

PART IV WELFARE SERVICES

Families and individuals facing problems with which they require help increasingly may turn for assistance to municipal or provincial public welfare departments, which, in addition to administering certain of the income maintenance programmes described in the preceding section, offer a number of other services for families, children and other persons. There are wide differences in the degree to which services have been developed in different communities. In some centres they include nursery and day care, post-school rehabilitation programmes, child welfare and old age services and the maintenance, supervision and licensing of welfare institutions.

A vital role in meeting the needs of families is also played by voluntary family welfare agencies, of which there are some seventy-five in the principal centres throughout the country. These agencies, which may combine certain child welfare services with their family programmes, were among the pioneer welfare agencies of Canada but, whereas their principal function for many years was the provision of maternal aid, their emphasis today is largely on casework and counselling. Through casework they help families with mental or other personal problems, with budgeting and home management and in solving environmental problems such as housing. Family agencies also provide a referral service to help persons unfamiliar with community services to find the help they require. The family agencies are generally organized to serve all sections of the community, though in larger centres there may be separate agencies serving particular religious groups. All are financed by a number of Canadian sources having jurisdiction over the federal fund.

In addition to family agencies providing the range of services mentioned above, more specialized organizations such as "Travelers" Aid are available in some centres to meet particular needs. Ethnic and fraternal associations frequently also make available to their special groups types of service similar to those of family agencies.

A type of service for families which is found in about fifty Canadian communities in the provision of a substitute homemaker when illness or some similar problem makes such a service essential in keeping the family as a unit during an emergency. A few day care programmes exist in some of the larger centres for children of working mothers.