

policies, public communications and management commitment inasmuch as these concerned disabled persons.

Again, a call for action by a parliamentary committee provoked promises from the government. In the response, *Accepting the Challenge*, the government agreed to hire an additional 2700 persons with disabilities by 1991 and as incentives for departments to hire persons with disabilities to make provision for 400 person-years and \$15 million as well as \$3.7 million for technical aids. During their appearance before our Committee, the members of the Treasury Board Advisory Committee on Employment of Disabled Persons told us that the implementation of some of these measures has been spotty.

The government's response to *Challenge* provided realistic and measurable goals for progress for the employment of disabled persons within the public service, but with the passage of time, this Committee sees that the report did not bridge the gap between the expectations of persons with disabilities and the activities of federal departments and agencies. *Challenge* narrowed its focus to attempt to make government departments and agencies more readily accountable for their employment practices with regard to disabled persons. But the report proposed measures which, when implemented, would affect only a very small percentage of Canadians with disabilities. Beyond its efforts to spur action by making departments accountable for meeting specific target dates, the report did not address the broader issues of systemic discrimination in employment nor the means of promoting greater economic integration and independence of disabled persons for which the advocacy groups had been calling.

Some government and parliamentary bodies have taken not only the letter but also the spirit of *Challenge* to heart and have undertaken considerable efforts to eradicate systemic discrimination within their jurisdictions. In this regard, we single out the efforts of the Speaker of the House of Commons who has established a Task Force on Disabled Persons which has updated the original Action Plan for the House of Commons and has made its own recommendations to promote the accountability of managers for making progress happen. We also commend the Speaker for the personal interest he has shown by sponsoring activities for National Access Awareness week on Parliament Hill.

By 1990, we find, as well, that government departments and agencies have been called upon several times over the years to prepare responses to committee reports as well as to formulate action plans with regard to their activities, including employment, that concerned persons with disabilities. Modifications in certain programs and practices were made to satisfy the recommendations of Parliamentary Committees, and Royal Commissions such as the Abella Commission on Equality in Employment as well as the requirements of Treasury Board. Although they have not tackled the problems of systemic discrimination, many public servants, and some ministers, felt that they had achieved considerable progress in meeting the demands of persons with disabilities. In addition, the