

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES



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CANADA'S HEALTH PROGRAMME

A statement by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Mr. Paul Martin, before the Committee on Estimates, House of Commons, Ottawa, March 16, 1956.

In opening the discussion in this Committee on the Estimates of the Department of National Health and Welfare, I feel that it would be appropriate for me to give a preliminary outline of the extent of federal activities in the health care field generally as a preamble to what I have to report on the recent health insurance discussions with the provinces. The constructive and encouraging nature of these discussions is already generally known, since the Prime Minister, on January 26 last, gave to the House an account of the proposals advanced by the Federal Government for participation in provincial health insurance programs. It will be fitting for me this morning to discuss in somewhat greater detail than the Prime Minister was able to do on that occasion the nature of these proposals and their implications, financial and otherwise, future development of health services in this country.

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PART I

1. FEDERAL EXPENDITURES ON HEALTH

Although health is primarily a provincial and municipal responsibility in Canada, federal expenditures for health services will reach about \$107 million in 1955-56. This equals about 28 per cent of combined provincial and municipal expenditures for health services.

It is worth recalling that federal expenditures have almost doubled since 1948 when the National Health Program was introduced. During the same period, provincial and municipal expenditures -- if we include hospital insurance expenditures in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland -- have trebled.