

Supply—Privy Council

all fields, but especially in regard to clarifying their functions, their organization and staff training to further improve their emergency capability.

To date in these exercises people generally have been requested to participate in a passive sense only. In fact, the aspect of these exercises aimed at the general public has formed a part of the over-all program of information and education on national survival matters. It is also becoming more and more apparent that although national exercises do achieve much, it is of concern that not enough attention has been paid to the subject of municipalities. While a considerable number of municipalities, actually some hundreds, participated in the exercise, greater efforts must be directed to having municipalities participate more fully, because in the event of a nuclear catastrophe this is the level of government which will feel the first impact. Possibly by recasting our concept of exercises we could achieve more. We have therefore been encouraging provincial governments to conduct exercises within provinces whereby greater emphasis will be placed on exercising municipal governments.

During the early phases of Tocsin B in which the continent was being subjected to a combined bomber and missile attack, it was apparent that our recommendations to the public on steps they should take to ensure their survival, on the basis of public warning systems, needed some modification. A general assessment of the exercise, however, indicates that it achieved its main objectives and reflected a considerable advance over the exercise of May, 1961. Hon. members will recognize that much remains to be done to ensure that fully comprehensive plans for national survival are developed. One of the purposes of these exercises is to test the advances that we make from time to time and to direct attention to the next stage.

That represents a summary of an exercise which was extensive and which was also much more effective and efficient than had been the one in May. This is one of the reasons for the exercises, to learn where there are shortcomings and, having learned, to act in order to prevent a recurrence.

Mr. Chairman, I think that in general covers my statement in respect of this matter. I again say to the hon. member for Essex East and to the hon. member for Peterborough that I appreciate very much having the benefit of their views, because both have studied this matter. All hon. members who have anything to contribute in this connection will receive the fullest co-operation of the government. This is a matter that transcends partisan considerations, the survival of our people to the largest degree possible.

That is the responsibility of government. It is also the responsibility of all our people to join together, as they did on these two occasions, in a national spirit of co-operation for the benefit of each and all.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, I think the committee will welcome the statement the Prime Minister has made. It was a comprehensive statement on this subject, the importance of which it is difficult for us even to conceive. While I do not propose to hold up the passage of this estimate, I do not apologize for saying a few words on this matter in the light of what the Prime Minister has said, nor indeed do I think we need apologize for discussing these supplementary estimates at a much greater length than would normally be the case, in view of the fact that we have no assurance that any of the subjects concerned with them will be open for discussion during the remainder of the session.

Especially in connection with civil defence we do desire to take advantage of this opportunity to listen to the policy of the government as it has been expressed by the Prime Minister and to add our own views, which might have some bearing on that policy. This is an item which does raise the whole question of co-ordination by the government of measures of civil defence. While the Prime Minister has stated, as did the Minister of National Defence before him, that the government is satisfied that these measures are efficient and would be effective in the awful emergency which is contemplated in case they ever had to be used, we cannot on this side of the chamber ignore the fact—and this has been pointed out this afternoon—that there are others who are not nearly so satisfied as to the effectiveness of these measures and their co-ordination. When those people include the premier of Manitoba and certain municipalities in the country, then we have, I think, good justification for expressing our anxiety that perhaps everything is not as perfect as we would like it to be and as the government undoubtedly hopes that it is.

Therefore this afternoon we have put forward some suggestions and proposals and we have asked some questions. The Prime Minister has this afternoon dealt with one of these questions; that is, the measures that have been adopted to enable a government to be carried on in the awful emergency, or in the awful fact of nuclear destruction. We had assumed on this side of the chamber that there was being constructed not very far away, we believed, from Ottawa what perhaps might fairly be designated as a national command post in which the effort to ensure survival and reorganize the life of the country after nuclear attack would be centred.