

*Social Security*

I was looking at some of these people who have been there for years and years, who did not qualify in any way by age, but there was no place for them. Young men came in there crippled, but bright mentally. If something had been done for them at the time they contracted whatever disease was causing their affliction they would not be in an institution of that kind, but would have been able to earn their livelihood.

Another thing that impressed me very much last year at the time we had our short session is this. I received three letters from people suffering from multiple sclerosis. They had gone as far as they possibly could. Naturally they sought to be cured. They had spent all their money trying to be cured, and the three of them had arrived at that stage when they wondered what was going to happen. They had no homes, or there were no facilities in the homes, if they had any, for their care. Certainly there was no one in particular to care for them. The difficulty was to get them into some institution.

You find these people in all ages of life. As has been suggested this afternoon, there are in the old age group people over seventy much better able to care for themselves, to work and to earn a living, than many of these people. That is something that I think hon. members should not simply pass by. Many hon. members have said that this afternoon. We should go a little further than we have ever gone before.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare has brought out something when he says that he is making a survey to find out the number of people who will require treatment under this resolution. But I think we can progress somewhere a little further along the road, without waiting for the complete results of the survey. Surely we can take some of these people, such as we saw last spring, into a welfare group as a beginning.

Therefore today I congratulate the hon. member for Terrebonne on being sufficiently aggressive to have kept this going since 1946. I think it is a good resolution. It is a resolution which every hon. member should support. Let us make a beginning by taking in some of these people even without the complete results of the survey, although the results of any survey are important. What I am trying to say is, let us try to get this group of apparent cripples, who are absolutely incurable, for whom there is no place, into a welfare group at the beginning. Let that be a start.

It is very easy of course to talk on a resolution like this. But I think that group

[Mr. Blair.]

should be taken first. The other group mentioned, namely, those suffering from an incurable disease, will require sufficient careful thought before we can take them all into the welfare group. It is not going to be so easy always to define the man or woman as being incurable, or to define them as being permanently unemployable. Therefore I think this survey should show the number of people permanently unemployable for whom there is no hope whatever, the number of people who can be rehabilitated in any sense to make a living, and the number of mental cases. I would imagine that there is very little hope for many people who are in that class.

Hon. members are aware that hospitals, especially mental hospitals, are jammed to the doors. We should take recognition of the lower-grade types, the types just below par mentally but who are not sufficiently mentally ill to become an inmate of an institution, but are handicapped in earning their own living.

There is another group of people who are mentally alert, but are subject to chronic diseases such as epilepsy. Some of these people are difficult to rehabilitate. It is dangerous to have them around machinery. They must be in some place where there is some supervision. Much can be done to help these people. Any doctor who has been in practice for some time knows very well that if he can get some of these people under treatment he can do a great deal for them.

I support this resolution in its entirety today, realizing the difficulty there would be in drawing the line between certain of these cases; but I suggest we make a beginning to deal with this question and not just pass it by as a resolution that we think should deserve some support and then forget about it for a year. We should make a beginning by taking into the welfare group as soon as the minister's survey is completed these people, the type we saw here last spring, where their permanent disability is apparent, and let us move on from there, carefully watching the type of legislation that we bring in. Let us move to the place where all people who are handicapped in earning a livelihood, who are incurable, will become a public charge, and will go into the welfare group, or receive sufficient money to keep them out of institutions, because one might use the term "cluttering up". They sometimes find their way into the public wards of institutions and take up beds that could be used for acute cases. There is not one of us who does not want to do something for these people.

The need is great; it is apparent to everyone. Let us make a start on it today; and as soon as the survey is completed, as soon as