Prosthetic services. The over-all objective of Prosthetic Services is to offer prosthetic and orthotic rehabilitation services to the amputee population and to other physically handicapped persons as provided for in agreements in effect with the provinces and with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Unemployment insurance disability assessment. A number of Medical Services physicians provide an assessment and advisory service to the Unemployment Insurance Commission in relation to claims for benefits under the new Sickness and Maternity Benefit Plan which came into effect on July 1, 1971.

Emergency health services. The objective of this activity is to prepare plans to ensure that the health component of the Department is able to continue operating in the event or threat of nuclear attack, and to advise, assist and stimulate provincial and municipal health departments in emergency health planning.

6.1.2 Health protection

Through the Health Protection Branch the Department is responsible for protecting the Canadian public from possible risks to health from foods, drugs, cosmetics, medical devices and hazardous products sold on the market. Under the Food and Drug Act, standards of safety and purity in foods are developed through laboratory research and maintained by means of regular and widespread inspection programs. The Branch is also responsible for enforcing food and drug regulations which prescribe maximum concentrations of additives in specified foods. Every drug manufacturer is required by law to submit information to the Health Protection Branch on all products he intends to market in Canada. Decisions are based on this and other information regarding the type of control to be exercised.

6.1.2.1 Food

Standards of safety and purity are developed through laboratory research and maintained by means of a regular and widespread inspection program. The inspection of food-manufacturing establishments plays a major role in the production of clean, wholesome foods containing ingredients that meet recognized standards. Changing food technology requires the development of methods of laboratory analysis to ensure the safety of new types of ingredients and packaging materials. The Food and Drug Regulations list chemical additives that may be used in foods, the amounts that may be added to each food, and the underlying reason. Information on new additives must be submitted for careful review before they are included in the permitted list. Considerable emphasis is placed upon studies to ensure that the levels of pesticide residues in foods do not constitute a health hazard. The effect of new packaging and processing techniques on the bacteria associated with food spoilage is also of special concern.

6.1.2.2 Drugs

The Health Protection Branch regulates both the manufacture and distribution of drugs in Canada. The conditions under which drugs are to be manufactured are described in the Manufacturing Facilities and Control Regulations. They relate to facilities, employment of qualified personnel, quality control procedures, maintenance of records, and a suitable system to enable a complete and rapid recall of any batch of drugs from the market. Pharmaceutical plants are regularly visited by inspectors to ensure that the drugs produced meet the quality standards required for sale in Canada.

When a new drug with unknown properties is to be placed on the market, the manufacturer is required by law to provide specified information, including a quantitative list of all ingredients, evidence of clinical effectiveness, the formulation of dosage forms and reports of any adverse effects. This information is studied carefully to ensure that the drug is safe and effective for the purposes claimed. Even after a new drug is on the market, its sale can be banned by the Health Protection Branch if the Adverse Drug-Reaction Program indicates that the drug is unsafe and injurious to the health of the Canadian people. More recently, the Branch announced the establishment of a comprehensive Drug Quality Assurance Program aimed at producing objective evidence on the quality of drugs already on the Canadian market and disseminating it to members of the health professions, governments and the general public. Plants manufacturing biologicals such as serums and vaccines must also be licensed according to specifications of the Health Protection Branch, whether they are located in Canada or abroad.

Another major activity of the Branch is to enable the public to purchase high quality drugs