

took effect and on July 1, 1966 the Ontario Medical Services Insurance Plan and the Alberta Health Program (an extension of the former Alberta Medical Plan) began paying benefits. These three provincial plans are voluntary and involve subsidization of premiums for low-income groups.

Supplementing the proposed federal medical program, a Health Resources Fund of \$500,000,000 was provided under the Health Resources Fund Act (SC 1966, c. 42) to assist the provinces in the construction and equipping of facilities for health research and training.

PART I.—PUBLIC HEALTH

Provincial governments bear the major responsibility for health services in Canada, with the municipality often assuming considerable authority over matters delegated to it by provincial legislation. The Federal Government has jurisdiction over a number of health matters of a national character and provides important financial assistance to provincial health and hospital services. All levels of government are aided and supported by a network of voluntary agencies working in different health fields.

Section 1.—Federal Health Activities

The Department of National Health and Welfare is the chief federal agency in health matters but important treatment programs are also administered by the Departments of Veterans Affairs and National Defence. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics is responsible for collection, analysis and publication of national health statistics, the Medical Research Council and the Defence Research Board administer medical research programs, and the Canada Department of Agriculture has certain health responsibilities connected with food production.

The Department of National Health and Welfare controls food and drugs, including narcotics, operates quarantine and immigration medical services, carries out international health obligations, and provides health services to Indians, Eskimos and other special groups. It advises on the visual eligibility of applicants for blindness allowances and co-operates with the provinces in the provision of surgical or remedial treatment for recipients of the allowances. Under the Public Works Health Act, supervision of health conditions is provided for persons employed on federal public works. Health counselling and medical supervision are provided for the federal Public Service. The Department also administers the civil aviation medical program for the Department of Transport.

The Department serves the provinces in an advisory and co-ordinating capacity and administers grants to provincial health and national voluntary agencies. Administration of federal aspects of the Hospital Insurance and National Health Grant Programs is a major activity. Co-ordination with the provinces on health matters is facilitated by the Dominion Council of Health, the principal advisory agency to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Its membership includes the Deputy Minister of National Health, who acts as chairman, the chief health officer of each province, and five appointees of the Governor in Council. The Council meets semi-annually. Federal-provincial technical advisory committees of the Council deal with specific aspects of public health.

Subsection 1.—Medicare and the Health Resources Fund

Medicare.—Proposals for a plan of comprehensive medical insurance for all Canadians, administered by the provinces and with federal fiscal contributions, were made by the Prime Minister at the federal-provincial conference held in July 1965. The federal contributions would be dependent upon the fulfilment of four criteria by each provincial plan: