

THE DISABLED AND THE HANDICAPPED

PLIGHT OF YOUNGER DISABLED ADULTS

Mr. Lee Clark (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, while most Canadians fortunately enjoy good health, I would like to remind those who are active in all levels of Government of the particular needs of the younger, chronically disabled adults between the ages of 18 and 59.

● (1410)

There are 249 young disabled adults who currently reside in personal-care homes in Manitoba, many of whom are afflicted with multiple sclerosis. Moreover, the average age of the younger disabled resident is 50 years, substantially and significantly lower than the 83 years, substantially and significantly lower than the 83 years which is the average age of all residents of personal-care homes.

These younger persons have specific accommodation needs which are not always met by many of the personal-care home programs. Younger disabled adults often require more than the elderly in terms of rehabilitation, therapy, recreational and job opportunities. They desire and need more community contact and involvement as loneliness is more apparent due to the fact that they are often separated from young families and spouses. In addition, and of great importance, their intellectual needs are often not met.

The development of programs and the provision of separate accommodation for younger chronically disabled persons are necessary because present living conditions sadly, and even tragically, lead to a regression in their state of health.

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CULTURAL AFFAIRS

ESTABLISHMENT OF CULTURAL CENTRE IN CHILLIWACK, B.C.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, I think every Member of Parliament from a rural riding must from time to time wish that his or her constituents had the same opportunities to receive as varied and enriched a cultural life as residents in urban constituencies. It is a fact of life that urban areas with their greater population bases receive a larger portion of funds from government. I do not think anyone would argue that such a practice should change, but I think that everyone must recognize that cultural matters mean as much to rural constituents as they do to urban ones.

Recently the Minister of Communications (Mr. Masse) approved a cultural grant to one of the communities in Fraser Valley East. This grant, along with funds raised locally, when coupled with money from the province, made a Cultural Centre for Chilliwack a reality. The Chilliwack Community Arts Council which worked long and hard thanks the Minister and his Department for his co-operation and for his appreciation and support of cultural matters.

S.O. 22

AIRPORTS

EXPANSION PLANS FOR VERNON, B.C.

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, I have a request from the residents of Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, showing concern about the Vernon airport expansion plans. Apparently the Airport Commission came up with a contract that will produce a licensed facility of only 2,000 feet. This is way below the 4,000 feet originally recommended in the Zolton Report, and below the 3,115 feet considered minimum for municipal use.

It is felt that NORD directors and their appointed airport commission have over-stepped their own mandate, ignoring the first of their prime objectives which is to locate and obtain a suitable airport site to serve the needs of the entire regional district, notwithstanding future expansion and commercial usability being major considerations in this selection.

I would like to know why the Government is putting money into a project that will be totally unsuitable to the needs of the entire Regional District of Vernon.

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WELFARE

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL AGREEMENT TO ASSIST WELFARE RECIPIENTS ENTERING EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Bill Attewell (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) announced last week that he and the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) have reached a historic agreement with the provinces and territories that will break the deadly cycle of welfare dependency. Disincentives have been replaced by hope, encouragement and, most important, opportunities.

Up until now there have been precious few incentives for welfare recipients to work. Any money a person earned while on welfare was deducted from his or her Government cheque. Hence, it was easier to stay totally dependent on welfare than to risk getting a job. This is a cruel and soul-destroying development.

We know that most people have pride in themselves and would like to work. To their great credit, people prefer self-sufficiency to hand-outs. Under this new program, by enrolling in federal job-training or work programs, people on welfare will be able to earn up to \$158 per week without any reduction in benefits. The new Job Strategies Program assures people on social assistance of a fair share of the opportunities at entry and development levels. This is just as true for youth, for women, and for the disadvantaged. I commend the Ministers for their brilliant success in such an important area of concern to all Canadians.