

People in those universities who are open and aware know something about the "Obstacles" report. They know about the commitments of the federal government. They know about the *Charter of Rights*, but it is still "if it is convenient, we will do something"; and when they do something, they make so much of it, it is a form of benevolence. That does have to change. (Issue 26, p. 11)

Educational programs funded under the *Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons Act*, which provides for federal coverage of 50% of the costs of a range of provincial "vocational rehabilitation services" designed to help people with disabilities pursue employment, came in for specific criticism. We were advised that the vocational emphasis of program can channel students into areas of study which do not match their interests, thus increasing the likelihood of failure; that funding for graduate studies (a virtual prerequisite for employment in some areas) is not available; that assistance levels and regional variations in the provision of services remains a problem; and that people with some varieties of disability, such as those with learning disabilities or hearing-impaired are markedly less well-served than others.

A critically important point was made during our hearings by a witness representing the Canadian Association of the Deaf. Education is much more than a means of getting a job. Without it, individuals may not clearly understand their rights and entitlements under existing law, or the political and bureaucratic processes which define, implement and change this framework. Without an understanding of these areas, and the skills required to use these mechanisms, disabled persons are excluded from the primary processes through which integration can be achieved.

### 3. Support Services

The impacts of such ancillary services and facilities as transportation and housing on the employment of disabled persons has not, to our knowledge, been systematically studied. Our witnesses have indicated to us, however, that the availability of accessible transportation or suitably-located and affordable housing, can often make a critical difference to employment prospects and living standards.

The relationships, furthermore, run in both directions. One of our witnesses suggested to us that a central reason for the lethargic rate of change in the area of accessible transportation, for example, is the assumption on the part of planners that people with disabilities "have nowhere to go," i.e. do not need public transportation to get to jobs. Equally, as long as persons with disabilities remain for the most part poor, they will be unable to obtain suitably-located housing or to afford modifications which may be required to enable them to cope with the combined demands of home life and full-time participation in the workplace.

We have noted, in an earlier section, that 1988 amendments to the *National Transportation Act* mandated the National Transportation Agency to develop regulations to