

*Act* presently requires immigration officials to refuse entry to those with disabilities who apply for landed immigrant status. People who are deaf or hearing-impaired have long advocated a requirement for increased captioning. This might be supplemented by another requirement that all televisions contain a micro-chip which permits decoding of closed captions at a small expense. Changes to the federal building code could serve as a model for the other levels of government and housing could be made more accessible by introducing a compliance mechanism in Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's contracts.

What we would like to see is a comprehensive assessment of the legislative and regulatory options and a comprehensive commitment to carry out reforms which includes a timetable for implementation. Where required, this timetable should include delays, that are known in advance, to allow those who must make modifications to undertake these changes.

Given that disabled persons can point to a growing list of unfulfilled undertakings, we feel that a mechanism to assure progress in the federal government must be established. This would, among other things, provide a reassurance that the legitimate concerns of disabled persons would be heard and dealt with expeditiously. Again, we have formulated a list of alternatives.

Both the Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA) and the Treasury Board Advisory Committee on Employment (ACE Committee) urged the establishment of a Prime Minister's Council on Disabled Persons. Although CPA and the ACE Committee called this an "advisory" council, when we analyze their proposals, we realize that they want a body with a stronger mandate than that associated with existing advisory bodies within the government. Under normal circumstances, an advisory council might be useful but we share the view of the majority of our witnesses that today's circumstances warrant a mechanism with stronger enforcement powers than those associated with providing "advice" and making recommendations. The history of the recommendations of parliamentary committees concerned with disability have shown us that what is needed now is more muscle at the centre of government. An advisory council with part-time members and a mandate to inquire — but not to enforce — would likely only increase the frustration of disabled persons across the country. Brian Bertelson is the senior member of the ACE Committee which directly advises the President of the Treasury Board and is the most centrally-located advisory committee of disabled persons in the federal government. Yet, he told us that his greatest disappointment lay in the hedging of the departments in providing information to the ACE Committee.

We like the idea of an independent agency, perhaps modeled on the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, that audits policy implementation and reports on progress to Parliament through this Standing Committee. In part, this is because we find it attractive to split the policy-making side of disabled persons issues from the grant-giving