

It is also well to remember that, of course, a substantial number of these are institutional cases in our mental hospitals, and in other forms of institutional care.

Mr. HALPENNY: I have heard of several blind persons who have closed up their little shops because they said, "Well, what's the use? If we make a little bit of money we don't get the blind persons' allowances, and we can't get all these other aids." It seems to me that we are destroying the incentive of these young blind people to go out and live normal lives. I have finished now.

The CHAIRMAN: Six members have indicated they would like to ask questions. Are there any further questions in respect of blind persons?

Mr. CARTER: With respect to this matter of blindness, I would support what has been said by Mr. Halpenny in connection with initiative. I have several such cases in my own riding.

But the question I would like to ask is this: does the act stipulate the degree of impairment a person must have to come under the act?

Dr. DAVIDSON: Of blindness?

Mr. CARTER: Yes.

Dr. DAVIDSON: Yes—oh, I am sorry, the act does not, but the regulations set it out.

Mr. CARTER: Can you say what that is, for the record?

Dr. DAVIDSON: Blindness—and I might say that this is in the previous evidence—but, briefly, blindness is defined as visual acuity after correction—of not more than 20/200, or a field of vision reduced to less than ten degrees in each eye.

Mr. PUGH: Mr. Chairman, I would like to support what was said by Mr. Halpenny, as well. Then, there is one thing further, that blind people should be in the category of getting all possible assistance. I feel that this procedure of setting an amount by making a means test is iniquitous. Would you have any figures which would indicate how much it costs the government to operate this means test?

Dr. DAVIDSON: I would merely refer you to the estimates of administrative costs so far as the federal government is concerned. I am speaking now of old age assistance, blind persons' allowances, and disabled persons' allowances, combined.

One unit of our department operates those three programs, so far as the federal supervision of provincial programs is concerned, and the administrative cost of those three programs is \$113,000.

Mr. PUGH: I am only trying to relate the figure to the one given by Mr. Halpenny as to the total cost, if there was no means test.

Dr. DAVIDSON: I think I can safely say that if the Blind Persons Act were amended in such a way as to abolish the means test, that would make almost no difference at all in the administrative costs that are carried by the federal government. That does not refer to administrative costs carried by the provincial governments, of course.

Mr. McDONALD (*Hamilton South*): In preparing the report, I was wondering if the department could prepare memoranda of what they think they should do with regard to these people, in connection with the matter of incentives, with respect to giving them opportunities of earning more money without being in jeopardy of losing their pensions, or being able to get it back right away, as in the case of an arthritic who might work only three or four months in the year.