

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION



The Paraplegia News is the official publication of the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the National Paraplegia Foundation. It is published in the interest of, and for the benefit of paraplegics all over the world. Nothing which does not concern paraplegia, paraplegics or wheelchair living will be printed.

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REHABILITATION PAYS!

One of the earliest bills to provide aid for the handicapped was the Fess-Kenyon Bill. It became a public law on June 2, 1920 and defined rehabilitation as "the rendering of a disabled person fit to engage in remunerative employment."

When the reader learns that the state and federal governments plan to spend an average of \$100 million per year for the next four years on rehabilitation, what are his thoughts? Does he say to himself, "Well, that's all right; it's better than givin' it to some ungrateful foreigner." Or, "Think of all the people it's going to make happy." Or this: "Taxes, taxes, taxes; when is it ever going to end?"

All three commentators on the passing-of-the-buck will be glad to learn that not only are their tax dollars being spent wisely but that a return will be made on their investment.

The first apparent result of the rehabilitative process is the change in the attitude of the disabled recipient. No longer is he a morose, disgruntled charity case. He is a prideful provider for his family.

Secondly, the community and the state are gainers in a negative way. If a handicapped person and his family receive \$1500 a year in welfare payments,

this money need not be spent the following year. There will be new cases, of course. But without rehab, the list would never be cut down.

Thirdly, the money paid back to the government through a wage-earner's taxes, in a few years, will equal the amount spent on his rehabilitation.

By way of illustration:

The government pamphlet, "Doing Something for the Disabled"* says, "One of the smaller states, for example, reported 69 disabled welfare recipients rehabilitated during the year (1952). Involved in the fortunes of these 69 were 120 members of their families—wives, children, parents and other relatives—all of whom had been dependent upon public welfare for the bare necessities of existence. Altogether they had been drawing welfare payments at the rate of \$45,760 a year.

"It cost less than \$14,000 for their rehabilitation. With this single investment in 69 human beings, the annual recurring public expense of more than \$45,000 was at an end. They were earning their own way again—to the tune of over \$133,000 a year in wages."

The insurance companies have learned, long ago, that *rehabilitation pays*. Dr. Donald Munro states in his article, "The Rehabilitation of Patients Totally Paralyzed from the Waist"^a. "... 26 paraplegics were rehabilitated by the Liberty Mutual Insurance Company... at a cost to the company of \$223,089." He quotes Mr. Hanson of this company, "We estimate our savings in payment for medical care and disability benefits that will not have to be paid at \$1,446,000. Deducting the cost of rehabilitation, that's a net saving of \$1,222,911 or a return of 600% on our investment."

Is it any wonder that workshops for the disabled and rehabilitation centers are springing up all over the country! Industries are constantly re-proving that newly popular adage, "ABILITY, NOT DISABILITY COUNTS!"

*A public affairs pamphlet, No. 197 by Mary E. Switzer (National Director of Vocational Rehabilitation) and Dr. Howard A. Rusk (Director of the Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, et al), price 25c. ^aConcluded in the April PARAPLEGIA NEWS.

"THE LITTLE MAN IN THE FLYING CHAIR"

The little man in the flying wheelchair, who adorns our front page regularly, (center column, bottom) has become, through the irresistible force of his personality, a national emblem for the PVA. As Editor John Price has

commented, "the little guy sure captures your imagination."

We thought you might be interested in the origin and story of the pipe-smoking lad. He was born in the latter part of 1946 at the Birmingham V.A. hospital in Van Nuys, Cal., the first home of the California PVA.

Wilbur Hyde, who was the chapter's secretary at the time, asked an artist friend of his to have a suitable stationery emblem drawn. The artist complied with two or three different sketches. From the sketches submitted, the high-flying man was selected by the Calif. PVA's board of directors. It is not known and we haven't been able to find out because of lost contacts, whether Wilbur's friend made the sketch (Wilbur thinks probably not) or one of his employees in his studio.

California immediately put the emblem on its stationery and lower left corner of envelopes and, later, on the chapter's automobile decal. Through the years, we have received many wonderful comments about the devil-may-care, get-the-hell-out-of-my-way fellow.

Some people may feel that the little man's attitude is too flippant to be a national emblem for paraplegics. We cordially do not agree. Leave us not become too pompous about this business of paraplegia. We think there is a good deal of worthwhile philosophy to be observed in the little man if one will take the time to study him carefully.

First, he is happy. He is not sitting around crying the blues about being in a wheelchair. Second, he's got places to go, and he's in a hurry. You better get out of this guy's way or he'll run right over you. Third, and most important, you don't feel sorry for him. On the contrary, you can't help admiring his spunk.

When you first see him, he puts a smile on your face. Maybe he isn't serious enough to be a national paraplegic symbol, but we think so.

He's symbolic of happiness, energy, drive, admiration and guts—and those are respected qualities in the paraplegic way of life...

... The Foundation Editor

AUTO BILL EXTENSION PASSED BY HOUSE

H. R. 5089 which extends the time in which paraplegics (and quads) can make application for a free auto (or other vehicle) grant was passed by the House of Representatives. The bill was passed on the consent calendar and now goes to the Senate.

Photos in Dr. Abramson's Mechanical Hand article, June issue, by Medical Illustration Dept., Bronx VA Hospital.