

*Expedition of Public Services*

below the level of untrained labour in the public service. This was supposed to have been the base on which we judged the basic rate for a war disability pension.

I wish to refer to a brief submitted to the minister by War Amputations of Canada on February 21 of this year. I will not read it because it would take too long. They selected five categories in the public service which are called untrained labour; these are correctional offices, building services, messenger services, protective and custodial services. The average wage of these categories is in the neighbourhood of \$4,551. This indicates that their pension is \$1,000 less, because they receive only \$3,500 than unskilled and untrained labour in the public service. The Department of Veterans Affairs should look into this matter with a view to bringing veterans pensions more in line with the base set out for them in the Pension Act.

Veterans are faced with a backlog of appeals regarding adjustment of their war disability pensions. They must go through the entitlement board, the pension board and the pension review board. I do not have the figure before me but I understand that at the present time hundreds of cases are waiting to be reviewed.

**An hon. Member:** Thousands.

**Mr. Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand):** My colleague informs me there are thousands. It is high time the appeal procedures were streamlined and speeded up. Perhaps the commission could be broken down into panels so that three cases could be heard simultaneously instead of only one.

If time permits, I will deal with the third phase of my remarks. This has to do with the Canada Pension Plan. From my own experience, and after discussing these matters with my colleagues, it appears it is taking far too long for Canada Pension Plan administrators to approve payments and place cheques in the hands of recipients. Especially is this true in the case of those who are entitled to disability pensions. Officials responsible for the Canada Pension Plan admit it takes up to six months to process an application for disability benefit.

• (1650)

**Some hon. Members:** Shame!

**Mr. Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand):** The delay is caused in part by the refusal of the department to accept proof of disability established by another department of government for which, for instance, the applicant might have been working. As a result, many pensioners are being deprived of their just rights for many months.

In conclusion, may I summarize by directing attention again to my comments on the subject of unemployment insurance, by urging a review of benefits to veterans and especially the need for an increase in war disability pensions and, last, to the case for speeding up procedures under the Canada Pension Plan.

**Mr. Ray Perrault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, in the time allocated to me this afternoon I wish to refer to two matters of substantial interest to all hon. members wher-

[Mr. Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand).]

ever they may sit in the House. I propose to deal with the subjects of immigration and unemployment insurance.

The hon. member's motion includes a reference to immigration procedures, in broad and sweeping terms, and because of the vague wording of the motion I can only guess at those aspects of immigration procedures which the hon. member believes need to be expedited. Presumably he is referring to the situation of visitors from abroad who seek to remain in Canada permanently. Before commenting on the situation as it exists today I should like to review briefly the legislation and policy affecting this class of immigrant so as to place the matter in its proper context.

Until 1967, Canada, like all other countries, attempted to discourage this kind of immigrant movement. Strong efforts were made to prevent the initial admission of people seeking temporary entry who, it was believed, really wanted to stay permanently. Most visitors who tried to obtain landed immigrant status were required to return abroad and make their applications to the appropriate visa office. This policy was followed, not for arbitrary or legislative reasons as some have suggested but for the very practical reason that it is much simpler and more effective for a person to be examined as an immigrant on his home ground, so to speak, by an officer experienced in immigrant selection and in the ways of that country, than for him to be examined thousands of miles away.

We must not forget that the entitlement to take up permanent residence in Canada is not a right in the person but, rather, a privilege to be accorded in the exercise of Canada's sovereignty if it is felt that the applicant can contribute to the development and quality of life in Canada. The immigrant selection examination is thus not a determination of rights but a review of a person's qualifications for being granted a privilege.

Nevertheless, in the broad and substantial liberalization of immigration legislation and policies in 1967, two very important changes were made in the interests of creating a more positive attitude to immigration in Canada and of ensuring that every individual was treated justly and sympathetically. First, the immigration regulations established, for the first time ever, the right of a non-immigrant or visitor to seek to change his status to that of a landed immigrant or permanent resident without having to depart from Canada. These people were to be examined in essentially the same way as applicants abroad, that is, in accordance with clearly stated, almost entirely objective criteria which were to be applied without regard to the person's race, religion or geographic origin, and had for their sole purpose the determination of whether a person would be a good resident and future citizen of Canada.

Second, an immigration appeal board was established. This board was to be completely independent of the department and of the minister responsible for immigration. It was given full power to deal with all appeals against deportation orders made by officers of the department, including cases of visitors who were refused landed immigrant status. In addition to dealing with the legal aspects of each case, the board was also empowered to set aside the Immigration Act and regulations in any case in