

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

CURRENT STATUS OF FUND

Hon. Richard A. Donahoe: Honourable senators, I have no desire to change the subject, but it is obvious that we shall get little or no information on the international situation, so I shall turn my attention to a matter which is domestic in nature.

● (2030)

I read the other day that the March pay-out from the unemployment insurance fund was the largest in the history of the fund. When I read it I was reminded that on June 2 last I directed a question from my seat here in the Senate to the Minister of State for Economic Development concerning unemployment insurance, in response to which he undertook to bring back to the Senate a report on the current status of this fund, including projections for the remainder of 1982. I am not aware that any reply was ever made to that question, and perhaps it is just as well, because when I read about the largest pay-out in history I also read that statistics now show that the unemployment payments in March were \$786 million. That is very serious. This figure is up 21 per cent from the figure for February, and up 48 per cent from March of 1981.

The surplus for last year was only \$320 million, and considering the depleting effect which a large number of work-sharing programs must have had on the fund, when contributions for 1982 were calculated on the basis of an unemployment rate of 7.6, and not the 10.2 per cent rate that we have now, my question is: In the light of these facts, is the government expecting to have to top up the fund for 1982? If so, to what extent? On the other hand, is it planning to recoup the entire deficit through increased premiums in 1983?

Let me add that I was interested to learn that we are to have the minister before one of the committees of this house shortly, that he is going to deal with matters relating to unemployment, and that we may expect to hear great things from him. I would expect that if the minister is going to give us some hope, it will cost more money than has already been referred to here.

As a further question, therefore, added to the one I have already asked, may I inquire from the minister whether the decisions taken with regard to the fund include provision for the new programs that are to be advanced by the minister?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of State for Economic Development): Honourable senators, we recognize and respect the seriousness of the question that has just been posed. I am sure, however, that my honourable friend will understand that announcements of the nature he refers to obviously would be contained, if anywhere, in the statement that the Minister of Finance may make, because certainly unemployment levels, and increases in the amount of money paid out in connection with automatic compensators, including the unemployment insurance fund, are significantly affected by changes in the economy. If an announcement is to be made that the fund may be topped up either by the federal government or by means of other revenue-increasing devices, it would be made by one or the other of the ministers directly involved.

Senator Donahoe: Honourable senators, I thank the honourable senator for what he has had to say. I choose only to remind him that all I ask is that we receive an update with regard to what it is proposed to do with the unemployment insurance fund. Such a report was promised to me, and it has not yet been forthcoming.

Some of what I have had to say applies only to circumstances surrounding that update, with the object of giving an indication of what I expect it to contain. I do hope that the question that I asked, will still be answered.

Senator Olson: I understand that.

EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION

ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

Hon. Nathan Nurgitz: Honourable senators, I was about to congratulate the Leader of the Government in the Senate for providing a delayed answer to a question I asked on April 27. Rather than offering congratulations, however, I would like to provide the Leader of the Government with an opportunity to correct his reply.

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): At what page of *Hansard* was that reply given?

Senator Nurgitz: The reply dealing with the advertising campaign, can be found at page 4331.

I am suggesting that the reply given by the Leader of the Government implies all-party support for the government's "Helping Canada work" advertising campaign. The leader said:

The conducting of such a campaign to heighten awareness of the Department of Employment and Immigration training programs was recommended by an all-party committee of Parliament in its task force report, "Work for Tomorrow."

I am sure most honourable senators have read the entire report, though I myself have not. All I have read are some of the conclusions.

I should like to point out to the Leader of the Government that in chapters 3 and 13 of the report the committee condemned, as insufficiently communicative, existing informational programs. I am suggesting that a billboard with the words, "Helping Canada Work," would in no way be adequate to meet that complaint. Furthermore, in its eight conclusions in chapter 13 on planning, information and forecasting, the committee called for an elaborate program to make previously unaware unemployed Canadians aware of specific job opportunities available. In its 24 recommendations to that end it elaborated upon the need for far more specific programs.

What I would like to point out to the Leader of the Government is, that in recommendation No. 180, on page 124 of the report, it says:

Pamphlets, bulletins, radio, television, cable facilities and community billboards in shopping centres and other heavily populated areas in which the government should publicize job vacancies and career possibilities without