

*Social Security*

hat survey as to how many incurable or physically incapacitated people there are in Canada be completed as soon as possible, and that a report be made by the minister so that we may be able to discuss the matter when his estimates are before us. We would then know what it would cost, and we would be able to see if an appropriation could be made so that what is envisaged in this resolution could be put into effect.

I support the resolution.

**Mr. J. H. Ferguson (Simcoe North):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words in support of this resolution. I am sure that every hon. member of the House of Commons, if he stops to think, can recall many blind people in his constituency who are receiving a pension. He can recall many people over seventy years of age who are now receiving pensions. He will know that those receiving old age pensions are in many cases able to do a good deal for themselves. He must realize that those of his fellow citizens who are incapacitated through blindness and who are receiving pensions are quite often able to do something for themselves. If he stops to think further he will be able to recall many men, women and children who, because of their being incapacitated, are utterly unable to earn a livelihood for themselves. This creates a greater burden for the family than does one who has lost his sight or who is over the age of seventy years.

This matter has been talked about for years in the house; surely it does not need any further consideration or investigation. The taxpayers of Canada, I am sure, would be more than willing to grant aid to these people. They should be looked after.

**Mr. John Hunter (Parkdale):** Mr. Speaker, I have a special interest in this matter because in the federal riding of Parkdale is the Queen Elizabeth hospital for incurables, while in the provincial riding of Parkdale is located the Mercy hospital which performs the same task. In these hospitals are large numbers of people who have been pronounced incurable. While many of them improve, it is very rarely that they recover completely. When they reach the age of seventy years they are able to obtain a pension which permits them to buy many small things to make life more comfortable. Those who are below the age of seventy years and without private means find themselves unable to purchase such things as cigarettes, chocolate bars and so on, and yet they may be in such an institution for as long as ten, twenty, thirty or forty years. These people should be given support.

[Mr. Low.]

Some people are discharged and are able to take up again the burden of life, but they are rarely so completely cured that employment is readily obtainable. Usually their history is against them. They may have suffered from arthritis or some other complaint and thus not be able to do work that can be done by other healthy people. As a result employment is difficult to obtain. At most, all they are able to get is specialized or limited employment.

I remember the by-election of 1946 in which I ran when the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann) came down to help me. As he was a medical man I thought the logical place for him to accompany me would be to the Queen Elizabeth hospital. We went there and we saw many sad sights. Such sights are depressing to anyone who is unaccustomed to seeing them. I must say that many of the patients display a courage under most adverse conditions which must be seen to be believed. However, when we were about half way through our trip I could detect signs of paleness in the minister and he declared that he had business elsewhere and excused himself. I did not blame him in the least, because such sights really break your heart.

I cannot urge too strongly that hon. members support this resolution. Personally I feel that this measure is long overdue. There should be no objection to supporting the resolution in its present form, because it merely asks that the government consider the advisability of taking such action.

**Mr. J. L. MacDougall (Vancouver-Burrard):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to support the resolution moved by the hon. member for Terrebonne (Mr. Bertrand). The hon. member who has just spoken (Mr. Hunter) stated that there are two institutions in his riding which take care of people afflicted in this way, and in which they are looked after, so far as it is humanly possible to do so, within the capacity of their families, the municipality or the institution itself.

In Vancouver-Burrard there is one of the larger hospitals in Canada. Before I represented that riding in this house I knew something of what was going on within the walls of that huge institution. I think today more than ever before we have a greater consciousness of being our brother's keeper. I need not reiterate that, because I know all hon. members have found that a certain stigma has been attached to the individual or to his family by virtue of there being an incurable within the family circle.

In the good old days our pride in looking after our own immediate family was a great