

Unemployment Assistance

Mr. Lennard: You are doing the dragging over there every time you interrupt.

Mr. Dickey: Drag him out somewhere.

Mrs. Fairclough: As has already been said, it is very difficult to understand information which was not in our hands until noon today. After obtaining the co-operation of this house, the minister believed that he could cram this down our throats in a very short space of time. I might say, the resolution was on the order paper on April 25. Since the minister knew the plans of the officials of his department I do not know why he could not have brought this bill down some time earlier than this. I would not have spoken in this vein, Mr. Chairman, had it not been for the smart Aleck interjection of the minister at the last minute. I think his attitude in that respect leaves much to be desired.

The Chairman: Shall clause 1 carry?

Mrs. Fairclough: No.

Mr. Bell: Can the minister answer the question I asked with respect to the per capita percentage of the figures he gave?

Mr. Martin: I shall have to get that information.

The Chairman: Shall clause 1 carry?

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Chairman, when we are on clause 1 matters of general interest might well be taken up. I want to give the minister an opportunity to make another political speech. Encouraged by what I said here he extended his remarks on second reading. At this stage, can the minister give us a little bit of the background I was talking about? He did give us the figures for the provinces, and he is going to elaborate on that. How was the figure of .45 arrived at as setting the floor? Can the minister tell us something of the burden of this type of unemployment assistance that has been on the provinces all those years? I suggested a few minutes ago that information of that nature must have been in the hands of the department before anything could be arrived at with regard to setting the figure of .45, or setting the figure of financial contribution of 50 per cent. At the committee stage I thought the minister was going to tell us something along that line. This is his opportunity.

Mr. Martin: I want to say simply to the hon. member for Hamilton West I do not want her to feel that she did not have the right to say what she wanted to say. I would ask her to bear with me. What I said was in reply to a question. That is why I had to say what I did say.

[Mr. Dickey.]

Mr. Sinclair: You said it very well, too.

Mr. Martin: I am saying that because I would not want to break faith with the hon. member for Hamilton West who is always very courteous and co-operative in these matters. I would be the most unhappy man in the world if I thought I in any way offended her.

Mrs. Fairclough: Mr. Chairman, if I might say so, the minister misses the whole point. There are a great many arguments we could bring to bear on this; there are many fields we could explore in the consideration of this bill. When the minister makes a provocative statement and when we are hampered by such procedure it is a little frustrating.

Mr. Sinclair: It was an accurate statement.

Mrs. Fairclough: There you go again. Do you want to discuss this next week?

Mr. Dickey: Political speeches are supposed to be made only by the opposition.

Mr. Martin: If I could pour oil on the troubled waters—

Mr. Lennard: You had better get the minister to keep quiet over there.

Mr. Martin:—the figure of .45 was arrived at because it represented the figure at which it would be possible to provide for federal participation in all the provinces but one. At first we had in mind and had discussed with the provinces the figure of 1 per cent. My hon. friend will recall that the premier of British Columbia, who was among those who proposed some measure of federal assistance in the past year, along with others, had suggested that he was prepared to accept this as a possible basis. When we came to examine the figure of 1 per cent as the starting point for federal participation it became clear that the provinces of Ontario and Nova Scotia would not benefit from the measure in a substantial way. As a result of the discussion with the provinces it was agreed that we would for nine of them arrive at the figure of .45 per cent, which enabled us to cover Ontario. Nova Scotia was recognized by all of the provinces as having a special situation. If the figures of .45 were to apply to them, under the information that we had available to us, we would have been penalizing that province more than any other province. Therefore, we made the proposal to them which we are now considering, that instead of beginning in the case of Nova Scotia at .45 we would begin with them in the first year at .30; in the second year, at .35; in the third year, at .40; and in the fourth year at .45. This was agreed to by all of the provinces. Everyone recognized that Nova Scotia had a special case and therefore the figure of .45