

WHY THIS FOLLOW-UP REPORT IS NEEDED:



In the report, *OBSTACLES*, which was released in February 1981, the needs and concerns of disabled Native persons constituted just one part of the Special Committee's examination of the effects of disability among all Canadians. Since February, however, the Committee has been made acutely aware that the Native population is a unique sector of the overall Canadian population. It is a sector which is frequently misunderstood by Non-Native Canadians, and one which is isolated from many of the resources which disabled Canadians who are not Native, can utilize on a regular basis. The needs of disabled Native people, therefore, require special consideration. This follow-up report focuses on the key areas of their lives where additional Federal Government action must be taken before many disabled Natives can be expected to help themselves.

Major Government Initiatives On Behalf Of All Native People Have Not Necessarily Helped Those Who Are Disabled

During the past twenty-five years, the Federal Government has made significant efforts to increase the level of information, services and resources which can be utilized by Native people in general. Despite these commendable efforts, the results have fallen short of expectations. As a consequence, conditions have improved very little for those Native Canadians who are disabled. Frequently they find themselves competing with other members of their communities for limited financial and community resources.

Many Of The Problems Of Disabled Native Persons Cannot Be Solved Until The Living Conditions For All Native Persons In A Community Are Improved

Native communities, and Native people living in Non-Native communities, suffer on a daily basis from living conditions which other Canadians experience only rarely. These adversities—political, economic, social and cultural in nature—greatly increase the probability of being disabled at some point in a person's lifetime. Although hard data is not available, it is generally felt by those who are knowledgeable about Native lifestyles, that the percentage of disabled persons is much higher among the Native population than it is among other groups of Canadians. The adverse living conditions which are a daily experience for many Native persons mean that it is practically impossible to deal