

The Department of National Health and Welfare, through the programs of the Canadian International Development Agency, provides advisers for service abroad and arranges for the training in Canada of foreign students and government officials, when recommended by their governments.

The federal department and provincial departments and agencies participate in the work of several international voluntary organizations including the International Council on Social Welfare and the International Union of Family Organizations. Informal discussions on the possibility of bilateral agreements in the sphere of social security have been held with the United Kingdom, Italy and the United States.

Canadian officials engaged in the field of social security participate in the work of the International Social Security Association and the social security program of the International Labour Organization. For some years, Canada has had observer status at meetings of the Inter-American Social Security Association.

6.4 Federal-provincial welfare programs

6.4.1 Canada Assistance Plan

The Canada Assistance Plan, 1966, was designed in consultation with the provinces as a comprehensive public assistance measure for supporting the integration and improvement of provincial and municipal assistance programs and encouraging the extension and development of welfare services which would lessen, remove or prevent the causes and effects of poverty, child neglect or dependence on public assistance. Under agreements with the provinces and territories, the federal government contributes 50% of sharable costs of provincial and municipal expenditures for public assistance and welfare services. Through the Plan, Canada also shares in the cost of work activity projects which are designed to improve the employability of persons who have unusual difficulty in finding or retaining jobs or in undertaking job training.

The only eligibility requirement specified under the Canada Assistance Plan for individuals or families applying for assistance under provincial programs is that of need, which is determined through an assessment of budgetary requirements as well as of income and resources. A province must not require previous residence to be a condition of eligibility for assistance. Rates of assistance and eligibility requirements are set by the province so that they may be adjusted to local conditions and the needs of special groups. The provinces are also required to establish procedures which enable individuals to appeal decisions relating to the provision of assistance.

Assistance includes any form of aid to, or on behalf of, persons in need of basic requirements such as food, shelter, clothing, fuel, household and personal necessities; special items necessary for the safety, well-being, or rehabilitation of a person in need; non-insured health care services; and maintenance in a home for special care such as a home for the aged, a nursing home or a child care institution.

Welfare services, which include counselling and assessment, casework, rehabilitation services, community development and day care, homemaker and adoption services, are provided to persons in need or to persons who are likely to become in need if they do not receive these services. The federal government also shares in the costs of administration of assistance and welfare services programs, such as salaries and employee benefits, and in the costs of staff training, research and consulting services which relate to welfare programs. These may be provided by provincial or municipal governments or by provincially approved non-profit agencies.

The number of recipients of financial aid under provincial social assistance programs is shown in Table 6.18. Federal payments under the Canada Assistance Plan amounted to \$824.8 million in the fiscal year 1973-74. This figure includes payments which were made to Quebec through the Department of Finance under the terms of the Established Programs (Interim Arrangements) Act (Table 6.19).

6.4.2 Allowances for blind and disabled persons

Under the Blind Persons Act, 1951, and the Disabled Persons Act, 1954, the federal government shares in the cost to the provinces of providing assistance to blind and disabled persons, aged 18 and over, who meet certain income and residence requirements. However,