

(d) The National Health Programme

The National Health Programme, inaugurated four years ago, is the most important contribution of the Federal Government in the health field. In its development, it followed an older but less extensive United States programme. Federal grants of more than \$35,000,000 a year are made available to the provinces to help them survey their health needs, build hospitals, train and employ health personnel, and strengthen their campaigns against such major health problems as cancer, tuberculosis, mental illness and crippling conditions in children.

These federal health grants have encouraged the construction of additional hospital accommodation totalling 36,000 beds. They have notably improved health facilities and services in all parts of Canada. Thirty-five hundred health workers have been trained and an even larger number employed on provincial public health staffs. The grants have helped bring Canada's health standards to record levels, while building firm foundations for any further extension of hospital and medical care insurance.

(e) The Old Age Security Programme

The Old Age Security Programme is the latest of Canada's major social measures. Assistance is available for those in the 65-69 age group who can prove need, and a universal pension is paid to everyone aged 70 and over who has lived a certain number of years in Canada. The universal pension which provides \$40 a month for single persons -- or \$80 for a married couple, when both are 70 -- is supplemented in some provinces by an additional pension or by free health services. This double programme, which got underway last month, currently benefits about 700,000 persons at an annual cost rising from \$330,000,000.

Characteristics Of Canadian Measures

The old age security measure can serve to illustrate four main characteristics of Canada's social legislation:

- (a) It is gradual in development
- (b) It builds on the experience of other countries
- (c) It is at times original in concept and wide in coverage
- (d) It is within the nation's capacity

(a) Canada's social legislation is gradual in development: Canada's first measure for old age security was the provision of Government Annuities in 1908. Nineteen years later a limited system of old age pensions was established, but it took nine years for it to be adopted in every province. Another fifteen years passed before the present system finally evolved.

(b) Canada's social legislation builds on the experience of other countries: Each of Canada's social measures has been shaped up only after careful study of the history of similar measures in other progressive countries. For example, old age pensions had been paid in Europe for more than a quarter of a century before Canada established its first measure. Our new programme for old age security was adopted after exhaustive review of similar programmes in the United States.