

Unemployment Assistance

reasons they did not feel that such an agreement was advantageous to them.

Mr. Martin: I have already dealt with the sole obstacle in the case of Alberta, so I do not need to deal with that matter any more. It was the question of residence. I cannot at this moment give you what were the reasons which persuaded the government of Quebec not to enter the scheme as of this date. I do not know what they were. As to the province of Nova Scotia, I have outlined that we were all agreed, all nine provinces, that Nova Scotia should be treated as a special case because .45 per cent did not seemingly cover the normal statistic of unemployed in both categories.

Last Friday I discussed this matter with the premier of Ontario. If I may put it this way, may I say that I do not feel I should be called upon to reveal—it would not be fair for me to do so—the character of the observations he made, except that I can say I am hopeful that Ontario will come in. I must be frank and say that one of the reasons Premier Frost had in mind for not coming in was that he felt that, in the package deal in 1945, we had at least given the impression—that is the way he put it to me—that we were prepared to accept 100 per cent responsibility for the unemployed employable group not covered by unemployment insurance.

I was obliged to tell him that I could not accept that interpretation of the situation. I had to tell him that in 1945 what we had agreed to do was accept for a limited period responsibility for that group; that we had brought in unemployment insurance; and that while it was understandable to say there was a logical responsibility on us that flowed from that, we had not in fact in the proposals made that offer. I have already quoted references to prove that statement is not only borne out by my own interpretation but by the interpretation of others in this house.

What we are doing in this bill now, I think, is being appreciated by the province of Ontario to a greater extent, I think I may say, than when we discussed this matter at the full conference. Having in mind the basic figure on that date, and including the retro-active period, there will be some 23,000 involved in Ontario, and three-quarters of those would be unemployed unemployable people. Since that was a responsibility we had certainly not agreed to, whatever may be the argument on the other count in 1945, we certainly were entering a field where the provinces would receive at our hands a measure of assistance which was certainly not contemplated in 1945.

I do not know that, in the case of Ontario, in view of the discussions with the premier, I would be fair in going any farther. I do not know if I have satisfied my hon. friend, but if I have not she will be good enough to so indicate.

Mrs. Fairclough: I did not expect the minister to give me any information that was given him in confidence, but bearing in mind that this letter does refer to other correspondence, and also to the fact that when I asked the minister yesterday where the correspondence with the provinces was he said it had been tabled—

Mr. Martin: Was I in error?

Mrs. Fairclough: Yes. It has not been tabled. I cannot find it anywhere.

Mr. Martin: I am sorry.

Mrs. Fairclough: When I asked earlier the minister said, if my memory serves me, that he would deal with that and would have the correspondence here.

Mr. Martin: I thought it was tabled.

Mrs. Fairclough: No, it was not. When the minister refers to this I presume he means the 23,323 he mentioned earlier. He said, with regard to the 23,000, that a certain percentage were unemployed employables. I draw to the minister's attention that Ontario is still going to pay for all those 23,000, because 23,000 still does not come up to the .45 per cent which is the basis on which the agreement was made.

Mr. Martin: The 23,000 is the hard core.

Mrs. Fairclough: But the .45 per cent amounts to 27,000, so they could still have another 4,000 for whom they would have to pay on the same basis as they pay for indigents and other relief, before they would even begin to qualify for the 50 per cent of the amount paid over-all.

An hon. Member: The same as any other province.

Mrs. Fairclough: Somebody says, "The same as any other province." That is true. I am simply using it as an illustration, because those are the only figures I have here. I thought it would be interesting to take one of the provinces presently under the agreement and take the figure for those who are receiving assistance as of June, the same date the minister gave for Ontario, and then take the figures for the highest period of unemployment. That does vary by provinces. In Ontario it runs along about the middle of February, as a general rule. In some of the other provinces it runs as late, I believe, as