

protection of community health and the control of infectious diseases. Public health bacteriology (testing of milk, water and food), diagnostic bacteriology, and pathology are the principal functions of the laboratory service, with medical testing for physicians and hospitals steadily increasing in volume.

**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 industrial management. Provincial agencies regulate working conditions and offer consultant and educational services to industry. All provinces have legislation setting standards for health safety and accident prevention on the job. Most provinces maintain environmental health laboratories that study industrial health problems such as the effects of noise and air conditions on workers.

### 5.2.7 Emergency health services

The Emergency Health Services Division, established in 1959 within the federal Department of National Health and Welfare, encourages the provinces, with the support of an advisory committee, to develop their own emergency health services divisions. These are organized under a provincial director who is generally assisted by a health supplies officer and a nursing consultant. Federal Emergency Health Services are represented in the provinces by the Regional Director of the Medical Services Branch.

The task of provincial emergency health services is to ensure that vital health functions are maintained during or reorganized after an emergency or disaster, to encourage and assist local planners in establishing emergency medical units, to train health professionals and the general public in emergency health procedures, and to place emergency medical units from the national stockpile at strategic locations.

## 5.3 Physicians

### 5.3.1 Number

As of December 31, 1973 there were 36,095 active civilian physicians in Canada including interns and residents (Table 5.1). Well over one third, 13,726, were located in Ontario. British Columbia and Ontario had the most favourable population-to-physician ratios at 575 and 585, respectively, compared with the national figure of 618.

Province-to-province comparisons of ratios that include all physicians are to some extent distorted because of the differing proportions of interns and residents to other physicians in each province. If the intern-resident category is excluded, the most favourable ratio, 649, was in British Columbia, compared with the national figure of 745. Ontario, at 698, was the only other province with a population-to-physician ratio below the national average.

Table 5.1 also shows trends since 1964 in numbers and ratios for all active civilian physicians combined and for physicians excluding interns and residents. In each case the figures include physicians engaged in such activities as administration, teaching and research within the medical field, as well as those in the clinical practice of medicine.

### 5.3.2 Earnings

The average gross professional earnings of self-employed fee-practice physicians in 1972 were \$59,325, 4.4% higher than in 1971. The average annual rate of increase over the period 1962 to 1972 was 8.5%. The highest average gross earnings in 1972 were reported in Alberta at \$63,384, followed closely by Ontario at \$62,462. New Brunswick was close to the nation-wide average at \$59,075. In the remaining provinces the average gross earnings ranged from \$58,470 in Manitoba to \$50,068 in Prince Edward Island. Generally, through the decade 1962-72, average gross earnings have been at a higher level in Newfoundland, Ontario and the western provinces than in Quebec and the Maritime provinces. But since 1971 earnings in Quebec and New Brunswick have risen swiftly to approach the national average.

The net returns to physicians, after deduction of the expenses of professional fee practice, reveal some shifting in geographic patterns compared with earlier years. Average net earnings for Canada as a whole were \$39,978 in 1972, 2.0% higher than in 1971. The highest provincial average net earnings were reported by Quebec and New Brunswick, at \$43,401 and \$43,012, followed by Ontario at \$40,968.