

were received and investigated by the county welfare boards, and approximately 70% were found eligible for referral. It is significant that in the previous year less than half as many applications, namely 7,538 were received.

General Public Assistance

So far all that has been said relates to special types of assistance, the aged, the employables and so on. But this is not all which needs to be said about public assistance. There is a group of persons, not large when compared with the whole, but none the less in need, who cannot qualify for these categories. For example, they are frequently persons over 45 years of age, but under 65, who may be sick, incapacitated, or unable to compete in the labor market of today. They are the problem of advancing age, rather than old age. They are the families of men who ordinarily are employable, but who have lost their wages because of temporary conditions. They are those unfortunate persons crippled or handicapped from birth or during their youth. Of the 6,520 families which were receiving general public assistance in September, 1938, approximately 10% in the counties were classified as families of employable wage earners, and about 28% in Baltimore City.

Since September the number of families dependent upon this type of assistance has risen to 7,232. Winter months find more employables in relation to the total than summer months. The grant which they receive is small. The average grant during December per family was \$14.16 in the counties and \$31.41 in the City.

The Public Assistance Division of the Board of State Aid and Charities has requested for the years 1940 and 1941, respectively, \$5,695,445.50, \$6,227,284.50. After much consideration, I am recommending an allowance for each of the years 1940 and 1941 the sum of \$5,000,000.00, with the recommendation noted on the appropriate sheet in the Budget that the appropriation be made contingent upon the passage of legislation providing additional revenue to offset this appropriation, and with the further recommendation that the Board be allowed to allocate the sum of \$5,000,000.00 to its several activities on a pro rata basis, or as nearly along that line as possible as may be deemed advisable. Such allocation to be submitted in detail to the Board of Public Works by a Budget amendment for its approval.

Department of Health

The Department is doing effective work in the field of public health administration. Under competent direction, and staffed with technically trained bureau chiefs, this Department, in cooperation with medical practitioners, has been effective in reducing both the number of cases and deaths from those communicable diseases subject to sanitary control. The usefulness of this Department can be greatly increased if provision could be made to increase by three the number of branch bacteriological laboratories which assist physicians in the diagnosis and treatment of disease. Six branch laboratories are now in operation, and three more are needed to serve adequately all the physicians in the counties.

The subject of venereal disease control is receiving much professional and public interest, and I am recommending for your consideration the report of the Commission to study this important subject. The report has been submitted and is available for your consideration.