

Unemployment Assistance

Mrs. Fairclough: If that is not the case I should like to hear the figures that actually apply. Certainly the minister made that remark, and a great deal of what I had to say was based upon that premise. If that is the case, and you start with your .45 per cent, which represents in effect your basic hard core—it is said that the poor are always with us, and undoubtedly some of these are always with us, and the provinces and municipalities always have to include charges for them—you wipe those out and then you start chopping at the additional assistance which must now be given by the province under the terms of these agreements. You say you cannot charge this, you cannot charge that and you cannot charge something else.

You put a person on your relief rolls. I do not care whether or not the federal authorities co-operate in it; you put them on your relief rolls, and there is much more to be provided for them than merely food, shelter and clothing. They are bound to be ill. For one thing, they do not get the nourishment they ordinarily would have. If the breadwinner for the family has no job and is not making normal wages they get by on a mere subsistence. So naturally they are going to be ill; they cannot help it. All those costs are added to the municipal costs, which in turn are shared. Granted they have not been heretofore, and I am talking of cases of unemployed employables. Those costs have not been shared heretofore by the province or the federal authority. If the municipalities out of ordinary humanity, took care of these people, then they were saddled with these costs. They were a 100 per cent charge on the ratepayers of that municipality. That is one of the things that has obtained and one of the reasons why all along we have tried to urge the government to do something for the municipalities in this regard.

It is not right that ordinary care for people who are unable to take care of themselves should be a charge solely on real estate, and that is the only place where the municipalities gain their income. If you start to chop off these amounts here and there and say that you will not allow medical costs, you will not allow hospital costs, you will not allow this and you will not allow that, this is not 50 per cent even of the amount over and above the basis of .45 per cent. You take the amount you refuse to allow, and then you saddle the provinces and municipalities with the cost of administration. I do not know how far down the scale you are going, but it will be a long way.

Mr. Martin: If I gave my friend that impression about the effect of the hard core figure, I certainly wish to correct it at once.

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Take the province of Saskatchewan. The .45 per cent would represent a figure of 4,000. From the figures given to us by Saskatchewan for February, 1955, the total was 8,052.

Mrs. Fairclough: The minister is quoting the figures for February. What about the June figures? Those were the ones you quoted as hard core.

Mr. Martin: Those were the last figures given by the province.

Mrs. Fairclough: You are now quoting the figures for which I asked you earlier and which you did not have.

Mr. Martin: You mean June of—

Mrs. Fairclough: Any year. Get into the summer months, when unemployment is at a minimum.

Mr. Martin: In June of a previous year the total was 72,118.

Mrs. Fairclough: What year?

Mr. Martin: The same year, 1954. We would be paying on that for about 3,200. In the case of Newfoundland, the latest available figure I have is for March, 1955. The hard core there would be 1,854, and the total persons involved would be 21,419.

Mrs. Fairclough: We are getting nowhere. You are taking one of the worst months we have had for unemployment in the history of this country for many years, March of 1955. You are quoting the figures of persons on assistance for that month, and you had previously said that the hard core is in the middle of summer, which anyone should know. You told me that .45 per cent was the top figure. Now you are starting to quote the middle of the winter figure. Let us have them all in one month.

Mr. Martin: Would July satisfy my hon. friend?

Mrs. Fairclough: Yes.

Mr. Martin: Let us take July, 1955, which is the last retroactive payment period. The hard core would be 1,854. That is the .45 per cent.

Mrs. Fairclough: This is Newfoundland?

Mr. Martin: Newfoundland; and the number shareable is 13,878.

Mrs. Fairclough: Give us some other provinces.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Take them all. Let us have the figures for the same month all the way through.

Mr. Martin: Prince Edward Island.

An hon. Member: Let us get them all.