

Supply—Health and Welfare

that has been incorporated in the act. I am sure that as time goes on the minister will change these things, but the point is this. Here we are in 1956 at this session of parliament which is about to close—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Van Horne:—with no indication from the government that any steps will be taken to bring about these desirable and needed changes. I feel the minister may wish to comment on this.

Mr. McIvor: I do not think there is one of us in this house who would not like to see old age pensions, family allowances, and blind pensions increased as well as the pensions to handicapped persons. I rise to ask the minister what taxes he would increase in order to raise those pensions? The sales tax hits everybody. I wonder how many in the house would stand for an increase in sales tax; that is the thing that bothers me. I know we would like to have more. I should like to have more for the veterans and for the civil service pensioners, but the Minister of Finance and the minister in charge of this department must have some way of raising the money. That is my question; what taxes would he suggest increasing?

Mr. Zaplitny: I desire to say a word or two in connection with the Disabled Persons Act. I know that is the next item—

Mr. Martin: I just want to say that my hon. friend is quite right, but several other members have already discussed this. I would suggest that we might consider all the remaining items together if that would be the wish of hon. members, with the idea of closing the discussion as quickly as we can.

Mr. Zaplitny: That suits me fine.

The Deputy Chairman: The remainder of the items of the department will be lumped for the purposes of discussion. They will have to be put individually.

Mr. Goode: But not so far as civil defence is concerned.

Mr. Green: Am I to understand that that includes item 281, civil defence?

The Deputy Chairman: No; the remaining items of the department. You notice that the items are marked, "A, department", except 281, which is marked, "B, civil defence".

Mr. Green: Then the items we are now considering are 278, 279 and 280?

The Deputy Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Zaplitny: Mr. Chairman, I have been waiting for quite some time to make some

comments on the administration of the Disabled Persons Act. The hon. member for Restigouche-Madawaska has already raised the question but I would point out that it is not particularly in the act itself that the real difficulty lies but, in my opinion, it is in the regulations drawn up under the act. While I would like to approach this question objectively, I find it very difficult to approach objectively a measure of this kind. In my opinion it is a tight-fisted, penurious, miserable, mean kind of act. I do not know of anything on our statute books that is quite so mean as the regulations drawn up under the authority of this act. In order that it may be well known just what the regulations are with respect to determining disability, I should read them into the record. Section 2 (2) of the regulations reads as follows:

For the purpose of the act and these regulations, a person shall be deemed to be totally and permanently disabled only when—

I ask hon. members to note the word "only". I continue:

(a) the person is suffering from a major physiological, anatomical or psychological impairment, verified by objective medical findings;

That, of course, must have been drawn up by a Rhodes scholar. I do not think anyone else would have used such words as these. The regulations continue:

(b) the impairment is likely to continue without substantial improvement during the lifetime of the person and is one to which the concept of cure cannot be applied; and

(c) as a result of such impairment, the person is severely limited in activities pertaining to self-care and normal living, such as being

(i) bedridden or chairfast,

(ii) unable to leave home without being accompanied by another person,

(iii) normally in need of care and supervision for one or more of such self-care activities as dressing, body hygiene or eating,

(iv) unable to perform such routine activities as climbing a short stairway or walking a limited distance on a level surface, or

(v) certified by a qualified physician to be under medical instructions to forbear from activities of the kind mentioned in subparagraph (iv).

Just to make sure, as if that were not enough, subsection 3 continues:

Notwithstanding subsection (2), a person shall be deemed not to be totally and permanently disabled where, in respect of that person, a favourable rehabilitation prognosis is obtained, or approved therapeutic measures are recommended, by the provincial authority, and the requisite rehabilitation services or therapeutic measures are available.

Well, now, applying that section—

Mr. Knowles: How can you be alive and meet that?

Mr. Zaplitny: That is what the subsection says. When conditions such as these obtain