

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 must establish procedures for appeal by individuals from decisions that relate to the provision of assistance. The cost of "improving and extending welfare services" is defined as the amount by which annual expenditures of providing welfare services exceed that of the period from April 1, 1964 to March 31, 1965. Items included in this category are the costs of salaries and employee benefits, travel, research, consultation, fees for conferences and seminars, and certain costs of staff training. Transfer of funds to Quebec are made under the Established Programs (Interim Arrangements) Act.

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 \$768.2 million in the fiscal year 1972-73, a figure which includes the special arrangement with Quebec (see Table 6.19). The Canada Assistance Plan has almost completely replaced the Unemployment Assistance Act. During the year ended March 31, 1973, the federal government made payments of \$1.3 million under the Unemployment Assistance Act to Quebec, Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

6.4.2 Allowances for blind and disabled persons

Although some provinces still accept applications from blind and disabled people under the Blind Persons Act and the Disabled Persons Act, a number of provinces have chosen to assist them within the framework of their general assistance program under the terms of the Canada Assistance Plan. The provinces may also transfer current recipients of allowances under these two Acts to their general programs, provided that there is no decrease in benefits.

By the end of 1973 the Atlantic Provinces, Manitoba and the Yukon Territory were still accepting applications under the Blind Persons Act of 1951, as amended. This Act provides for federal reimbursement to the provinces for allowances to blind persons aged 18 or over who meet the 10-year residence requirement and specific income limits. For an unmarried person, total income including the allowance may not exceed \$1,500 a year; for a person with no spouse but with one or more dependent children, \$1,980; for a married couple, \$2,580. The income of a blind couple may not exceed \$2,700. Statistics on allowances for the blind appear in Table 6.20. The federal contribution may not exceed 75% of \$75 a month or the provincial allowance paid, whichever is less. The province administers the program and may fix the amount of allowance payable and the maximum income allowed. Effective April 1, 1965, compensation to Quebec was made under the Established Programs (Interim Arrangements) Act.

By the end of 1973, only New Brunswick, Manitoba and the Yukon Territory were still accepting applications under the Disabled Persons Act of 1954, as amended. This Act provides for federal reimbursement to the provinces for allowances paid to permanently and totally disabled persons aged 18 and over who meet the required definition of "permanent and total disability", the 10-year residence requirement, and specified income limits. For an unmarried person, total income, including the allowance, may not exceed \$1,260 a year. For a married couple, the limit is \$2,220 a year except that, if the spouse is blind within the meaning of the Blind Persons Act, the income of the couple may not exceed \$2,580 a year. Statistics for recent years are given in Table 6.20. The federal contribution may not exceed 50% of \$75 a month or the provincial allowance paid, whichever is less. Effective April 1, 1965, compensation to Quebec was made under the Established Programs (Interim Arrangements) Act.

6.4.3 National welfare grants

The National Welfare Grants program was established in 1962 to help develop and strengthen welfare services in Canada. Under the program, project grants are made to provincial and municipal welfare departments, non-governmental welfare agencies, citizens' organizations and universities. Fellowships are provided to individuals seeking advanced training in the social welfare field. The variety of provisions within the program, with its associated consultative services, allows it to operate as a flexible instrument in the development of welfare services and to give major emphasis to experimental activities in the welfare field. The allotment for the year ended March 31, 1973 was almost \$3 million.