

Supply—Privy Council

made in advance for the evacuation of the civil departments from London and for the evacuation of certain offices such as Canada House to the country. Two men in each office, the high commissioner and his secretary, had been given information as to what to do when the emergency occurred. However, we were given it in very guarded terms, and we were only told that when we got a signal we were to send an advance party to a certain spot on a map and they would get further instructions then where to go.

Our advance party was ready within a couple of hours of the declaration of war. We received a telephone call and sent the advance party to point X on the map, where they were to get further instructions; but the ordnance map was of 1921 vintage, and the pinpoint for further instructions had been made on that map. When our advance party got to this particular position the pinpoint, which was a house, was not there. It had disappeared some years before.

So there can be hitches even in the best of plans. That was a simple operation compared to that with which we will be faced if this dread emergency ever occurs now. It is well that we should be planning for it, but it is more important that we should be working in our respective ways to prevent a situation that will ever require these plans to be put into effect.

Mr. Fisher: These plans are certainly worthy of the comments made about them by the Leader of the Opposition. One point which I think is worth bringing to the attention of the Prime Minister at this time is that last week there was a meeting in the United States, I believe in Vermont, to go into all the effects of atomic radiation. I know that the meetings of scientists at Geneva in connection with detecting the testing of nuclear explosions were very important, but it was most disappointing to me to learn that Canada had no official representatives in attendance at the meeting considering the effects of atomic radiation. I understand there were only two government observers in attendance, but their role was that of observer.

In plans for the future concerning how civil government will continue one assumes that a major aspect of the problem will be instruction with regard to radiation and the effect of fall-out. The failure of the government to have an official representative at the Vermont meeting seemed to me an indication that in this area the government was not following things perhaps as closely as one might wish.

I wish to bring up a point which at first glance may appear to be rather petty and

[Mr. Pearson.]

ticklish. It was noticed last year when statements were made in the United States that reflected on the political tenets and loyalty of the secretary of the privy council there were very sharp replies forthcoming from the Canadian government, which were quite appreciated, dismissing the whole idea and protesting against the views that were expressed.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member is embarking on another subject I wonder if we cannot dispose of this subject on which I yielded to the Prime Minister, in order to dispose of it. I am not seeking to interrupt the hon. member for Port Arthur, but I had the floor first in committee and yielded to the Prime Minister to make a statement on this particular subject.

Mr. Fisher: On the particular subject about which I am speaking?

Mr. Pickersgill: Are you still speaking about the subject of future planning?

Mr. Fisher: No.

Mr. Pickersgill: That was my point.

Mr. Fisher: I will yield the floor.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, what has been said by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate is correct. I want to hear the hon. member for Port Arthur as he explains his views in this connection at the conclusion of the discussion of this matter.

I wish to say to the Leader of the Opposition I appreciate the benefit of his ideas and the recital of his experiences. He suggested there should be very close co-operation and communication with the United States and United Kingdom, and I may say in reply that we are in close touch not only with the United Nations, the United States and the United Kingdom but with NATO as well. Canadian officials concerned with these matters visit London, Washington and Paris on these questions, and United States officials have come to Ottawa at our invitation to discuss relations between their plans and ours. In consideration of the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition I thought I should point out that action in this regard is being taken.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if I may make a suggestion to the Prime Minister. I thought the item called was item No. 308. That is the item on which I wish to speak. But if the Prime Minister would wish you to call item No. 313 first in order that it might be passed that would be quite agreeable to me.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes, 313 could be called and passed.