

Unemployment Assistance

The Deputy Chairman: Shall clause 1 carry?

Mrs. Fairclough: Before clause 1 carries, I wonder whether the minister has the answers to the questions asked previously by the member for Saint John-Albert and the member for Peel?

Mr. Martin: I forget the question asked by the member for Peel, but in answer to the question put to me by the member for Saint John-Albert I should like to point out to him that he asked me, if I understood his question correctly, how the actual unemployment figures in New Brunswick compared with those in the other provinces. I may have given him a wrong impression when I was talking about the significance of the .45 per cent, which was a figure arrived at with the provinces as one that represented the normal situation that attended in most provinces other than the province of Nova Scotia.

The national employment service statistics respecting applications for employment are compiled regionally rather than by provinces, and the maritime provinces are taken as a single region. These figures show that applications on hand at national employment service offices for employment in the Moncton and Saint John offices combined totalled 6,301 on May 17, 1956, compared to 10,529 on April 19, 1956, and 6,345 on May 19 a year ago. While these figures may be significant as indicating the number of individuals seeking work in New Brunswick, they do not reflect accurately the numbers of the needy unemployed, which are much smaller in number.

The labour force survey for May, 1956, and for earlier months, published by the dominion bureau of statistics, does not contain figures relating specifically to the province of New Brunswick. I was looking that up during the dinner hour to make sure. The statistics produced in the labour force survey for the maritime provinces lump together Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The labour force survey, like national employment service figures, relate to the numbers of individuals seeking work, not to the number of individuals in need, which is the concern of this present legislation.

So far as the statistics relating to the needy unemployed are concerned, we have made every effort to obtain reliable figures from the New Brunswick authorities themselves but, owing to the fact that the province neither contributes to local assistance costs nor collects statistics from the municipalities—though they are starting to do that now—regarding municipal case loads and payments, we were unable to obtain, even

[The Deputy Chairman.]

with the full co-operation of the New Brunswick authorities, any figure whatsoever on the numbers of individuals receiving local assistance in that province. Some dollar expenditure figures were produced by the New Brunswick authorities, showing that for the full year of 1954, the highest year of cost in the six-year period 1949 to 1954, \$349,108 was spent on assistance for unemployables by New Brunswick municipalities, while \$138,111 was spent for assistance to employable persons.

New Brunswick has entered into an agreement effective January 1, 1956, and we expect very shortly to receive the first claims to be submitted under the agreement with the province. Only then will I really be able to give an accurate estimate in reply to my hon. friend's question. I thought I was going to be able to, but when I looked it over during the dinner hour I found there would be an inadequacy in these figures.

Mr. Bell: I appreciate the effort the minister has gone to, and I understand he did some work during his supper hour. However, I only wanted the percentage of the total population of the various provinces with respect to the figures he gave of unemployed employables. I wanted only a relative comparison. In other words, the figures you gave on second reading for the various provinces started with Newfoundland at 1,854, Prince Edward Island at 486 and so on. I only wanted to know what percentage those figures were of the total population of those various provinces, so I could have the relative comparison to find out how many would possibly be eligible under this bill.

Mr. Martin: I see. Except for Nova Scotia, it is .45 per cent, which was the figure agreed to at the conference as the official figure. It is what I indicated this afternoon. We had thought of 1 per cent, but 1 per cent would have left out Ontario and Nova Scotia completely. So then we lowered the threshold figure from 1 per cent to .45 per cent, which met the situation of all the provinces except Nova Scotia where, on the admission of all provinces, there was a special case.

Clause agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

Mr. Martin: I can simply thank the house for passing this very good legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Applewhaite): When shall this bill be read a third time?

Some hon. Members: Now.

Some hon. Members: By leave.