

If the computer rejects a claim, then someone should take another look at it and see that it is processed by hand. If not, the person has to start all over again and another four or five weeks go by. I do not know why we have not been able to operate the systems simultaneously. Computers are probably the tool of communication of the future, but there is a human element involved which means that we will always have difficulties, and steps should be taken to deal with them. It is not good enough for the parliamentary secretary to say that only 2 per cent or 3 per cent of the population is affected.

Mr. Perrault: I never said that.

Mr. Peters: You did, in exactly the opposite way. You say that 97 per cent are being paid regularly. The hon. member has said it at least four or five times. I presume he had previously read what he was reading then, but of course he may not have. I think that members of parliament have to get as much assistance as possible from the department and they will have to intercede on behalf of constituents who have problems.

I have read in the newspapers about people asking Star Probe to investigate a problem. What did they say? Star Probe handled the problem of a man who was laid off last July. He said that his experience was like screaming in a soundproof room.

• (1750)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to speak to the motion now under study. I listened with great satisfaction to the speeches of several hon. members, and one thing that makes me happy is the fact that the motion calls upon the government to accelerate public services which affect our way of life.

We often tend to blame the government very categorically. In view of the phrasing of the motion, the government will normally be inclined to reply in the affirmative to the requests made today by hon. members concerning certain services which cannot always, this is true, be easily improved.

To give the impression that the minister alone is responsible for unemployment insurance benefits is unfair, in my view. I am sure that the minister, as well as hon. members, want every claimant to receive his cheque without delay, and that the difficulties suffered by those who have been waiting for their benefits, especially since January, will be overcome.

I shall refrain from simply accusing the minister of being responsible for those difficulties, as I believe that the government has in fact tried to improve the service. I wonder, however, if it would not have been better to keep a certain number of regional offices, because it is possible that the experiment that was carried out is not conclusive.

I personally had occasion to ask the minister, six or seven months ago, to reopen an unemployment insurance office in my area, and I received an affirmative reply.

Expedition of Public Services

Now, this service is again available to my riding, and is most appreciated.

I should also like to ask the government to consider improving services at the civil servant level, taking into consideration all the time spent on negotiations concerning the new agreement on family allowances in the province of Quebec and the other provinces.

I could also mention the endless negotiations concerning the policy on telecommunications. It is evident that not only the province of Quebec, but the others as well, often complain about these long-drawn out negotiations. In fact, we are quite aware that citizens would benefit greatly if these services could be improved.

I suggest that the government could give favourable consideration to the request expressed in this motion, urging them to seek solutions for improvement of these services.

Of course, I shall not dwell on the immigration and passport procedure. I know that the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) gave an account of the situation. There again, I imagine that the white paper in question should normally be published and tabled in the House before long.

Distribution of mail was also mentioned. Of course, many changes have been made in the Post Office over the last four years. On being elected to the House of Commons, I deplored the serious changes that were made, without enough concern for the service that department was to offer the public.

I remain deeply convinced that the Post Office is a public service. The public not only needs that service, but is entitled to it. I do not believe it wise to put profitability before service due the Canadian people among the assessment criteria. Some definite changes have been made now following the replacement of the incumbent at the time, and I hope they will produce much more humane results for the country.

I felt it necessary to make these few remarks and to call upon the government to seriously consider improving such services, in the interests of the Canadian people. I have faith in a motion requesting the government to consider all representations from hon. members. In the debate, they did not simply blame or criticize the government, but outlined to the minister the difficulties being experienced by the Canadian people. I believe that we can thus make the government aware of the situation while providing it with as much information as possible, and this solely to improve the services provided to our people and to give them the satisfaction they so legitimately look for.

Mr. Speaker: It being six o'clock, it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to Standing Order 58(11), proceedings on the motion have expired.

The House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 2(1).

At six o'clock the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.