

Public services are supplemented by those of voluntary agencies whose interests include the welfare of families and children and of groups with special needs, such as the aged, recent immigrants, youth groups, and released prisoners. Welfare councils and social planning councils contribute to the planning and co-ordinating of local welfare services. Local voluntary agencies and institutions may receive public grants, depending on the nature and standard of their services, although, with the exception of the semi-public children's aid societies, their main support is usually from united funds or community chests, or from sponsoring organizations.

Subsection 1.—General Assistance

All provinces make legislative provision for general assistance on a means or needs test basis to needy persons and their dependants who cannot qualify for other forms of aid, and some provinces include those whose benefits under other programs are not adequate. Where necessary, the aid may be for maintenance in homes for special care. In addition to financial aid for the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and utilities, some provinces provide incapacitation or rehabilitation allowances, counselling and homemaking services, and post-sanatorium care and some provide allowances to persons with long-term need: persons who are unable to support themselves because of mental or physical disability or because of their age, mothers with dependent children and, in two provinces (Ontario and Quebec), needy widows and unmarried women of 60 years of age or over. This assistance is administered by the province or by the municipalities with substantial financial support from the province, which, in turn, is reimbursed by the Federal Government under the Unemployment Assistance Act for 50 p.c. of the provincial and municipal assistance given (see p. 317).

The provincial departments of public welfare have regulatory and supervisory powers over municipal administration of general assistance and may require certain standards as a condition of provincial aid. Length of residence is not a condition of aid in any province, but the residence of the applicant as defined by statute determines which municipality may be financially responsible for his aid. This rule does not apply in three provinces; British Columbia and Saskatchewan have equalized municipal payments and Quebec does not require its municipalities to contribute to general assistance costs. Provinces with unorganized areas take responsibility for aid in these districts. Under the federal Unemployment Assistance Act, all provinces have agreed that residence shall not be a condition of assistance for applicants who move from one province to another. For persons without provincial residence (usually a period of one year), aid may be given by the province or the municipality and a charge-back may or may not be made to the province or municipality of residence.

The formula for provincial-municipal sharing of costs is determined by the province. A substantial proportion of the costs of aid given to needy persons is borne by the province through assumption of responsibility for aid to certain categories of persons and through reimbursement of municipal expenditures varying by province from 40 p.c. to 100 p.c. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario, the province also reimburses the municipalities for 50 p.c. of the costs of administration. In British Columbia, the province shares with the municipalities expenditures on the salaries for social workers. In Newfoundland all aid is provincially administered. During 1966, a number of provinces introduced legislation extending provincial responsibility for the financing of welfare services.

Subsection 2.—Mothers' Allowances

All provinces make provision for allowances to needy mothers. A number of provinces include such allowances in a broadened program of provincial allowances to persons in several categories of long-term need or have incorporated this legislation with general