

PROGRESS IN HEALTH AND WELFARE

MINISTER'S REPORT: Widening scope of federal activities in all concerning the well-being and security of Canadians is indicated in the Annual Report of the Department of National Health and Welfare for the last fiscal year.

In tabling the report in Parliament, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Mr. Martin, noted that it covered the first full year of operation of the new three-part programme embracing Old Age Security, Old Age Assistance and Allowances for the Blind. This new legislation accounted largely for an increase of some \$250,000,000 voted for this Department's work last year.

GRANT MONEYS

Mr. Martin also noted that the Provinces had made greater use, during the year, of federal grant moneys available under the National Health Programme, that there had been large increases in appropriations for Indian Health Services and that the federal Government, in this period, had initiated a system of grants-in-aid to assist the Provinces in developing civil defence projects.

Outstanding development of the year in the welfare field was the successful implementation, with co-operation of the Provinces, of the new three-part programme replacing the Old Age Pensions Act of 1927. At March 31, 1953, no fewer than 782,134 Canadians were benefiting under the three new measures. Under the Old Age Security Act, a total of 686,127 persons 70 years or over, were receiving payments of \$40 a month, administered and financed entirely by the federal Government, without means test of any kind. Another 87,675 persons in need, between 65 and 70, were receiving old age assistance payments, administered by the Provinces, with the cost shared equally by federal and provincial Governments and 8,322 blind persons 21 years or over were receiving allowances administered by the provincial Governments, with the federal Government bear-

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EMPLOYMENT DOWN: Industrial employment moved downward at the beginning of November in the first general decline since the early Spring. This is also the first occasion since the early part of 1950 on which a comparison with a year earlier has been unfavourable. The existence of labour-management disputes causing substantial losses in employment, hours and earnings, contributed to lower levels of activity.

The Bureau's industrial employment index for November 1 stood at 115.7 as compared with 116.9 a month earlier and 116.2 at the same time in 1952. Reversing the trend followed since April 1 the weekly payrolls index de-

ing 75 per cent of the cost. Federal payments under these three measures totalled \$345,255,669.68 for the year reviewed.

As the National Health Programme, inaugurated in May 1948, approached its fifth anniversary, the report noted that some \$94,000,000 had been granted to the Provinces to assist them in surveying their health facilities and future needs, in overcoming serious shortages in hospital accommodation and in improving public health services and facilities generally. More than 400 individual hospital construction projects, providing some 46,000 additional hospital beds, 5,900 bassinets for infants, 5,700 beds in nurses' residences and various other facilities equivalent to an additional 2,600 beds, had been supported by the federal grants.

TRAINING OF WORKERS

Also, the National Health Programme had made possible the training of nearly 5,000 specialized health workers, employment of an additional 4,700 on provincial and local health staffs, the financing of more than 200 health research projects and the strengthening of provincial and municipal health services. As a result, the Provinces had been able to intensify their campaign against major health hazards, such as cancer, tuberculosis and mental illness, and to lay foundations for the introduction of health insurance.

There was marked expansion during the year in facilities and services provided for the health care of Indians and Eskimos and the report noted that there had been a further gratifying decline in the death rate from tuberculosis, the greatest single health threat to Canada's native population.

The Health Department reported that modern methods of prevention and improved treatment procedures had continued to reduce the incidence and mortality of many communicable diseases.

clined to 157.2 from 158.7 a month earlier. The November 1 index, however, was the second highest in the record, exceeding by 4.7% the November 1952 index of 150.1. At \$58.14, the latest average of weekly wages and salaries established a new maximum, slightly above the October 1 per capita figure, and 4.5% higher than at November 1, 1952.

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About 77% of the primary iron and steel industry's output in 1952 was produced in Ontario, 12% in Quebec, 8% in Nova Scotia, and the other 3% in Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia.