

Vocational Rehabilitation

record of the achievement of this government. One of the things he will hold up will be this vocational rehabilitation act, as though it were a new initiative in the field of social reform, when in fact it has been part of the law of this country for over 12 years.

I would have been interested in hearing what the Minister of National Health and Welfare had to say about this matter, because while much has been done in this field by the Department of Labour, very considerable work is being done by the Department of National Health and Welfare in the rehabilitation of disabled people.

When you combine the work of the Department of National Health and Welfare with that of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labour, the program is indeed much more impressive than the criticisms of the hon. member for Peterborough warrant. The hon. member undersold his country today, not intentionally, because we really have done a tremendous amount in the field of rehabilitation. But I can understand why the hon. member for Peterborough did not realize this fact. It was because we were confronted today with all the trappings and all the setting of something that was new which had been originally conceived by the former administration.

It must not be forgotten that the rehabilitation grants provided for by the government of Canada under the national health program are of the greatest significance. When one thinks of the work of Dr. Gingras in the city of Montreal in the field of medical rehabilitation; when one thinks of the work being done by the paraplegics in Toronto, each made possible as a result of moneys voted by this parliament 10 years ago, I cannot help but think that we should put this matter into proper perspective.

As the hon. member for Lincoln says, the work of the compensation board, the work of the provincial governments, the work of the arthritis and rheumatism society, the work of the tuberculosis association, the work of the muscular dystrophy groups, all this voluntary work throughout the country is part of a continuing effort with the government toward a productive and outstanding program of rehabilitation which, I think, warrants our saying that this is a field which has not been neglected in Canada. It is not being approached for the first time by this government which announces, through its propaganda agencies, that it has done more in the field of social welfare than was ever done in the history of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Hon. members applaud, but the fact is otherwise, and their

applause now serves to justify the very warning I am giving to them. This is not an initiative; this is not a new measure. This is merely putting into a new form something we have been doing for a long time, and the kind of applause we have just heard serves to confirm my fears that this measure *inter alia* will be used for the purpose of conveying the impression that the first effort in the field of vocational rehabilitation was undertaken by the present government. That, of course, is not the case.

Mr. Thrasher: Would the hon. member permit me to interrupt him for a moment? He mentioned various organizations and societies which were doing something in this field. In view of the fact that the cancer society is now engaged in a drive for funds perhaps he would mention them.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I am very glad the hon. member has mentioned the cancer society and certainly we cannot do too much to assist that society which, by the way, in 1949 was invited to Ottawa by the then minister of national health and welfare—the hon. member for Greenwood laughs, but I tell him this: as a result of that invitation there came into being the Canadian Cancer Institute which is one of the most impressive contributions ever made to attacking this whole problem in our country. The hon. member for Halton—

An hon. Member: An excellent autobiography.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): That might be an interpretation, but I think the hon. member should know that I am not ashamed of that autobiography. I was referring to the hon. member for Halton. His father, the distinguished Dr. Best, one of the most outstanding medical research scientists in our country, could confirm practically everything I have said here today because he was one of those along with Penfield at Montreal, along with Collip at Western, along with Brown at McGill, who collaborated with the government. All this really shows that what I have been saying is true, that we are today doing nothing new in this field. Not one additional cent is being expended. If the government had come forward and said: we need more money to do this job better, that would have been an initiative but that is not what we have today.

The Minister of Labour in his opening remarks, after he had cited the resolution, said that it would encourage action which would enable many seriously disabled Canadians to rise above their handicaps. I disagree with that statement. That authority now exists and this parliament will not deny to any Minister