

Supply—Health and Welfare

or someone else wants to take a goldfish, or bedding and other personal belongings. Evacuation is an impossibility, I think.

Civil defence may have worked all right. There has been a great deal of credit given to the leadership that has been supplied at Arnprior in the civil defence school. I know many of the people who have taken the courses and they have been very impressed with the training that they received. The government has failed to give leadership in deciding what civil defence itself is going to do. I know many important people in communities in my area who have volunteered to assist in civil defence and have been very disillusioned and dissatisfied with the opportunities they get for doing anything that is constructive or anything that appears to them to be worth while. Though they are willing to give up their time on a voluntary basis, they are very often, in a very short time, disillusioned with the orders and the multitude of directions and instructions that come from all sorts of places, and they are never sure just who runs it, who is responsible for it and where it is going. Under the system that has been devised and outlined tonight I think they are going to be even more confused because the heads of the various departments from whom they are going to take direction are going to be divided again into a number of departments.

This civil defence matter is much more important to the Canadian people than the defence department itself will be or could be. In case of an attack Canada is not going to be defended. We should face the fact that we cannot defend. If we do this, then we have to face the fact that we should try to do something to help the poor people who are going to be left in what many consider to be a defenceless position. This is going to take a good deal of study if we are to save even that half of the population that the hon. member for Port Arthur said may exist after a bomb is dropped and the radiation has finally settled.

The department should look very closely at some of the other agencies that have been very active and very helpful in cases of disaster. I am referring particularly to the experience that was gained in the city of Toronto at the time of hurricane Hazel. They found there that the civil defence organization, although it was very young, was of very little use. They found that the army was of absolutely no use at all. The other services were in the same category, no use; but they did find that two organizations which were not expected to be involved were of a great deal of value. One of them was the Bell Telephone Company and the other was

[Mr. Peters.]

Hydro. Without going into the details, the officials who were connected with civil defence at that time pointed out that they were operated in such a way that there was an individual responsible for a unit. They could move the unit around themselves; whereas the army was a unit to start with and it was very hard to break it down and to delegate responsibility; once an order was given, then that order was carried out and that was that. But with these other organizations that are built up on a truck unit or a very small unit basis, they could expand into a very large group under the authority of the person responsible for the original unit.

This matter should be given very close consideration. The minister should put out a direction. If he cannot do it by tabling the brief that he had prepared, then he should make available the much more comprehensive document that has already appeared on this subject, so that again the people in the small communities, the leadership that is being given from the civic point of view, will again be enticed into the civil defence organization and be again in a position where they will be of some help in this organization and continue to do the work that is going to be absolutely necessary if civil defence is going to be of any success at all.

Item agreed to.

The Deputy Chairman: This completes the estimates of the Department of National Health and Welfare. The committee will now take up the estimates of the Department of Finance.

DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

General administration—

106. Departmental administration, \$2,461,599.

Mr. McMillan: Is the minister going to make a statement?

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance): Mr. Chairman, I think there is no occasion for any statement on the part of the minister. All questions pertaining to matters of policy related to the Department of Finance, I think, have been discussed during the course of this present session on many occasions; indeed to the point where I think they are—

Mr. Chevrier: Threadbare.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): "Threadbare" is the word. I said that on a previous occasion, Mr. Chairman. Therefore, I will simply content myself with the observation that I am asking the committee to approve estimates of this department totalling \$1,261,434,605 in the main estimates and \$5,155,000 in the supplementary estimates.