

*Disability Allowance*

ed. He is 56 years old, and he has worked with his hands all his life. He can no longer work now; he cannot get a job because of that disability. He was asking me what I can do for him. His total income amounts to \$278 a month and he cannot live on it, he told me. I hope we have something coming along to assist him, but this is the problem.

Prior to that person coming to my office there was another man who came who has epilepsy. Let us look at industry's side of it. What happens to a man who comes in to apply for a job? Most industries today require him to take a medical examination before he joins their insurance plan or performs a creation job. The man tells them he has epilepsy but that it is controlled, he has been on medication for X number of years. "That does not matter", they tell him. Let me tell you that when people are being considered for a job, the man or woman with epilepsy is shuffled out and never told why. They apply for a job and then they are shuffled out because of their disability. I cannot blame the employer because if it is a job running delicate machinery, where the safety of others may be involved, perhaps the employer has a case to make. But the fact is that these people who are disabled have special problems which the rest of us do not have to face.

When I was a young boy, unfortunately I contracted polio and my left side was paralysed. I wore braces and crutches for many years and I missed much of my schooling, so I know first-hand what it is to be disabled, and I know what it is like to come back from it. So I speak with a little bit of authority.

I know the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) is very concerned with this area and I know he supports our setting up a select committee to look into the matter of the handicapped. I commend my colleague for bringing this matter forward because one of the problems with which we will deal is that a handicapped person is defined under the Income Tax Act. The income tax officials, God bless them, have to collect their pound of flesh from all of us, but they define a person who is handicapped, and they lay down certain specifications for him. We must look at that because a person who had epilepsy a little while ago and whose disease is now controlled will perhaps not come under the definition of handicapped, but the fact is he is handicapped because he still has a great deal of difficulty in getting employment, and those who live with him have difficulties as well.

I know there are others who want to contribute to this debate. I commend my colleague for the third time for bringing this matter forward. I know we are going to deal with it in the select committee and, judging from the expressions from all sides of the House, I think it will be a subject on which we will be able to proceed with some dispatch, thus bringing some measure of relief to these people in fairly short order.

**Mr. David Kilgour (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, I will only take about 60 seconds of the time of the House to urge all hon. members to vote in favour of the motion. Also, I wish to identify myself with the remarks made by the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale). I do not know how many members here know what a friend of mine who is blind told me, namely, that

[Mr. Kempling.]

a blind person has no benefits coming to him at present. He cannot even claim for transportation as a blind person. So I would like to urge every member here to vote in favour of the motion.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, if the House is disposed to pass this motion, I have no objection to this being done, but I think we should give the matter a little further thought. I commend the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta (Mr. Friesen) for bringing the subject before us this afternoon. He is quite right in quoting me as having said that I was sympathetic to what he is trying to do. But as my colleague, the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mrs. Mitchell), has pointed out, it is another one of those proposals that does not begin to go far enough. That position has been underlined by the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) in his contribution. That makes me a little concerned lest our action in passing this resolution will say to the government, and will say to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Crosbie) in particular, when he is drawing up his budget, that if he does this the House will be happy.

I have learned that in this place you have to be happy about small things that are done, but this problem is much larger and much more demanding than is met in this resolution which simply provides certain income tax deductions for those who have enough income that they have to pay tax on it. If we are going to deal with the matter through the medium of the income tax, we should provide income tax credits. These should be credits like those provided under the child tax credit provisions where persons get even if they did not pay any income tax in the first place.

The only persons who will benefit from this resolution are people who themselves, or through their families, are paying income tax. That is a step, it is a beginning, but my fear is that if this motion receives the unanimous endorsement of the House and gets it easily in 40 or 45 minutes, the Minister of Finance will be able to say, "I can do that", and that will settle the issue. The hon. member for Brandon-Souris would never say that; he would never admit that this settled the issue. As I say, if we are to deal with it through the income tax method, it ought to be by income tax credits, but there are all those other things which ought to be done.

● (1740)

Frankly, I should like to see the House find the ingenuity to refer this resolution to the committee which is to be set up. I realize I am creating a procedural tangle for Your Honour. To refer a resolution at all is difficult, but to refer it to a committee which has not been set up is even more difficult. I commend my fellow Manitoban, the hon. member for Brandon-Souris, on the persistence with which he has kept at the campaign for a special committee. It appears that he will get it in this session. We will be happy to give support to the setting up of that committee.

I believe this business of what we do for handicapped persons should be looked at in its totality; not just income tax