

NEWFOUNDLAND SIGNS HOSPITAL INSURANCE AGREEMENT

Newfoundland, which in 1934 initiated the first government-sponsored hospital insurance plan in British North America, has entered into agreement with the Federal Government to broaden its programme with Ottawa assistance. Second province to avail themselves of the benefits of the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act, it was represented last week at the signing ceremony in the House of Commons by Mr. J.M. McGrath, Minister of Health. The Minister of National Health and Welfare, Hon. J. Waldo Monteith, was the federal signatory.

Newfoundland's original prepaid medical and hospital programme, the Cottage Hospital Plan, was designed for families living in the out-port areas and covered something over a third of the provincial population. Last year a general programme for children was introduced which provided ward accommodation and out-patient diagnostic services. The plan made possible by last week's agreement will extend in-patient hospital care to all Newfoundlanders as well as providing certain out-patient facilities.

The in-patient services are the same as those to be made available in Ontario as a result of the agreement signed with that province on March 3, 1958. It is mandatory for a province to provide these services in order to

receive federal assistance.

Out-patient services, on the other hand, are optional under the terms of the federal act. Each province is free to omit insured out-patient services entirely or to include such out-patient services as the province considers desirable as long as they are uniformly available to all residents of the province on equal terms and conditions. Newfoundland will include on an out-patient basis:

- (a) laboratory and radiological services, as well as certain diagnostic services.
- (b) the use of radiotherapy and physiotherapy facilities where available.

The body of the agreement with Newfoundland, is essentially the same as that signed with Ontario. Such differences as there are reflect the differences in administration and scope of the two programmes. Where Ontario makes provision for the financing of its share of the costs through a system of premiums, Newfoundland proposes to meet these financial commitments out of revenue derived from provincial taxes. A further difference in the Newfoundland agreement is the absence of any provision for a waiting period for benefits. Every bona fide resident of Newfoundland will be eligible immediately for insured services.

Newfoundland plans to commence the new programme on July 1, 1958.

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WINTER WORK CONFERENCE

On the invitation of Mr. Michael Starr, Minister of Labour, leaders of industry and organized labour and representatives of provincial governments will meet for a National Winter Employment Conference in Ottawa on July 14 and 15 to discuss practical ways of reducing seasonal unemployment in the winter in Canada, a perennial problem which has plagued this country since its earliest days.

About 90 delegates representing 25 national organizations and provincial governments are expected to attend the Conference.

In sending out invitations, Mr. Starr recognized the fact that expansion of employment on a year-round basis must remain the principal objective of industry and government, and that fluctuations in employment occur at all seasons of the year, but he indicated that the basic purpose of the Conference is to increase the effectiveness of the National Winter Work Campaigns which have been conducted with increasing support during recent years. Supported by the Department of Labour and the Unemployment Insurance Commission in co-operation with provincial and municipal governments, these "Do It Now" campaigns, concentrated mainly in January, February and March, have now become annual events extensively organized in communities from coast to coast.

Mr. Starr felt that the time now had arrived when management, labour, governments and other groups which had supported past campaigns should get together at a national level to develop further practical proposals which could lead to increased action at all levels. The three main items on the Agenda will be:

1. Extent and causes of the annual winter decline in employment in Canada.
2. The action that has been taken to increase winter employment opportunities.
3. Practical proposals for further action by all interested groups on local, provincial and national levels.

Employer and business groups will include the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Railway Association of Canada, the Canadian Construction Association, the National House Builders' Association, the Canadian Metal Mining Association, the Canadian Retail Federation, the Retail Merchants Association, the Western Retail Merchants Association, and the Canadian Council -- Operation Home Improvement.

Labour will send representatives from the Canadian Labour Congress and the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour.

Other groups to be represented are the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Inter-Provincial Farm Union Council, the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, the Canadian Welfare Council, the National Council