

Routine Proceedings

problem. For this plan to be operational it is essential that the Vancouver Port Authority co-operate fully with the City of Vancouver.

In our opinion, the Vancouver Port Authority has been stonewalling the whole consultative process. Indeed, their latest proposal to you is merely another example of their unwillingness to act in good faith.

We are talking about an access to a public park controlled by a federal authority for disabled Canadians. They want to do this because there is an international congress and exposition for persons with disabilities to be held in that location in the spring of 1992. Among many of the dignitaries who will be at that congress, if we can refer to them in that way, will be the Prime Minister. What kind of message are these people sending to the disabled community?

• (1540)

I see it is indicated that my time is up, but I want to end with just one other brief policy area and that is with respect to the refunds under the GST that is proposed.

Many people will remember that the last time we made amendments to the Canada Pension Plan to improve pensions for people with disabilities, the federal Parliament authorized a substantial increase. By the time it got to the provincial level, provincial governments were grabbing the money. They were saying simply that this was a payment that had to be calculated when determining provincial benefits, whether it be welfare or disability pensions, and so they deducted an equivalent amount from the payments the province was paying to these people. It ended up a boondoggle to provincial governments, rather than going to help people who had disabilities.

There is a real fear the same thing will happen with the refunds under the GST if it passes. I asked the Minister of National Revenue a month or so ago what he was going to do about this. He said, and I quote:

—the hon. member will know that the federal government cannot control the actions and activities of the provincial government.

Well, that is true and we all know that, but he can certainly sit down and talk to provincial governments and say to them that we do not want them to do this. At the

very least, the Minister of National Revenue should be doing that. But he is unwilling to do even that.

I would ask every member of the House, not only to support this report in principle, but to sit down, read it, and lobby within our own caucuses to finally get the policy makers to do something in a concrete way about these very serious issues.

Mr. Terry Clifford (London—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I think there is a lot of merit in the motion of the hon. member for Beaches—Woodbine, but what I fail to understand is this. He made the motion asking for six recommendations for the government's consideration, I believe on November 7, and on November 8 he received a reply indicating a very positive response. I think that is only in keeping with the government's record.

I take as one example the co-operation with Rick Hansen and the Man in Motion Society to develop a school package for kindergarten to Grade 8, the Discover Together Program. Our government has done all kinds of things for the disabled people of Canada. I think they have come to know this and, in fact, a school is named after Rick Hansen in my riding of London—Middlesex.

Canadians can see the government is committed to those less fortunate and our record speaks for that. In light of that, when the member got those six positive responses, I wonder why he is taking time up today to debate this motion. He knows that we are in agreement for people who find themselves in this situation and, indeed, are doing everything we can to make Canada's society more fulfilling for all Canadians.

Mr. Young (Beaches—Woodbine): Well, if the hon. member had listened to what I said, he would know I said that I think political will existed. That is what I said.

I perhaps should have said at the beginning, and I mean this sincerely, that committee on disabled issues is probably the most non-partisan committee the House has ever seen. There was nothing partisan in me putting forward this motion. In fact, I do not think I used a partisan term or word in the course of my whole 20-minute discourse.

What I do say is that pointing a finger at this little item, or that little item, or another little item, is largely cosmetic. We want to see it become an integral part of government thinking—and I am not talking about just