

Put simply, the existing legislation makes it impossible to build and maintain homes for disabled persons within the stipulated cost limits for non-profit housing. Disabled persons need to be in the centre of cities and towns in order to have access to facilities. But the cost of serviced land in city cores forces housing for disabled persons to the outlying areas, which defeats much of the rationale for independent living.

The building cost ceiling for non-profit housing is often 15 per cent lower than that needed for equivalent family accommodation; yet, the real building costs of such units exceeds that for normal residential housing. Certain accounting procedures tend to confuse the issue of "special needs" housing, because they lump together senior citizens' housing with housing for disabled persons. However, the needs of disabled persons are quite different from those of senior citizens. There is, therefore, very little "independent living" housing available. In Canada today, there are only 400 bed/units, with support services, presently occupied by disabled persons.

Accessibility to buildings

- That the National Building Code be revised in consultation with disabled persons and their organizations to include comprehensive standards of accessibility for disabled persons including deaf or hearing-impaired persons and blind or visually-impaired persons.

Recommendations for changes to the National Building Code and Supplement No. 5 are currently made with the representation of traditional organizations — but without direct input from disabled consumers. The consultative process must be expanded to include disabled persons and their organizations.

This lack of first-hand experience results in standards which provide only a minimum level of access. Persons with special needs, such as those with hearing and visual disabilities, tend to be ignored in the code.

The public address and fire alarm systems in most buildings do not take into account the needs of people with hearing disabilities. At the same time, persons with a visual disability have great difficulty in using elevators in most buildings because there are no raised numbers to indicate which floor button to push, and no signal to indicate when



Disabled require recreation opportunities.

the elevator car has reached the desired floor.

Positive attitudes

- That the federal government direct the appropriate departments and agencies to undertake promotional campaigns in areas such as employment, transportation, access and housing in order to stimulate awareness and encourage positive attitudes.

Disabled people can make progress only when two sets of attitudes are changed — their own towards themselves, and the attitudes of non-disabled Canadians. Improved services to the disabled community depend upon a general awareness among the public that disabled persons can function independently within society.

For the most part, public attitudes towards disabled persons have bordered on charity. This "charity" has ensured that disabled persons receive treatment and care, but it has also reinforced barriers which prevent disabled persons from being seen as equal citizens.

"Equal treatment" is the key to all positive public attitudes towards the disabled. Non-disabled Canadians must be shown that disabled persons can function in a full spectrum of everyday activities related to employment, transportation, access to buildings and facilities, and to housing. Visible minorities and women have faced the same kind of unequal treatment. But attitudes are changing as individuals are shown to the public in a wide variety of "normal" activities and situations. The same must now be done for disabled persons.

Acid snow a threat

Fish spawning in many Ontario lakes could be endangered by acid accumulations in melting snow, say provincial environmentalists in a *Canadian Press* story.

Judy Mittmayer, assistant co-ordinator of Ontario's acid precipitation study, said the effect of melting acidic snow, called spring shock, is of high concern to environmentalists.

Spring shock can endanger any lake in the province, killing eggs of spawning fish, even in those lakes not susceptible to harm from acid rain during the summer months, she said.

Acid in the form of rain, snow, dust and mist builds up during the winter. The spring melt can swamp a lake's natural ability to neutralize acid.

One factor determining a lake's susceptibility to acid rain damage is its geology, said Mittmayer. In the Haliburton-Muskoka region, lack of limestone to act as a buffer for acid makes it highly sensitive to acid-rain damage.

Rules eased for oil industry

The federal government has announced measures to help companies meet Canadianization objectives for the petroleum industry.

The move will provide easier access to incentive grants aimed at encouraging oil supply development, as outlined in the National Energy Program.

Under a new phasing-in approach to the Petroleum Incentives Program (PIP), more companies will be immediately eligible for the maximum incentive payments for exploration and development, and they will be given more time to increase their Canadian ownership rate (COR). There will also be a new intermediate category of incentives to encourage other firms to make additional investments and to raise their Canadian ownership.

In addition, certain administrative rules will be eased in the measurement of the Canadian ownership rate, on which eligibility for incentive payments is based. The aim is to ensure that the process of demonstrating Canadian ownership does not interfere with the basic objectives of the National Energy Program.

Mr. Lalonde said the changes were made after consultation with the petroleum and investment industries.