

## Disabled average only \$16,000 annual earnings

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dicapped (COPO). But Ross Robinson, of the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres, is skeptical.

"I would think those industries create a lot of disabled workers. They are not very good at bringing people back into the workforce," said Robinson. His association runs 10 resource centres across Canada helping the disabled choose lifestyles through access to government programs and other agencies.

The high level of disabled in the agricultural sector also may be attributed to work-related injuries. Farmers injured on the job may find it easier to return because, being self-employed, they face fewer barriers.

Robinson said he was surprised at the findings. But he agrees more disabled Canadians are finding jobs.

"There are more technical aids out there and more of an understanding about how to integrate someone with a disability into the workforce."

But "severe disincentives" remain for those who want to work, Robinson says. Disabled workers still lose government benefits when their income rises and there are frustrating delays in the provision of special equipment.

D'Aubin is not so sure. She said employment equity data shows a decline in disabled workers among federally regulated industries, such as broadcasting and the airlines, last year.

### REGIONS DIFFER

The survey also found major regional differences in the employment levels of the disabled. Newfoundland and Quebec had the lowest employment ratio in 1986 at 18 and 20 per cent, respectively.

The highest levels were in Western Canada, with Manitoba at 44 per cent, Saskatchewan at 43 per cent and Alberta at 40. The Northwest Territories' ratio was 43 per cent.

Part of the reason for that may be because support services for the disabled in provinces such as Manitoba are available on the job, said COPO's D'Aubin.

"In some areas, it's very hard to work because you can't get attendant care to come to you on the job. In Manitoba, many people have government-provided support services on the job, whereas in Ontario, a lot of people's support services are delivered where they live and the attendant care can't go outside that," she said.

Booming Ontario's employment ratio of the disabled was well behind at 31 per cent, B.C.'s was 34 per cent, Nova Scotia's 30 per cent, followed by Prince Edward Island at 29 per cent and New Brunswick at 26 per cent.

Cohen said employment of the disabled parallels general economic conditions. A shortage of jobs in Atlantic Canada means fewer opportunities for everyone there, including the disabled.

The survey also found lower education levels among the disabled: 61 per cent had not completed high school, compared to about 38 per cent of non-disabled Canadians. Only four per cent had university degrees, compared to 11 per cent of non-disabled.

## Twinkling lights in Ashgrove

By DORIS McNABB  
Ashgrove W.I.

Amid twinkling lights, Christmas garlands and a beautifully decorated tree, Marion Hunter welcomed 22 members and five guests to her home on Dec. 12 for the Christmas meeting of the Ashgrove Women's Institute.

The festivities began with a pot luck lunch, organized and served by Mildred Blackett, Annabel Bird and Wilma Ella. A delicious assortment of appetizing first and second course dishes provided something to suit everyone's taste.

Mary Jane Wingfield and Isabel Carney planned an interesting program which kept everyone busy all afternoon. A contest to identify characters associated with Christmas was won by Muriel Nurse for correctly guessing she was Rudolph. With Isabel Carney at the organ and Mary Jane leading the singing, a sing-song of familiar carols was enjoyed.

President Pat Stark presided for a short business meeting opening with a story on poinsettias telling how to make them bloom for a second year.

Six members signed up to attend the workshops at Melville United Church on March 3.

Verna Bird agreed to buy the Christmas gifts for our seniors and shut-ins and several members offered to help deliver them.

To let them know we missed them, cards were signed by everyone present, to be sent to four members who haven't been well and were not able to attend the meeting namely Elizabeth Wilson, Ruth Thompson, Marjorie Wilson and Mary Bird.

Mary Jane Wingfield reported on the recent tour of Club 2000 attended by about a dozen of our members and friends. Any members interested in going in

January should call Mary Jane.

The roll call "Read a Christmas verse from the oldest card you have saved" was answered with an assortment of cards, one from the 1890s, being read and displayed.

For the gift exchange all gifts were to be wrapped in recycled material. This showed the ingenuity of some people and proved that recycled materials can be just as attractive as new.

The next meeting will be held on Jan. 16 at 1:30 p.m. at Hillcrest Church. Everyone is welcome to attend.



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