The unemployment figure

Of the Alquerian population all are employed in some form or other. They may not do much actual work in their employment with Rodriquez's olive mill or the thriving Remitroot business belonging to Poyato. They don't expect to exert themselves to any great extend. Although they live off the income from one of these enterprises. The services they render could be anything from a full day's work to some simple or menial task.

At least that was the case until Alfonso Hagapoco decided to exercise his democratic right to be an unemployment statistic. Alfonso worked as a Remitroot stigma nurdler which involved one hour's worth of very gentle labour per week, for this he received a fair remuneration. But being of anarchic tendencies, not to mention bone idle he thought he would rather have the whole week to himself. He thought that this was an hour too far and resigned.

The Alquerian establishment prided itself on being a government for the people, of the people and by the people. They took it to extremes however. One year the entire adult population ran for the post of president. Everyone received one vote each. This meant a joint presidency consisting of everyone over the age of eighteen, apart from Loco Paco that is. Becoming confused he put his cross next to the printers name. The Madrid printer, Inky Pedro was quite surprised when the letter naming him as joint president of Alqueria dropped onto his mat.

Alfonso presented himself at the Town Hall and asked to be registered unemployed. Poyato, who was manning the office at the time was taken aback. There had been no unemployment in Alqueria since it became a republic. Poyato asked him what job he would like “Abyssinian Goat Shirling instructor to the Dalai Lama” Alfonso replied. He was awarded 2,000,000 Raros per week unemployment benefit that's about €150.00, three times more that he earned working.

The people of Alqueria were quite proud of their sole unemployment figure and Alfonso's status in the Village mushroomed. They seemed to adopt him as a joint dependent. Treating him to free drinks, meals, and forcing money on him. Admittedly very little actual force was necessary. He was greeted each day with “Morning Alfonso and how goes our unemployment statistic today”. Alfonso Hagapoco never needed to buy food nor drink, the townspeople provided for his every need. By careful money management he soon acquired a tidy pile keeping the cash in a hollow under a kitchen flagstone.

His affluence grew and Alfonso started to live a double life. He bought a house across the border in Spain and moved an extremely flashy woman in. He would leave the house every morning, don his much patched clothes and cross into Alqueria to his place of work as an unemployment statistic.