

MEDICARE IN FIVE PROVINCES

The following statement by Mr. John Munro, Minister of National Health and Welfare, was made on April 1:

With the application of the Medical Care Act to Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Manitoba, effective April 1, we have attained a very considerable measure of progress toward our goal of providing insured health services to all Canadians under provincial medicare plans.

British Columbia and Saskatchewan implemented the provisions of the Act on its inception last July. The five provinces now participating begin to give reality to the portability-of-benefits principle. Canadians form a mobile industrial society. It is estimated that 7 per cent of our population moves from one province to another each year. Any effective programme must provide for continuous coverage regardless of provincial boundaries and regardless of the organization of insurance groups.

The principles and criteria given in the Act offer the provinces considerable flexibility in introducing their own programmes. Two of the five provincial plans now in effect are funded from general revenue, another has a voluntary premium system. Still another has a compulsory premium system, and the fifth is funded from a combination of premiums and general revenue. Similarly, benefit provisions vary to some extent but all meet the general requirement of comprehensive coverage for all medically required services rendered by a physician or surgeon. Three of the plans are making use of non-profit doctor-sponsored plans in a variety of ways, in relation to the administration of their programmes.

In each case, however, administration of the plan is on a non-profit basis by a public authority accountable to the provincial government.

Developments to date and indications for the future are encouraging. I believe that the medical profession will respond to this programme in a responsible manner, reflecting the trust and confidence that the public has placed in the profession.

PRIMA BALLERINA RETIRES

Lois Smith, prima ballerina of the National Ballet of Canada, has announced that she will retire at the end of the current season on June 8.

Miss Smith plans to open a ballet school, and make some guest appearances with the National Ballet next season. She will also "be doing some teaching at the National Ballet School", she says.

Several injuries are the cause of Miss Smith's decision to withdraw from her heavy dancing schedule.

One of the original members of the company, she has danced with the National Ballet of Canada since 1951 and has appeared in every major city in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Miss Smith began ballet lessons at the age of ten in Vancouver, and, as prima ballerina of Canada's National Ballet since 1955, she has danced the leading roles in many productions including *La Sylphide*, *The Nutcracker*, *La Prima Ballerina*, *Bayaderka*, *Studies in White*, *Swan Lake*, *Cinderella*, *Giselle*, and *Coppélia*.

Lois Smith has been proclaimed by North America's foremost ballet critics as one of the world's finest prima ballerinas.

BANK RATE RAISED

The Governor of the Bank of Canada, Mr. Louis Rasminsky, announced on April 11 that the minimum secondary reserve ratio of the chartered banks was being raised from 7 per cent to 8 per cent of Canadian dollar deposit liabilities, effective in June.

The Governor stated that the increase in the minimum secondary reserve ratio would reduce the surplus liquidity available to banks to support the expansion of loans. The new measure will supplement the control by the Bank of Canada over cash reserves, which has brought about a substantial reduction in surplus bank liquidity since last autumn and has involved a considerable tightening of credit conditions. It will reinforce the monetary policy of the Bank, which is directed toward reducing inflationary pressures.

COPPER CONTROL MAY TIGHTEN

Mr. Jean-Luc Pepin, Minister of Industry and Trade and Commerce, advised the House of Commons recently that it might become necessary to change the arrangements for control of copper in refinery shapes to offshore destinations.

Since November 1965, copper in all forms has been controlled by authority granted under the Export and Import Permits Act. In the case of refinery shapes, however, permits valid for multiple destinations have been issued on a yearly basis.

Mr. Pepin explained to the House that the contemplated change had been suggested by the fact that, over the previous several months, the London Metal Exchange price for copper had continued at a "significantly higher level" than the North American producer's price. This continuing price differential had intensified interest on the part of some of the copper-concentrate producing mines, whose concentrates were smelted and refined in Canada, to sell their resultant copper at the London Metal Exchange price. These mines had traditionally sold part of their refined copper in Canada at the North American price.

Part of Mr. Pepin's statement follows:

"Current conditions in the industry are such that there is a danger the continuing higher overseas price would attract away from Canada some of the