

Unemployment Assistance

represents, excepting in the case of Nova Scotia, that proportion of the unemployed population of each province, made up of those who are capable of working and those who, for physical or other reasons, cannot.

Mr. Johnston (Bow River): May I ask the minister this question with regard to .45. Is it clear that the federal government will not begin to participate until that figure has been reached, and that they will participate only when the figure gets above .45; that is, they will not start from the bottom and go up, they will come in only when the figure is in excess of .45?

Mr. Martin: Once the assisted population of a province with which we have an agreement is .45 of the population of that province we start to participate.

Mr. Johnston (Bow River): In the excess of the .45?

Mr. Martin: Yes.

Mr. Winch: Am I correct in what I said this afternoon, that the minister's idea of .45 of unemployment is outside of any possible coverage of any act of the provinces or the dominion, unemployment insurance, old age pensions and mothers' allowances? The .45 starts outside of that? Am I correct in that interpretation?

Mr. Martin: Except any additional assistance payments as provided in clause 9 of this agreement.

Mr. Winch: Except any—

Mr. Martin: Additional assistance payments and family allowances.

Mr. Winch: The .45 is outside of all regular assistance. Then, you accept no basic responsibility for anybody else until unemployment is beyond .45?

Mr. Martin: Yes.

Mr. Winch: That is also correct?

Mr. Martin: Yes.

Mr. Winch: I want to get this clear if I can. It is also clear, then, that if in British Columbia, as an example, the figure is around 6,000 as the normal, and if it hits around 7,000, under your interpretation, you average the entire cost of the 7,000 and you pay only on the 1,000?

Mr. Martin: That is right.

Mr. Winch: Is that correct?

Mr. Martin: That is right.

The Chairman: Shall the clause carry?

Mr. Churchill: No. Just on that basis of .45 and relating it to the figures the minister

gave, if all the provinces were in under this scheme and the legislation were passed, what number of people would benefit from it? Has the minister those figures?

Mr. Martin: Well, that question cannot be completely answered, but on the basis of the figures of July 1, 1955, which would be the earliest month for the retroactive effect of the agreement now concluded, in the case of Newfoundland, the total assisted would be about 16,000; and in the case of British Columbia, 20,000. I have not before me the figures for the other provinces.

One of the difficulties here is that the only two provinces that have submitted claims to us as yet are the provinces of Newfoundland and British Columbia. Once this measure is passed we would be able on the basis of the claims to reimburse the province of British Columbia to date in the amount of approximately \$1,300,000 or \$1,400,000, and we would be able to reimburse the province of Newfoundland in the amount of approximately \$720,000. I cannot say what the figures are for the other provinces because we have not yet received their claims. Some of the provinces do not have the complete reporting system they had at one time and which, I suppose, has fallen into disuse.

All I can say is that the only provinces which have submitted claims to us at the moment are those two provinces. We have asked the others to get them in, because once this legislation is passed we will be able to pay them whatever amount is owing; but we cannot do so until they put in their claims. On the basis of those figures it should be possible to make an estimate, but I would have to estimate very roughly. Eight million dollars is an extremely rough estimate of the probable annual federal cost because we have not received their claims.

Mr. Barnett: May I ask the minister one or two questions in relation to the figures he has given? First of all, do the figures the minister has given—20,000 for British Columbia and I cannot recall what figure was given for the province of Newfoundland—represent the number of people for whom the federal government would pay 50 per cent of the cost, or do those figures represent the total number of people in the provinces who are unemployed?

Mr. Martin: They represent the total number of needy persons, either employable or unemployable; including dependents.

Mr. Barnett: In the case of British Columbia, then, the number of people for whose claims the federal government would pay part of the cost would be roughly—