

Welcome urged for working handicapped

October 3 and 4 were two very special days at the AES Downsview headquarters. They marked the first time that the AES community had come together to listen to and communicate with people determined to improve the employment possibilities of the handicapped.

In a filled auditorium, ADMA Jim Bruce, firmly supported the idea of the integration of handicapped persons into the AES workplace. "The handicapped must be included in all open competitions; managers must ensure there is equal employment opportunity for the disadvantaged and employees must make a determined effort to welcome handicapped persons into the work environment," Mr. Bruce said.



Dr. Stan Woronko of the Canadian Climate Centre and Susan Hjelholt (OAP) are seen at the AES Handicapped exhibit.

Dr. Victor Bennett of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission said the human person was "multi-dimensional" and pointed out that any one of us could become handicapped at any time. Maureen McKinnon shared with us experiences of her work at the enquiry desk at Revenue Canada. Maureen has been blind since birth, a fact which did not deter her from attending public high school and York University from where she obtained a BA in Psychology.



Jan Glover, chairperson of the AES handicapped committee is seen with Dr. Victor Bennett of Canada Employment and Immigration who spoke in the Auditorium and Dave Humphrey, counsellor, Ontario Ministry of Labour Handicapped Employment Program.

There are programs available to federal departments to initiate and encourage the employment of the disabled. Michael Harper, Coordinator of Services to Handicapped People at the Public Service Commission outlined some of those programs and voiced his frustrations at departments unwilling to make an effort at employing the disabled.

Following the auditorium presentation and continuing the next day, representatives of a number of associations and the Handicapped Employment Branch of the Ontario Dept. of Labour were available to talk with employees, display technical aids and suggest literature for further reading. Booths had been set up in the lobby and near the cafeteria to facilitate discussion.

In addition, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), displayed and sold crafts made by residents of their Clarkewood Residence, all of whom are blind and many of whom are elderly.

The AES Handicapped Program Committee, which sponsored this two-day event, is optimistic that employees will work at eliminating those obstacles which prevent disabled persons from entering our work environment. Says Jan Glover, chairperson of the AES Handicapped Committee, "We must all ensure that the handicapped share our workplace, share our career aspirations, and share the rewards of labor."