

committee like this. These things could be put before this committee. It is a prestigious committee, and it should be given publicity. Have parents who have children who are alive and well ever been told that those children would lose the family allowance if both the father and mother die? No, no one tells them that. Grandparents do not want to die with the knowledge that if their grandchildren should be left without parents they would grow up with fewer advantages than other children. This is an example of the gut-wringing type of thing we hear about.

● (2100)

The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) and the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) speak in the dry terms of the legal profession; I speak in terms of the human suffering, misery, and injustice that this type of regulation causes.

As the hon. member for Peace River pointed out, every member of parliament knows of such cases. I for one cannot do as the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Goodale) suggested and just go to the minister and get the problems resolved. I have to deal with the civil servants who maintain that there is no way around the regulations.

Let me give another example that affects every member of this House and his family. There is a regulation in the Department of Transport to the effect that any company carrying passengers by air in Canada—whether it is Pacific Western, Air Canada, Canadian Pacific Airlines or any other—must carry passenger insurance. That is the will of the Canadian government, and it is a good regulation. If my memory is correct, the amount of insurance is \$45,000. It is not really necessary to take extra insurance for air travel as it is already provided by this parliament. But what happens if there is a crash, such as there was on the Canary Islands yesterday, and parents are killed? This regulation is not enforced because the insurance companies will only pay when liability is established.

How many dependants of the more than 100 Canadians who died in a Toronto crash four years ago have been paid? Every member of parliament gets an airline pass to his constituency every week and is automatically insured for \$45,000, but if he is killed the insurance is not automatically paid to his dependants unless the liability of the airline is established. In the case of Air Canada and the Department of Transport it would be necessary to bring suit in two courts because one of them is an agency of the Crown. It costs about \$50,000 or \$100,000 to bring a suit, so the ordinary person—or even the wealthy person—has no chance of claiming the insurance. The only thing they can do is combine to bring suit.

Even though the suggestions made by the hon. member for Peace River are not perfect, they are moderate, positive, and constructive, and this House should listen to them. I do not think his could be called a political speech.

On the basis of the two types of regulations that I have brought to light this evening I should like to see parliament do what other legislatures have done, and set up a statutory

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committee. That just means that the government cannot stop the committee from meeting; that the committee is set up by statute and not by the will of the government. The committee would have the power to look at all the regulations and, where there was injustice, make it known and let the pressure of public opinion have its effect.

To the layman listening to this debate today I think the matter of a committee looking into statutory instruments would be regarded not as a legal procedure but as something responding to deep human feelings. These deep human feelings come to the fore when particular cases are under scrutiny. I have given examples of two cases and I am certain that almost every member and every party could give others.

I think the government could accept this report without harm to its prestige. It could accept this report and not just say, "everything is going well." It could let us have a statutory committee. Australia has one—not on this subject but on another. The province of Saskatchewan has the device, along with a statutory committee, of saying the House cannot adjourn as long as there are any matters before the statutory committee, and that forces the civil servants to divulge information in order to get rid of the legislators. It takes someone with the technical mind of the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas) to think of an amendment like that. With the combination of the statutory committee and the practical idea of the New Democratic Party in Saskatchewan that the legislature cannot adjourn until the answers are forthcoming, members are able to get hold of the short hair of some of the civil servants and so get their answers.

This is not just a debate on a dry academic subject; it is the meat, and flesh, and blood, and guts of the human being. All we are asking is that we be given a chance to deal with these injustices in our regulations and other statutory instruments.

● (2110)

[Translation]

Mr. Albert Béchard (Bonaventure-Îles-de-la-Madeleine): Mr. Speaker, in the last twenty-five years and particularly the last fifteen years, our society has developed as a result of technology which has tremendously progressed during the last World War. Since then it has made giant progress. I just have to mention, for instance, the advent of television and its introduction in almost every Canadian household, the development of communication satellites which allow Canadian people, and particularly those interested, to follow a surgical operation made in Newfoundland from Montreal, Quebec City, Sept-Îles, Gaspé or even Magdalen Islands. It is even possible to communicate with the surgeon and give him some advice. In Canada, development makes also possible a quasi-universal access to post-graduate studies and travelling abroad for more and more Canadians.

Students exchange travels are also encouraged not only between provinces but at the international level. Mr. Speaker, all this contributed to increase the demand for information among people. The Canadian citizen wants to know what