

*Unemployment Assistance*

but as far as the participating provinces are concerned there will be complete reciprocity.

**Mr. Johnston (Bow River):** Mr. Chairman, there are two questions I would like to ask the minister, and one is with regard to the .45 per cent. I believe he stated that in British Columbia there were about 20,000 who are eligible under this section. Can he tell us what percentage of that 20,000 are unemployed employables who would ordinarily come under the Unemployment Insurance Act if their benefits were taken care of?

**Mr. Martin:** About 2,000 of that figure were employable.

**Mr. Johnston (Bow River):** That means the province will be required to pay 50 per cent for those 2,000 persons, because the Unemployment Insurance Act has not sufficient coverage to take care of them?

**Mr. Martin:** My hon. friend could argue that and I could not quarrel with him, but I think the fair thing to say would be that the federal government as a result of this measure will now be undertaking to pay 50 per cent of the cost of a group for which up to this time no one has accepted responsibility.

**Mr. Johnston (Bow River):** That brings up the point I mentioned a while ago. I do not want to be too critical of the bill because I think it is very good, but it seems to me that the federal government is evading its responsibility. Here is a case in British Columbia where 2,000 people should be receiving benefit from a fund to which they themselves have contributed, but because the federal government has not assumed responsibility and amended the Unemployment Insurance Act to provide for them they are now being shifted over to the province and the province not only is going to have to assume the burden of paying 50 per cent of their maintenance—I was going to call it relief, because that is exactly what it is—but the federal government also very nicely slips out of its responsibility in regard to these employable unemployed and places the whole blame on the province for that result. I think that is one thing that should not take place.

I am not saying that those who are not receiving proper payments under the Unemployment Insurance Act should be deprived of assistance, but I am saying that the blame should be placed exactly where it belongs, and that is on the Unemployment Insurance Act and the federal government. The federal government should not be allowed to slip out from under its responsibility.

The other question I wanted to ask was in regard to the length of residence. I recognize immediately that this would apply only to those provinces which are under agreement. Alberta has not signed, but assuming that Saskatchewan has signed and a person moved from Alberta to Saskatchewan, would he thus be deprived of any benefits?

**Mr. Martin:** The hon. member is asking about a person who moves from Alberta to Saskatchewan?

**Mr. Johnston (Bow River):** Yes.

**Mr. Martin:** As Alberta has not signed, obviously Saskatchewan is not obliged to pay.

**Mr. Johnston (Bow River):** Surely there should be some residence qualification. If a person moves into Saskatchewan he should come under the legislation after a certain length of time. Is there no provision made for that?

**Mr. Martin:** That is a matter entirely for the province of Saskatchewan. The governing factor there is the attitude taken by the government of Alberta. I am not saying that critically, because I have every reason to think we are going to—

**Mr. Johnston (Bow River):** The whole responsibility would rest with the province of Saskatchewan as to the making of residence qualifications if they so desired, and that would be agreeable to the federal government?

**Mrs. Fairclough:** Mr. Chairman, the question I wanted to ask was somewhat along the lines of that asked by the hon. member for Bow River. The minister has said on three different occasions that there is no residence requirement, but the word "if" in here looks pretty big. The agreement 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, and

(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 would cover, as the hon. member for Bow River points out, the province concerned if there was no agreement. But take the case where someone from Alberta moves into Saskatchewan and applies for assistance. The normal procedure followed in cases where a person from another province finds himself unable to support himself and applies to a municipality for assistance is for the municipality first of all to see if the person cannot be sent back to the place from which he came. According to this that condition does not change; obviously he could still be sent