

Hon. Mr. Golding: \$900 million.

Hon. Mr. Reid: That danger of depletion could arise in being all too ready to take moneys from this fund which should come—and on this also I agree with the Leader of the Opposition—from the consolidated revenue fund.

The Unemployment Insurance Act was passed in 1940 by a previous administration. Supplementary benefits came into effect in 1950.

My question, honourable senators, has to do with the proposed section 52, which provides for one seasonal benefit period. If we pass this bill will that become part of the original Unemployment Insurance Act?

Hon. Mr. Brunt: No, it will not.

Hon. Mr. Reid: Is there a limited time? Is it just temporary? There is nothing in the bill to say it is temporary. The legislation that was passed in 1957 made certain changes that were carried through this year to May 17; now we are extending the period to June 28 of this year. I am wondering if when this bill is passed those changes will become part of the original Unemployment Insurance Act. That is not made clear in the bill.

Hon. Mr. Brunt: Honourable senators, I beg to refer the honourable senator to clause 1 of the bill, which reads:

1. During the period commencing on the 18th day of May, 1958 and ending on the 28th day of June, 1958, both days inclusive, sections 50, 51 and 52 of the Unemployment Insurance Act shall be deemed to read as follows: . . .

For that period of time the sections as set out in the bill will be in operation, but after the 28th day of June 1958 the sections will read as set out in the original act.

Hon. Mr. Golding: That is right.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: May I ask the honourable gentleman who explained the bill (Hon. Mr. Brunt) whether any actuarial reports have been made with respect to this payment? He told us that \$14 million would be paid out as a result of this extension, which will be the second extension of seasonal benefit periods. What was the amount paid out under the former extension? Is that figure available?

Hon. Mr. Brunt: The only figures available to me were contained in the statement made in the other place by the Minister of Labour, at page 85 of the Commons *Hansard*. With the permission of the house, I will quote what he said:

I would like to note that in the five months beginning December 1, 1957, and I think this will answer a question asked in the house earlier, almost \$230 million were paid out in unemployment insurance benefits but in spite of these heavy

expenditures the unemployment insurance fund had at the end of March a remarkably healthy balance of more than \$740 million.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Of course it is obvious. Is it not, as the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) has stated, that that \$740 million is a credit owned and justly held for those who in the past have contributed to the fund. It is for the purpose of satisfying the general conditions of the act, and it is not a very large sum when one considers what may take place. One has only to look back to the hungry thirties, for instance, and remember the numbers of men who were unemployed at that time, to realize the calls that may be made on this fund, and that \$740 million could very soon melt away. That sum is owned by, is due to and is the right of those who have contributed to the fund.

Now we are asked to give additional benefits to other persons. The figure that my honourable friend has stated does not give me any information at all as to how much the other extension has already eaten up of this fund. He has told me that \$14 million would be expended under this proposed extension. Can my friend give me any further figure?

Hon. Mr. Brunt: No, those are all the figures I have available.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: And there is no statement, other than this very loose remark of the minister in the other house, with respect to the effect upon the fund?

Hon. Mr. Brunt: I would not say that. I do not know what statements were made in the House of Commons this afternoon when the bill was being considered there, because today's *Hansard* of that house is not yet available.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Do you not think when we are being asked to pass a bill of this kind that a full financial statement should be put before us?

I have a further question. What is the necessity for this extension at this time? Spring is not delayed. What is the economic reason that the Government puts forward as to why we should make this extension now?

Hon. John J. Connolly (Ottawa West): Before the honourable senator answers that question, I wonder if I may heap a few more coals on his head. I do not mean it in that spirit, because I think he has done very well with his explanation of this legislation. Although he has had a somewhat gruelling session tonight, he has handled himself extremely creditably.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: Hear, hear.