

Mr. Epp (Provencher): This will be an annual event to be held for the first time in 1988. The federal Government, on behalf of Canadians, is pledging its support as a partner in developing and implementing this exciting initiative together with a National Access Awareness Week committee comprised of representatives of disabled persons organizations, labour, business, governments and rehabilitation agencies.

The experience Rick and others have gained confirms our belief that communities working together in partnership with all their members can achieve lasting change. The National Access Awareness Week builds upon that belief and creates an ongoing challenge for the future. I thank Members and all Canadians joining me in this tribute to a great Canadian.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. William Rompkey (Grand Falls—White Bay—Labrador): Mr. Speaker, this is a special day in Vancouver, a special day in Canada and, indeed, a special day in the world because Rick Hansen is a world conqueror. Rick Hansen conquered the world and made it smaller and more manageable. Rick Hansen conquered the hearts of Canadians and, indeed, the hearts of people all over the world. Finally, Rick Hansen conquered disability. Because of that, he has done more than any of us can ever do to advance the cause of the disabled.

● (1230)

However, we in this Chamber do have a responsibility. We have a responsibility to see that the dream does not die and that the momentum is not lost.

I welcome the Minister's remarks. I know the generosity of spirit out of which he speaks. I believe that the special week that he has put aside will be an important and significant first step in bringing to the attention of the Canadian people the special situation of disabled people and the necessity of dealing with that.

I also believe that we must do more. I know that the Government gave \$1 million to the special fund set up in connection with the Man in Motion tour, but I also know that the budget of the National Medical Research Council has been capped and tied to the private sector. I urge the Minister to take steps to change that and give to the agencies that are doing the research in this important area the necessary tools to do the job.

We know from experience in other areas that there are two requirements we must fulfil as parliamentarians and as a Government to help the disabled. They are money and legislation. I hope that we can put aside funds to aid disabled groups across the country to take affirmative action. I believe that we also need legislation with provisions that not only encourage but demand of the Government and the private sector that they put into practice the principle of affirmative action in hiring the disabled in the workplace. It is not enough to

Petitions

encourage hiring, to promote and monitor it. I believe we need strong legislation to back those objectives.

Permit me to add to the words of my leader earlier today when he said that Rick Hansen is a hero to physically challenged Canadians, young people, us all. We also welcomed him in my area of Canada, at the other end of the country. If I may, I would like to offer Rick Hansen a Newfoundland toast, the hope that the wind will always be in his sails. Rick Hansen, long may your big jib draw.

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, it is a great day for Canadians, particularly disabled Canadians, and it is an absolutely superlative day for Rick Hansen as he at long last arrives home after some 792 days and 40,000 kilometres. It is an incredible feat for any human being, one in which all Canadians will take immense pride.

Rick has said that he was inspired originally by the wonderful work done by Terry Fox, who Canadians will recall set out to bring hope to those seeking a cure for cancer. Rick Hansen has done what we thought at that time would never be duplicated. What Terry Fox did for cancer, in making us aware of the incessant need for us to do more in getting research into that terrible disease, so Rick has drawn the attention not only of Canadians but the world to the problems of those afflicted by spinal cord damage. He was an inspiration to those of us who met him when he was in Ottawa. Many Members of the House had the occasion to see the courage and, frankly, modesty of the man, and his seriousness of purpose. He is an inspiration with that immediate impact of very fine character.

[Translation]

He did raise funds, of course, and hopefully there will be some progress in research in the near future. However, most Canadian men and women will remember the accomplishment itself, as will people worldwide who followed Rick's global tour.

[English]

We say to him: "A great job, wonderfully done. You have made all of us proud to be members of this very fine nation".

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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PETITIONS

RIGHT TO LIFE OF UNBORN—PROTECTION OF THE CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Mr. Jim Caldwell (Essex—Kent): Mr. Speaker, I have the duty to present a petition on behalf of constituents in my riding from the area of Harrow, Kingsville and Amherstburg. They ask that Parliament support Motion M-37 to allow unborn babies to be protected by the Charter of Rights.