

Report of the Committee on Health, Science and Welfare

Tuesday, June 22, 1971.

The Standing Senate Committee on Health, Science and Welfare to which was referred Bill C-229, intituled: "An Act respecting unemployment insurance in Canada", has in obedience to the order of reference on Monday, June 21, 1971, examined the said Bill and now reports the same without amendment.

Respectfully submitted,

Chesley W. Carter,
Acting Chairman.

Senator Chesley W. Carter (Acting Chairman) is the Chair.

[Translation]

The Acting Chairman: My dear colleagues, I thank you very much for your confidence, and I hope that you will have no regrets.

Senator Fyles: I don't believe so.

The Acting Chairman: Thank you.

[Text]

Honourable senators, I have here a telegram addressed to the Speaker of the Senate from a person named Kroeber, a name which will probably ring a bell with some of you. As I recall, he is a former civil servant. He signs himself as president of a group called Canadians for Responsible Government. His communication is not too clear, but I will put it on the record. It appears that he wants to come before the committee and dispute the costs of Bill C-229. I will read it slowly, because it is not too lucid:

Please inform all senators that the House of Commons has approved unemployment legislation in ignorance of or deliberate disregard of its full financial consequences an annual deficit of from four hundred million dollars to one thousand million dollars estimate by responsible citizens who offered to appear before the Commons Committee and the minister in this regard has been ignored these witnesses are available to the Senate please consider fully before approving this unemployment insurance legislation with its large and long lasting damages to Canadians

John Kroeber President, Cdn. for Responsible Government

Senator Smith: Mr. Chairman, may I say something at this juncture? It will be recalled that when Senator John M. Macdonald spoke in the Senate, I presided as the spokesman for the Opposition, in order to participate in the discussion in committee, and perhaps I should quote what he said:

—since we are approaching the time of adjournment I expect a long study will not be possible. Fortunately, I do not think one is necessary, as the committee of the other place had both the time and inclination to go over the Bill in detail. We have the reports of their deliberations, which make very interesting and instructive reading.

I personally agree with what Senator Macdonald said. I believe it will be impossible for us to consider hearing a witness who represents nobody but himself, and in particular who writes that kind of telegram with reference to the House of Commons which is not permitted by even members of the Senate. If you want a motion, I will assure that we proceed with the bill.

Senator Fyles: We should certainly proceed to hear the witnesses who are here.

The Acting Chairman: Shall we let this be in abeyance? I was going to say, this committee does not have a steering committee. There have been a steering committee they would deal with the rest of things and make a report. Would it be worth while to have a small committee to look at this?

Some Hon. Senators: No.

The Acting Chairman: Or should we dispose of it now?

Senator Fyles: Not at this time. Let us proceed with the witnesses, and we will go afterwards. We can always inquire about the committee mentioned in this telegram.

Senator Connolly (Opposition West): The question was over that.

The Acting Chairman: To have before us a witness Mr. M. Macdonald, Chief Commissioner, Unemployment Insurance, Finance, and Mr. David Young, the former Director, Unemployment Finance and Administration, appointed by statute will be coming here. In the meantime Mr. Fyles Connolly is representing the bill. Shall we proceed with the witnesses?

Hon. Senator: Agreed.

The Acting Chairman: Before Mr. Macdonald begins his presentation, I should like to point out that this is a situation with 100-100 dissent and some senators believe that it is better to deal with the bill. It is divided into three parts. It seems to me that some parts would be of more interest to the committee than other parts. For example, Part I, the Unemployment Insurance Extension Act, sets out the program which has been considered that that has been in operation for a good many years.