialization, however, has imposed new responsibilities calling for new techniques in public health engineering and sanitary services. Air pollution, water pollution and radiation are emerging as major environmental health problems, necessitating co-ordinated effort by governments and other agencies in research and in planning effective control measures.

Occupational Health.—Services designed to prevent accidents and occupational diseases and to maintain the health of employees are the common concern of provincial health departments, labour departments, workmen's compensation boards and industry management. Provincial agencies regulate working conditions and offer consulting and educational services to industry. All provinces have legislation (Factory Acts, Shop Acts, Mines Acts, Workmen's Compensation Acts) setting health safety standards for employment.

Communicable Disease Control.—There are separate divisions of epidemiology or communicable disease control in six provinces; in the other provinces these functions are handled by provincial medical health officers. Local health authorities undertake case-finding and diagnostic services in co-operation with public health laboratories, carry out epidemiological investigations and often participate in tuberculosis and venereal disease control measures.