

worker compensation, 85,000. These were all disability cases. There were also 150,000 receiving unemployment sickness benefits, making a total of 500,000 disabled under income support. These figures indicate that the remaining million disabled persons of working age were employed, keeping house or going to school.

In 1980 a federal task force held hearings across Canada to receive briefs from and on behalf of the disabled. Canada also hosted the Congress of Rehabilitation International in Winnipeg in June 1980 and was co-operating with other countries as part of the activities associated with the International Year of the Disabled, 1981. Integrated programs for the disabled are being developed to take account of their need to participate in the social and economic life of the community through innovative aids to daily living, modifications to the workplace and improved access to buildings and transportation systems.

## 8.2 Federal income programs

### 8.2.1 Old age security program

The old age security (OAS) benefit or basic old age pension has been in effect since 1952. It is available to all Canadian citizens and qualified residents aged 65 and over. Since 1967 pensioners with little or no other income have also been eligible for a guaranteed income supplement (GIS) which is renewable annually. Since October 1975 a spouse's allowance (SA) has been available for the spouse of a pensioner with little or no income when the spouse's age is between 60 and 65. The overall cost of the old age security program for the fiscal year 1978-79 was \$5.49 billion (Table 8.4).

**Old age security.** The basic old age security benefit was designed as a flat rate benefit available to all qualified residents. Since 1973 the amount of benefit has been indexed on a quarterly basis in order to maintain its purchasing power.

In July 1980 the basic monthly pension was \$191.28, and 2.2 million people were receiving it. For a full pension the applicant must have been resident in Canada for 40 years after the age of 18 or for 10 consecutive years immediately prior to receipt of the pension. In July 1977 the basis for eligibility was modified to introduce the concept of a partial pension based on the number of years of residence.

**Guaranteed income supplement (GIS).** Since 1967 old age pensioners with little or no personal income have been eligible to receive a guaranteed income supplement which is intended to provide a basic standard of living for the elderly. In July 1980 a single pensioner with a maximum supplement was eligible to receive a monthly cheque of \$383.31 (\$191.28 OAS plus \$192.03 GIS). The maximum combined pension for a married couple was \$678.00. For pensioners with personal income, the supplement is reduced by \$1 a month for every \$2 of other personal income.

**Spouse's allowance (SA).** In October 1975 the federal government introduced an additional allowance payable to pensioner spouses 60-64 years of age. The program is income tested in the same manner as the GIS for a married couple. If there is no personal income in the family the maximum SA equals the amount of the OAS pension plus the maximum GIS at married rates. Thus in July 1980 the maximum SA was \$339.00. As with the GIS the SA is reduced in accordance with the amount of personal family income. In 1980, SA recipients became eligible to continue to receive their benefits following death of the pensioner spouse.

There has been a continuing increase in expenditures for these three benefits during the 1970s (Table 8.5). The largest single factor was the indexing of benefits after October 1973 in accordance with the quarterly increase in the consumer price index. Inflation of benefits under this index has been running between 10% and 11% annually in recent years. There has also been an increase of 2% to 3% annually in the population receiving OAS benefits. Both these factors may be expected to continue with a corresponding growth in the OAS expenditures. With GIS and SA programs effects of interacting legislative changes make it more difficult to estimate future trends but increased expenditures may be expected.