

Unemployment Assistance

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes; by the hon. member for Hamilton West. Section 5 continues:

—(a) the applicant has come from a province whose government has entered into an agreement similar to this respecting unemployment assistance, and . . .

You note how the door is left wide open. Suppose a person has gone from a province that has since entered into an agreement to a province in which the agreement applies, and has done so within the last year but certainly not with a view to securing any benefits under this act. The minister is in a position under the regulations to say that person shall not receive the allowance provided under this agreement. The section reads:

5. Length of residence shall not be made a condition for the receipt of assistance if

(a) the applicant has come from a province whose government has entered into an agreement similar to this respecting unemployment assistance,—

If the person has come from a province within the last year or two years, we will say, and in that province there is no unemployment assistance, all that will need to be done in order to defeat the person's claim will be to simply pass regulations to the effect that the period shall be two years or three years, or whatever the case may be. Section 5 continues:

—(b) such agreement includes a like clause as herein contained in respect of length of residence not being a condition for receipt of assistance.

That is the joker in this act, and it will remain a joker unless the minister incorporates this draft agreement into the bill as an appendix. If he does not do so, then the minister will be in the position of having an agreement that can be interpreted in a wide-open manner and in such a way as to defeat the just claims of individuals who should be entitled to benefits. I say the minister either should incorporate length of residence or, if he does not incorporate length of residence—and I am not supporting length of residence to be included—then in order to ensure that section 5 of the draft agreement is carried out, it must be made part of this bill.

To do otherwise is to place the minister in the position of having a power that parliament never intended to give him or never intended to extend. What the minister tells the house in committee will in no way enter into the interpretation of the meaning of any section of the bill. If in the event of a disagreement the matter comes before the exchequer court, the court will look at the bill by itself. It will say, "Parliament did not intend to refer to any draft agreement because, if it had done so, it would have included it".

[Mr. Martin.]

I make that suggestion to the minister. If this bill is bona fide, as I trust it is, and if it is not to be made a political football between now and the next election, let the minister—in his desire to have the bill improved and to have every province treated alike, outside of the province of Nova Scotia, which is a special case—say to the committee, "There is no reason whatever why the agreement in the form in which it was placed on *Hansard* should not be attached as an appendix". If he will do that, a major portion of my objection to this bill will be removed. If he will not do that, I say this. It is going to give him an opportunity of—

Mr. Martin: I have just been thinking. I have no objection to doing that very thing. As a matter of fact, I may say to my hon. friend that at one time we had discussed that matter with the provinces. At the moment I just cannot think what the reason was that it was not done but, as I remember it, it was not consequential.

Mr. Diefenbaker: If the minister has no objection, would he at an appropriate time accept an amendment to that effect?

Mr. Martin: Yes. I will do it right now.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I think it should be in the form of a motion.

Mr. Martin: I have already asked my colleague and he is going to move one.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is fine. In that way I feel that the ambit of the bill will have been restricted equally to all provinces, not only those which have entered but as well those that contemplate entering or may consider entering into an agreement.

Mrs. Fairclough: Mr. Chairman, earlier in the day, at the second reading stage, I mentioned the fact that I had been unable to procure copies of the correspondence. The minister said that when we got into committee he would be glad to give me the information. In one of the letters from the Prime Minister to the premier of Ontario, dated December 5, I notice that he refers to earlier correspondence, and says this:

In revising the draft agreement, we have sought to meet all the points raised by provincial representatives . . .

I am now back on my original point. I should like to know what specific points were raised by the non-contracting provinces. From the minister's remarks yesterday I understand that one province is about to complete a contract. If he would do so, I should like him to deal with the other three provinces and tell the house just what were the main points of protest by the provinces or the