

*Routine Proceedings*

In its first recommendation, the committee urges the government to make economic integration a priority. There seems to be little point in discussing support services until action is taken on economic integration. The government must recognize that people with disabilities can be as productive as those of us without physical limitations.

Given the ever shrinking labour pool to draw from, employers would be well served to start drawing from this community, and this takes government encouragement.

As I have already indicated, this issue crosses many ministerial borders and in fact is affected by almost every act of this Parliament.

In the committee's second and third recommendations we suggest that all existing acts be reviewed in order to facilitate the 3.3 million Canadians with disabilities. We further recommend that all future legislation and regulatory instruments be drafted with these Canadians in mind.

Employment equity provides an opportunity for employers to see just how productive persons with physical limitations can be. By setting the example through the federal Public Service, it is hoped that private industry will follow suit. We must be careful in this area, however, as recently we have seen federally regulated employers double and even triple counting to meet target numbers.

In the committee's fourth recommendation we urge that an internal audit be conducted to determine exactly how effective this program has been.

Not only does the issue of the disabled and their economic integration cross ministerial borders and responsibilities, but it encompasses federal and provincial jurisdictions as well. For this reason the committee recommends that the issue be placed on the agenda of the next First Ministers' Conference to establish what kind of co-operative efforts and programs may be entered into.

As important as the recommendations I have already covered are, the most important and most fundamental is that of funding for research.

How can we set employment equity targets or tailor specific government initiatives and programs if we do not know what the disabled community needs or wants. This

data is crucial to laying the foundation for effective economic integration.

In 1986 the government conducted a post census survey of the disabled. In this study Statistics Canada conducted interviews with over 112,000 Canadians with disabilities. This research generated the data that parliamentarians, departments, and national consumer groups co-operatively work with today.

• (1610)

In February I asked the minister responsible for Statistics Canada if such a study would be conducted after the 1991 census, and at that time he offered no satisfactory answer.

In early October I again asked the minister, who responded that the government still did not have an answer. Several days later I wrote to the minister and was informed that a post census survey would be conducted after the 1991 general census.

It is difficult to believe that so much consideration had to be given to a survey so fundamental to the employment picture across Canada.

All the individuals from the disabled community to whom I have spoken, as well as the national consumer groups, were very pleased to learn that the government intends to act on this survey; that is, until we learned the details. We understand that the budget for the 1991 study will be only 40 per cent of the 1986 budget.

If this government intends to make this issue a priority one would think that this study, which will provide the information necessary for the next 10 years to design government programs effectively, should be more comprehensive than the one conducted four years ago.

The time for talk is over. As the title of the report indicates, we need action, concrete action. Token initiatives such as Action Awareness Week will no longer suffice. Even the corporations, once great advocates and contributors, realize this point.

Recently McDonald's, IBM, and Esso have discontinued their funding for Action Awareness Week, indicating that research, not television and radio commercials, better serves Canadians who are physically challenged.

I am glad that we are having this debate now rather than last June, when the report was tabled. Now that the