

for. There is the matter of a two-member expert panel, requiring one to find in favour, but both if the decision is to be against the refugee's claim. These are points strongly supported by all the public witnesses, church representatives, the Bar Association, and refugee serving organizations which came before and were unanimously supported by the committee. I believe there should be no difficulty in putting these into effect through this House.

However, there are, as I say, serious flaws in what the Minister has proposed and I hope he will give them further consideration. The appeal system is not satisfactory. There was a Justice of either the Federal Court of Appeal or the Supreme Court who told a gathering in Hart House in February of 1982 that the Federal Court is not the place to handle refugee questions. It has neither the time nor the expertise. Furthermore, since the question in a refugee claim is almost always one of credibility of the claimant, and that is the very question which is almost entirely excluded from the jurisdiction of the Federal Court of Appeal, an appeal will be almost entirely useless for most claimants who may seek one. It is in that respect that I say the independent and well-informed decision-making process is only partly present. It is present, I hope, in the board, but there is no provision for making it present in the Federal Court of Appeal.

My second concern is that the limitation on access is very loosely handled in the statement we have where it says "Those granted prior protection in another country". It is not at all clear whether we are talking about a country which according to its laws has solemnly granted that protection and that protection will not be reversible. It is not clear whether that is what we are talking about or whether we are talking about some official at an airport who says "You came from such a country and we are going to send you back, you have prior protection".

Third, there is a harsh time limit considering that the right of counsel is still denied at the port of entry. It is not at all clear that a refugee will have a reasonable time to prepare his case.

Fourth, there is the question of the backlog and who is eligible. That is not defined here. It may be made clear later on but it is not defined on page seven. It says individuals whose claims have not been initiated, and so on, will have their refugee claim dealt with swiftly. That is a very vague statement. Furthermore, we are not told how it will be handled swiftly and whether they will have a proper right of appeal.

There is also a very ominous statement in the original draft, which has perhaps now been dropped, that a visa requirement may be imposed suddenly on a country to serve as a prompt deterrent to further abuse when there is an increase in claims. In other words, the Minister is taking the view that as soon as there is an increase in claims it is an abuse. If there was a right-wing coup in Chile and refugee claims rose, then that would be considered an abuse and a visa would be slapped on. The same in El Salvador and Guatemala and other countries.

In other words, genuine refugees are then suggested to be abusers.

In conclusion, I want to say that the many Canadian citizens who the Minister has acknowledged, citizens who helped to settle about a quarter of all the refugees, who have helped at all stages of the process, those who asked for a better report than this on the six points I have named, should be heard because they are the ones on whom the Minister says he depends for help in settlement. They should be heard through the medium of a debate in this House and in its committees. In particular, the regulations on the backlog which have not been spelled out in any kind of detail must be heard in a committee, or we will find ourselves with the same system of injustice from which we are trying to escape.

* * *

PETITIONS

USE OF PENSION INCOME IN CALCULATION OF UI BENEFITS

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I have the duty and privilege to present a petition signed by many residents of Stratford, Ontario; Halifax, Nova Scotia; and Calgary, Alberta. They are protesting changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act which see pension income treated as earned income for unemployment insurance purposes. The petitioners call upon Members of Parliament and this House in particular to rescind that iniquitous provision in the Unemployment Insurance Act.

CANCELLATION OF UI BENEFITS TO ARMED FORCES

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I, too, wish to present a petition in this House on behalf of numerous citizens of this country from British Columbia and Alberta. They are very seriously concerned about the removal of unemployment insurance benefits for currently active and retired Armed Forces members. This Government has, without consultation, changed the ground rules and the petitioners urge the Government to reconsider this position, play fair with them, and reinstate their benefits.

DECOMMISSIONING OF LIGHTHOUSES

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox—Powell River): I have a second petition from numerous people who live and work on the coast of British Columbia. It is the intention of the Government to automate lighthouses and remove their capacity to provide search and rescue communications and accurate weather briefings. Many fishermen and mariners have lost their lives on the coast of British Columbia because of a lack of this information. The fact that the Government is willing to shut these down will wreak great hardship on those who must live and work on the coast of British Columbia and depend on marine and air services, which in turn depend on the services provided by lighthouses. The petitioners urge that these