

Ottawa during World War II. But still he is ineligible for a passport.

This is an individual case. Governments get tired and frustrated with individual cases. But the member of parliament who is representing individual cases, and is glad to do so, is perhaps the last humanizing link between the citizen and the state. Really, Mr. Speaker, it becomes very frustrating for us when these almost incomprehensible—I hate to use the expression red tape because it is over-used—regulations prevent citizens from entitlement to their ordinary privileges.

I do not know whether my colleagues in this House enjoy Kafka, but Kafka was a contemporary philosopher of the absurd. I think it is fair to say that Kafka would understand perfectly; as a matter of fact he would really be the patron of the Department of Labour and its machinations with the Canada Pension Plan and unemployment insurance. Kafka warned mankind that if man allowed himself to be captured by the mechanisms of modern technology, then the ordinary human elements of life would really be second or third rank. As I say, he was a philosopher of the absurd and therefore he would have identified very readily with the motion that is before the House.

**An hon. Member:** And with practitioners of the absurd.

**Mr. Fairweather:** Yes, with practitioners of the absurd.

**Mr. O'Connell:** You are well versed in the absurd.

**Mr. Fairweather:** Any member of parliament who is doing his duty is well versed in the absurd when dealing with this government.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Fairweather:** There is no problem with that, particularly when we hear great lines of figures read out, with talk about 600,000 cheques. As members we have to deal with individual persons, and it is a good thing for this country that some people are dealing with persons on an individual basis. We see the difference between insensitivity and compassion. In fact, this may be a good subject for an election manifesto.

No doubt we will soon have great election lists recording boasts of achievements. I presume one that the government will want to lay claim to is the Canada Pension Plan. But nowhere in its boasts will be the orphan who had to wait seven months for an identification of his claim. Nowhere will be the individual people who are suffering disabilities, who have paid for their entitlement and yet cannot get adjudication for six or seven months because of absurdities. This motion is intended to jolt the government off its very complacent status quo and I am delighted to support it.

**Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming):** Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to see this motion appear on the order paper, particularly as it deals with a number of departments. It indicates that people have difficulties with quite a number of departments. All members of parliament receive mail outlining individual problems. The people concerned

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encounter a stand-off in trying to achieve ready settlement of what appear to them to be simple problems.

The matter of unemployment insurance is one that has been raised a number of times in this House. I am always surprised to find that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Perrault) is able to read some of the garbage that some civil servants hand him. He did it again today. He pointed out that 600,000 cheques were mailed out; but really what does that mean? Every person in this country who works at a job paying over \$25 a week and who spends over 24 hours on the job pays unemployment insurance. He pays it just as sure as the sun rises and the sun sets. It is taken from his pay cheque.

There is no question about whether he wants to pay it or not. No consideration is given to the possibility of slow mail, of a lost contribution, or to the possibility that the computer did not handle it properly. The government is highly efficient in getting its pound of flesh. On the other hand, different criteria apply when the government is dealing with individual people who have claims against it.

The parliamentary secretary has often said that 97 per cent of the unemployment insurance cases are settled within what he calls a normal period of time. What is the normal period, Mr. Speaker? It is between four weeks and eight weeks. Anything over eight weeks is considered to be not quite normal. This amounts to three to four pay-days that the worker must wait. In such a case it is not difficult to understand why people seek welfare. I send my share of people to welfare offices because I sympathize with them and I am never sure that the UIC will solve their problem soon or at all.

I am also prepared to tell many people that if they can get out of signing the assignment, they should do so. The amount of money these people get is never \$100, as the government claims; it is always considerably less. It is a physical impossibility to get \$100 under the Unemployment Insurance Act. Although there are many booklets pointing out that the worker is entitled to \$100, the worker never gets that amount.

**Mr. Perrault:** You had better read the book again.

**Mr. Peters:** I know it has been rewritten several times, but despite the propaganda that claim is not true.

**Mr. Perrault:** You are misleading your constituents.

**Mr. Peters:** You simply can't get \$100. A person accustomed to an income of \$8,000 or \$10,000 a year finds that \$100 is the minimum he needs to make the payments which he has contracted. But he finds income tax deducted from the \$100 and his actual payment is considerably less. Some of the problems connected with unemployment insurance are the fault of the government. One mistake was the computer. We undertook the computer system on the cheap. I am sure it is costing the UIC several millions of dollars to cover the mistakes obviously made in the development of its computer. In the unemployment insurance offices in each province the computer has a payout recorder attached to it. This payout goes on tape which is then sent to the various offices. When someone wants information from it they must scan the whole computer