

A useful by-product of this grant should be the easing of the strain on our limited facilities for hospital accommodation. At the present time, many hospital beds are occupied for purely diagnostic purposes which might better be made available to patients requiring active treatment. By helping to improve laboratory facilities and services for the diagnosis of illness outside of hospital, this grant may make it easier for hospitals to provide accommodation for the acutely ill.

Five Years of Achievement

These three new grants are logical extensions of the National Health Programme and were decided on in the light of our wide experience in bridging gaps in Canada's health services. Two years ago I reported to this group on the achievements of the first three years of Canada's National Health Programme. Now, in the broader perspective of five years' time, it might be of interest to look back and trace some of the more notable achievements made possible with the aid of federal grants under this Programme.

Since the inauguration of the federal grants programme, the provinces have been able to initiate projects that will use more than \$110,000,000 -- or two-thirds of the \$167,000,000 made available to them.

This substantial federal support has provided a decided stimulus to health activity in every part of Canada by enabling the provinces to survey their health resources, by encouraging hospital construction, and by assisting in the improvement of health facilities and services in such important fields as mental illness, cancer, tuberculosis, arthritis and rheumatism.

Because of this measure, every province has been encouraged not only to strengthen existing services but to strike out in entirely new directions. As a result, there is no community anywhere in this country that has not, in some way, felt the impact of this programme. If it were possible to trace its effect on individual Canadians over the past five years, it would be clear that the National Health Programme has directly touched the lives of fully 75 per cent of our people, and, more indirectly, of all Canadians.

Perhaps the most tangible, most easily measurable achievement is our remarkable success in hospital building -- a feature of the programme that is of particular interest to members of this group.

In reporting to Parliament recently I indicated that, in the past five years, federal grants have been approved for hospital construction projects to provide an additional 46,000 beds. What I neglected to tell the House, however, was that this figure did not take account of the federal funds provided towards the cost of 5,900 bassinets for infants, 5,700 additional beds in nurses' residences, and of space required for out-patient departments, and for public health laboratories and community health centres established in hospitals.

In other words, in the past five years, the National Health Programme has assisted in the construction of new hospital accommodation for 57,000 patients, nurses and infants -- besides helping to increase hospital, laboratory and out-patient facilities and to supplement hospital services by