

Unemployment Assistance

What I am bringing to the minister's attention is the fact that British Columbia is being reimbursed this year to the extent of over \$1 million for its unemployment contributions over the past year, while Newfoundland is to receive some \$750,000. I think that demonstrates the value of the legislation. Those provinces are getting back that amount of money which they would not get back if the legislation was not in existence or if they did not have an agreement. But I am concerned with that part of the country where they are moving out.

As I say, some hundreds of people were sent in groups from Nova Scotia to the lumbering industry in British Columbia. That is a highly unionized operation and if there are to be lay-offs, those who came on last will be laid off first. That means that those men who were moved out there are likely to be among the first unemployed when there are seasonal lay-offs. They will not be able to qualify for unemployment insurance, because they have not worked long enough to draw benefits. Under the residence clause these people will not be able to receive unemployment insurance or unemployment assistance, and this through no fault of their own. This is all assuming that Nova Scotia does not enter into an agreement. I just leave that thought with the minister.

The second thing I should like to get clear is that under the agreement—I am going to talk about Nova Scotia again—the formula is that there must be 30 per cent unemployed as related to the total provincial population. In the case of Nova Scotia I think that would amount to around 2,500, which would be the number to be handled by the municipalities and the province. The minister has stated that there are approximately 3,000 unemployed in the province. As I understand it, that is where the federal government would begin to contribute.

As of now, if Nova Scotia had an agreement it would be absorbing 50 per cent of the cost of the 500. What I would like the minister to clarify for me is this. When you come into the picture and begin to contribute to the relief of that 500 on a 50 per cent basis, is that a straight provincial-federal proposition without any reference to the municipalities?

Mr. Martin: No, it could be the municipality entirely or the province and the municipality.

Mr. Gillis: Would they divide the 50 per cent?

Mr. Martin: Yes, they share the 50 per cent.

Mr. Gillis: Is that to be determined by the provincial or federal government?

Mr. Martin: It is to be determined by the two jurisdictions concerned. We do not have anything to do with that.

Mr. Barnett: I have just one or two questions relating to the question just asked by the hon. member for Cape Breton South. There has been a good deal of discussion on this question of entry into a province which has an agreement by former residents of a province which has not an agreement. I was wondering whether the minister has information he could give the committee as to what residence qualifications the various provinces have established at the present time with respect to eligibility for unemployment assistance. For example, in the province of British Columbia, how long must a former resident of another province have been in British Columbia before being qualified under the agreement?

Mr. Martin: In British Columbia it is one year. In some provinces it is three years; in some provinces six months; in some municipalities it is as high as seven years.

Mr. Barnett: My second question would be, was any understanding arrived at—I notice that it is not in the agreement—with respect to the maintenance of existing regulations by the provinces?

Mr. Martin: In respect of those provinces where we have agreements there is no residence qualification. The only test is one of need and unemployability.

Mr. Gillis: If you went in, you must have come from a province that had an agreement?

Mr. Martin: If a person, for example, came from Alberta to Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan was willing, there is nothing in the act to prevent that.

Mr. Barnett: Assuming, for example, that Nova Scotia for some reason or other does not conclude an agreement, there is nothing in the arrangement or understanding that would prevent British Columbia, for example, from increasing its residence qualification from one to two years?

Mr. Martin: As far as this agreement is concerned there must be no residence qualification. My hon. friend was referring to section 5, which refers to provinces where they both have agreements with the federal government. Where that is the case, each must have a provision for no residence qualification.

Mr. Winch: I am sorry if I am a little dense. If a province such as British Columbia, for