

services to a proportionately decreasing rural population and to the sparsely settled northern expanses severely tax the available resources of health and welfare personnel and public health and public welfare administration.

During 1964-65, the Royal Commission on Health Services published the results of its enquiry into the present status of health services in Canada.* It declared that, for the nation to achieve its health goals, a universal, comprehensive, health services program should be available to all Canadians. The Federal Government, responding to this report, proposed in 1965 that a comprehensive medical care program be introduced. In opening a Federal-Provincial Conference in July 1965 the Prime Minister said that "Canadian attitudes and Canadian economic standards have now developed to the point at which we are ready to regard medicare as a part of Canada's basic social standards. It is now the responsibility of the Federal Government to co-operate with the provinces in making medicare financially possible for all Canadians". Earlier in the year (March) British Columbia had passed the Medical Grant Act and Ontario had passed (June) the Medical Services Insurance Act; both these Acts provide for provincial subsidies to assist residents with taxable incomes of less than \$1,000 a year in paying the premiums required to purchase medical care insurance from an approved medical insurance carrier.†

In November 1964, the Federal Government introduced a Bill "to establish a comprehensive program of old age pensions and supplementary benefits in Canada payable to and in respect of contributors". After second reading this Bill was referred to a Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons set up to study it. The Committee held 51 sittings from Nov. 24, 1964 to Feb. 8, 1965 and heard 116 witnesses. In its final report the Committee recommended a few changes in the Bill, most of which were accepted by the Government. The House of Commons debated the Bill from Feb. 22 to Mar. 29, and the Canada Pension Plan received Royal Assent on Apr. 3, 1965. Before the Bill was introduced, a series of meetings had been held between federal and Quebec officials from May to October 1964 in order to integrate the details of the Canada Pension Plan and the Quebec Pension Plan. The Quebec Pension Plan was assented to and became effective on July 15, 1965. The revised Ontario Pension Benefits Act, which regulates the operations of private pension plans in the province, was proclaimed on July 30, 1965.

With the April 1965 Throne Speech, Canada embarked on its own "War on Poverty", a program for the full utilization of human resources and the elimination of poverty. Included in the program will be an expansion of the Area Development Program (ADA) and the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Program (ARDA),‡ measures to assist the re-employment, relocation and retraining of workers, urban renewal measures, the establishment of a Company of Young Canadians to undertake projects for economic and social development in Canada and abroad, and the establishment of a Canada Assistance Plan. This last will be a companion to the Canada Pension Plan, designed to assist people now retired, disabled, widowed or otherwise in need who will not be able to participate in the contributory pension plan. Provincial programs for persons in need will be financially supported by federal cost-sharing arrangements.

During 1964-65, public and voluntary agencies and interested individuals were actively engaged in the preliminary work for the Canadian Conference on Aging, sponsored by the Canadian Welfare Council, to be held in January 1966 in Toronto. The Special Committee of the Senate on Aging, formed in 1963 to study various aspects of the needs of older people including their housing, health and institutional care, social services, community participation and recreation, held hearings from February 1964 into December 1964. The report of the committee was in preparation at the time of writing (August 1965).

Of particular interest in the area of family welfare was the Canadian Conference on the Family, convened by Their Excellencies, Governor General and Madame Vanier, and held in Ottawa in June 1964. The Conference recommended the formation of an Institute of the Family to stimulate and foster study of the family, to constitute a medium of continuous action in favour of the family, as well as a meeting ground and channel of commu-

*See also p. 286.

†See also p. 300.

‡See Chapter X on Land Use and Renewable Resource Development.