

tion. While provinces have total responsibility for matters of education, the committee believes the federal government can exercise leadership in pointing out the scope and seriousness of an inequity that exists in many parts of Canada.

Canadians no longer see the education of children as a privilege to be reserved only for those who can afford it. It is universally agreed that education is a basic right to which all Canadians are entitled, including disabled children. The provinces of Quebec and Saskatchewan have already enacted this fundamental right. Canadian citizens in every province deserve this same protection for their children.

Employment opportunities

• That the federal government require all departments, agencies and Crown corporations to expand or implement affirmative action employment programs to include:

- special orientation, recruiting, training and job advancement plans for disabled persons;
- a timetable for implementation;
- ongoing review and updating of the programs;
- regular reporting to an affirmative action compliance board charged with the initial approval of the programs; and
- annual public reports.

The rate of unemployment for employable disabled Canadians is extraordinarily, and unacceptably high. The precise figure is difficult to determine, but a former Minister of National Health and Welfare, Marc Lalonde, estimated this figure to be approximately 50 per cent. A recent publication of National Health and Welfare stated that the figure was 80 per cent. And COPOH, the Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped, suggests that it may range as high as 90 per cent. Whatever the exact figure, there is no doubt that the rate of unemployment for disabled persons is much higher than for the Canadian population as a whole.

The solutions to many other problems faced by disabled persons can only be achieved when more jobs are provided. The federal government must make this the highest priority of all policies and programs for disabled persons, and take whatever action is needed to begin removing the obstacles which prevent employment.

In Canada during the summer of 1980,



Securing jobs for the handicapped should be one of the highest priorities.

the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC) began to develop and implement an affirmative action program within the federal government. While the program is well organized and making progress, it has two major limitations:

- the program has been undertaken by only three federal departments: Employment and Immigration, the Secretary of State, and Treasury Board; and
- the program is directed towards the employment of only three specific groups: women, native persons, and individuals with a physical disability. Persons with any form of mental disability have been excluded.

The committee, based on testimony received in its hearings across Canada, now recommends that this program be expanded to include all departments, agencies and Crown corporations, and that the program be expanded to include persons with mental disabilities.

Communications needs

• That the federal government, direct the Minister of Communications, in consultation with disabled consumers and their organizations, to develop and publish a communications policy for physically disabled persons to ensure access to the same type of information and entertainment available to able-bodied persons. That the federal government, in consultation with disabled consumers and their organizations, convene a national conference on "Communications and the Physically Disabled" as an important step in the policy development process.

A national policy on the communications needs of physically disabled persons has not yet been established. As a result, current programs are developed on an *ad hoc* basis. Treatment is different for the various groups of disabled persons. Technical and methodological innovations, such as Telidon, go unannounced or are poorly explained in the communities which could benefit from them most. Technical aids and devices, such as captioning equipment, which could be produced in Canada, must currently be imported, or utilized elsewhere. Some communications needs are over-emphasized, others are completely ignored. With over one million physically disabled persons in the country, a national policy on their communications needs must be developed.

Housing for disabled

• That the federal government amend the National Housing Act to enable groups to develop more non-profit, co-operative and group homes for physically and mentally disabled persons — including clusters of units in apartment buildings.

A decade of experience in the United States and Europe indicates that independent living for disabled persons, when possible, is more beneficial and less expensive than institutional care. Independent living could increase significantly in Canada if it were not for serious obstacles presented by the National Housing Act. Its regulations put disabled persons into a financial squeeze which makes it virtually impossible to obtain non-profit co-operative and group homes.