

Social Security

to the Minister of Finance can find between \$60 million and \$70 million somewhere to take care of these unfortunate people. I think I have said practically all I wish to say at the present time. In view of the fact that so many have already voiced their opinions that such help should be forthcoming at the earliest opportunity, I wish to urge this matter upon the minister and his parliamentary assistant. Knowing their ability, I am sure that help will be forthcoming for many of these unfortunate people in the very near future.

Mr. Raymond Bruneau (Prescott): Mr. Speaker, I shall not be more than five minutes so that there will be an opportunity to call a vote. I will support to my utmost the resolution now before the house, namely, that the government should during the present session take into consideration the advisability of including in their social security program a system of allowances to every person without any sufficient income or means of support, who, by reason of an injury, accident, congenital infirmity or incurable disease, is at a disadvantage in seeking or obtaining employment, or incapable of providing for his subsistence, and whose age prevents him from benefiting by the social security legislation now in force. Many such sad cases have been brought to my attention, where for years people have been left helpless and forced to rely upon their own resources, which for the most part were nil. They were human beings like ourselves, left to their miseries, but unlike ourselves incapable of providing their own subsistence and already too handicapped to do so. They had no silver lining to look forward to, and were left to mourn their hopeless existence.

A person so physically handicapped finds it impossible to even seek employment, and if he does he is often brutally informed that he is not suitable for any job. I know of people so disabled that they find it almost impossible to walk, or to seek employment for which already they are sadly handicapped. There are also those whose age prevents them from benefiting by the social security legislation now in force, because they have not reached the age of seventy which would permit them to come under the Old Age Pensions Act but already are too old to continue their employment. Invalids without income or means of support, whose disability puts them at a disadvantage in seeking or obtaining employment, are incapable of providing for themselves and almost inevitably are left to get along on a meagre fifteen dollars a month or so from their municipal government, when they are lucky enough to receive such a ridiculous allotment

as a means of subsistence. It is most embarrassing to a member of parliament to have to interview such sad cases and be obliged to inform them that at present there is no legislation enabling us to help them in any way, but that a resolution to this effect is under study in the Commons. Then we have to inform them it is our sincere hope that a bill will be enacted which will enable us to be of assistance to them. As for our old people, as I have stated already in the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne, let us make it possible for those who have attained the twilight of life to have a little more happiness. In preparing the coming budget let us not forget the helpless, the handicapped and the aged, and let us do our utmost to see that those less fortunate people share in the social security program through a system of allowances. In doing so let us remember the beautiful words of Shakespeare's immortal "Merchant of Venice":

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice bless'd;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

Mr. Paul E. Cote (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I submit respectfully that this debate should not be allowed to come to an end before a case has been made for what has been achieved already under this or other governments in the way of relieving the handicapped, the disabled, or those otherwise prevented from competing in the labour market. In my opinion the way the resolution is drafted—in good faith, I am quite sure, knowing the mover as I do—it casts a certain amount of blame on the government by requesting immediate consideration, or consideration during the present session, of the advisability of including, and so forth.

As parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour it is my duty to bring to the attention of this house what has been done by the department in the relief of the disabled and the rehabilitation of those handicapped, and placing them on the labour market in a position to get and hold jobs. I mention more particularly the special section under the national employment service called the special placement section. At the present time this service has officers stationed in 32 of the 186 offices of the unemployment insurance commission and the national employment service across the country. These officers have found jobs for 81,731 handicapped persons in the past six years. In 1947, the peak year, placements totalled 14,844, and just last year 10,970 handicapped people were successfully placed in employment. When