

Government Efficiency

Written by

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Today after I spent some time cleaning out cupboards and Rick cleaned the roof of the motorhome, we ventured downtown to renew my passport. Before we left Ontario, it occurred to me that my passport was due to expire in November when we will be in California so I elected to renew it now before we go south. I filled out the application, had the appropriate paperwork completed and had my photograph taken (on a good hair day, no less) and proceeded to Paul DeVillers office in Orillia (the local Member of Parliament) to send it off. After they checked it over, it was suggested to me that I should wait until I went to Vancouver to send it out in the event that there was a problem with it.

So today, I had the pleasure of waiting for over two hours to have an attendant recheck my previously-checked application and start the renewal process. First, I stood in line for ten minutes to get a number so I could wait in a room with a "kazillion" other people for it to be called. I was told that it would take about an hour for my number to be called so I was able to join Rick for some lunch first. Fearing that the line-up of people ahead of me might miraculously be looked after sooner, I ate quickly and returned to the office while Rick went for a walk. Fortunately, I had the good luck of sitting beside some very interesting and funny people who helped make the time go by faster.

Two hours and some good conversation later, I found myself face to face with a very amicable "passport checker" who after 20 minutes lightened my wallet by \$97 (\$87 for the passport and an extra \$10 so I could save them the postage by picking it up myself!). Apparently, I can collect it on October 3 unless I get a call to tell me otherwise. What a lovely way to waste, (oops I mean spend) a sunny afternoon and such a great way to see how our hard earned tax dollars are being spent. It was so good to see all those attendants standing around watching the handful that were at the 8 or 9 out of 14 wickets serving the public. Of course, if all the staff had actively been working the wait might only have been a reasonable 30 minutes or less but then we (the people waiting) wouldn't have had such an interesting afternoon. Unlike this family of raccoons in Stanley Park, efficiency is not something the government can ever be accused of having!