

**STATEMENT OF HON. SAM L. COLLINS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen——

Mr. TREADWAY. If I may ask, what district does the gentleman represent?

Mr. COLLINS. The nineteenth district, Mr. Treadway.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you appear in opposition to the bill, or in support of it?

Mr. COLLINS. I am appearing with only one purpose in mind, and that has reference to the Townsend bill, which has been before your committee, and on which considerable testimony has been given to your committee. People have testified, actuaries and others, as to the figures involved in the Townsend plan.

I am not prepared to testify on that. I have no figures available, and would not attempt to set forth figures that have been furnished me as accurate, because I know nothing about them myself.

I have been present through these hearings. I wanted to call the attention of this committee to the fact that in my district, and in the State elsewhere, whether or not other Members who will appear here will tell you that, this organization is well formed and claim to have in my district 85,000 signers of a petition, petitioning Congress for the enactment of the Townsend plan.

You gentlemen have the figures that have been submitted by the proponents of this plan. As I said at the outset, I cannot vouch for those figures, because I have not made a study of them.

I told my people that I would see that their evidence was submitted to your committee, that I would appear and advise your committee of the number of people in my district who were interested in this plan.

That, Mr. Chairman, completes my testimony. I have nothing to offer other than the information of the number of people who are interested in that plan.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Collins, are you advocating the adoption of the Townsend old-age pension plan?

Mr. COLLINS. I am not, Mr. Hill.

Mr. HILL. You are taking no stand, one way or the other?

Mr. COLLINS. I am not taking a stand on it. I am just advising you of the number of people in my district who are advocating that plan.

Mr. HILL. You are maintaining a sort of armed neutrality status on the question?

Mr. COLLINS. I am not a member of this committee, Mr. Hill. I am leaving in your discretion entirely the type of legislation that should be enacted for these aged people.

Mr. HILL. You just want us to know of the wide-spread sentiment in your district in favor of that plan?

Mr. COLLINS. Absolutely; that is all, Mr. Hill.

Mr. TREADWAY. Mr. Chairman, I think Mr. Collins' statement is a very fair one. As I understand him, he simply wants to act as agent for his constituents in informing us that as he understands it, 85,000 of them have endorsed the plan referred to.

Mr. COLLINS. That is correct, Mr. Treadway.

Mr. TREADWAY. The Townsend plan, is that correct?

Mr. COLLINS. Yes. In addition to that, I advised them that I would assist them in presenting their evidence to your committee.

Mr. TREADWAY. And you are simply carrying out your agreement with your constituents to appear here today in their behalf.

Mr. COLLINS. That is correct.

Mr. TREADWAY. May I just ask you one question bearing on that point? What assurance have you that there are 85,000 such people in your district?

Mr. COLLINS. I have several thousand petitions that have been signed; I only have the statement of secretaries of these various units in the towns advising me of the number which they say signed the petitions.

Mr. TREADWAY. And in the aggregate they number—

Mr. COLLINS. Eighty-five thousand.

Mr. TREADWAY. Have you checked them to see whether they amount to 85,000?

Mr. COLLINS. I have not had added the names on the petitions, I will say, Mr. Treadway, but I can say there are many thousands.

Mr. TREADWAY. Yes; I have no doubt of that. To what extent do you think those with whom you have come in personal contact who are advocating this measure, have given it any definite consideration, so far as the financial aspects of it are concerned?

Mr. COLLINS. Of course, you are asking me to determine the minds of the petitioners, as to whether or not they informed themselves on the questions. I am in no position to advise you nor any other member of the committee as to whether or not these people have advised themselves. My own opinion is that a great many of them have not. That is only my opinion, and if I am in error in that, I am not bespeaking their minds.

Mr. TREADWAY. In other words, you would feel that many of the signers realize the advantage of getting \$200 a month for the rest of their lives, so that they may spend the money—and that is practically the scheme, is it not?

Mr. COLLINS. That is right.

Mr. TREADWAY. From that viewpoint they favor it, but further than that you do not think they have examined the financial aspects of the question to determine whether or not the plan is workable, whether or not the Federal Treasury can stand the drain, and all those details that we, as members of this committee, must look into.

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. Treadway, this committee is in a much better position to determine the merits of any proposition than those petitioners. Permit me to say that if I were to state here that they have not given that matter any thought, I would be putting words in their mouths, and that I do not propose to do. I am not capable of guessing whether they have given this matter thought or not. My belief is that they have given it some thought, but whether they have given it sufficient study is another question entirely.

Mr. TREADWAY. I think our colleague has made an excellent witness, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. If there are no further questions, we thank you for your statement, Mr. Collins.

Mr. COLLINS. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee.