

*Government Orders*

I want to make special reference, if I may, to those individuals who administer the Canada Pension Plan, who administer the Canada Pension disability applications which come forward, and to all those individuals who have been involved with family allowance and the Old Age Security.

I have had the pleasure over the years to meet, to discuss, to interface, to write, and to seek their assistance on behalf of constituents.

They can only do so much. They cannot pull rabbits out of a hat, although sometimes members of Parliament I would think would want them to do so. They are not able to expedite decisions because of the law.

I am not presupposing that the parliamentary secretary would say no to the amendment which is being put forward. I am hoping the parliamentary secretary will concur with the substance of the amendment, which is to expedite and to facilitate the process both for the claimant as well as for the public servants who have to administer those claims.

It is utterly shameful, and I say this with great sincerity to the parliamentary secretary, for a claimant to have to wait for an inordinate amount of time before an adjudication is reached by the department.

I am not saying, as I indicated at the outset, that this is the fault of some public servant who is not doing his or her job. I have a great respect for and I admire them. They have a tremendous workload. They have a phenomenal work ethic, but they need the assistance of this Chamber in order to direct a sufficient amount of resources which are necessary. Obviously that will be part and parcel of the bill in any event because the premiums have gone up and it is going to require some additional administration expenditures. There is no question about that.

But 30 days is a long time in a woman's life when she makes application for a benefit and the Government of Canada, some would say through wanton neglect, is not responding to that claim. The law is wrong. We should change the law.

I have hundreds and hundreds of constituents who have made application for Canada pension disability under the Canada pension fund. They have to wait not days, not a week, but they have had to wait months. Life does not stop. They still have to put groceries on the

table. They still have to feed their children. They still have to clothe them. They still have to pay energy costs and transportation costs for their children.

The law is wrong. It does not give a clear directive to officials, able officials I might add in the Department of National Health and Welfare, to see to it that these benefits which if they are approved are done so quickly and expeditiously. If they are not approved the decision should be made as well and given to the claimant expeditiously.

I have constituents who come to my office who have waited for months and months and months. I have colleagues in this House who are aptly aware that some have had to put off expenditures for their children going back to school in September. Some have been denied that bit of extra income for the purchase of Christmas gifts.

I know hon. members opposite will say: "Oh, he is being melodramatic again". I am not. That is a reality. That is a fact.

If a woman has two kids, one in university and one in high school, they eat like horses. She has to dress them. She has to feed them. She has to provide them with some entertainment, unless we believe in the catholicism of some members in this House that somehow if she is on welfare or on a fixed income, those children, that woman or that man are not supposed to have a television. They are not supposed to have any entertainment. They are not supposed to have a social life. They are not supposed to have the necessities of life. The law is wrong. This amendment, I suggest to the parliamentary secretary, will not cause any undue burden to the Crown. It will expedite decisions of the Department of Health and Welfare. It will assist those able men and women within the Department of Health and Welfare to expedite those decisions on those various claimants. That is what the amendment is intended to do in Motion 5A, as is referred to in the other amendments I have drawn to the attention of this House.

• (1110)

I say to the parliamentary secretary that in the sense of urgency and in the sense of fairness 30 days in the life of a woman, a man or a child to receive a benefit from the Government of Canada is a long time. But, 90 days, six months of twelve months is beyond comprehension or reason.