

*Supply—Privy Council*

I do not propose to embark on idle criticism because this is a very difficult question, and this was noted by the hon. member for Peterborough. This is too important a matter to permit idle criticism to dominate what one has to say. This does not mean that there are not some things that should be put forward which are agitating the public mind. We must recognize that the difficulties which attend the formulation of civil defence policy are being experienced in countries other than our own, but I think it is only fair to say that, particularly since we last discussed this matter in the house, there is throughout the country, rightly or wrongly, among the people and on the part of those holding office in provincial and municipal governments a feeling that more direction should come in certain aspects of civil defence activity than is now the case.

The premier of Manitoba indicated recently that because there was no clearcut policy as to shelters, he was no longer going to use the private shelter which he had built, and he was not going to encourage citizens of the province of Manitoba to engage in the construction of shelters. I asked the Prime Minister a question about this last week; I asked if he had any comment to make on this statement by the premier of Manitoba. The Prime Minister said he had not seen the statement and on that account could not make a reply at that time. I think it will be expected of him that before we reach the hour of five o'clock he indicate if there is any ground for the action taken by the premier of Manitoba.

Last year when we discussed this problem of public shelters, the Prime Minister stated that the government believed, and I think rightly so, that a considerable avoidance of human destruction and suffering could be avoided by the use of shelters. I think that is a valid statement. I notice that only the other day Mr. John Gelner, a specialist in this and military fields, said that those who opposed the use of shelters under private or public auspices are simply engaging in an unmistakably irresponsible course. The question is not whether we can relieve ourselves from damage in the event of thermonuclear war by the use of shelters, but whether we are going to have a shelter policy that is non-discriminatory. That really is one of the important issues at this time and it is being discussed in the country.

The government has not indicated that it proposes to give any financial assistance in the building of public shelters. That was the statement of policy of the government given by the Prime Minister when we discussed this matter in 1961. We have a right to ask the

government if that continues to be the government's view. Is it simply going to continue to encourage, through publications and through the information services, the Canadian people to build basement shelters or shelters above the ground? Is it going to provide for loans under the existing arrangement? Is that the extent of the policy? We are entitled to know what the government proposes to do about this. We are entitled to know this particularly because in the United States there has been, as the hon. gentleman for Peterborough pointed out, a change of policy.

When we discussed this matter last year the Prime Minister was in a position to say that the United States were pursuing a policy of encouraging the American people to build their own shelters and that shelters could be built by private individuals at various prices, but down to a figure manageable for certain income groups. Since that time, as I say, a change has been made in United States policy. The President of the United States announced that the government of that country was going to engage in a program of assisting in the building of public shelters and they were going to spend a considerable sum of money toward reaching that objective.

Is the government going to continue with the policy enunciated last fall, or is it going to do what has been done in the United States, where the government of that country in the month of December announced a program of \$700 million to build community shelters for 20 million people. The money under that program is to be spent in a 12 month period starting July 1, 1961 and a major share of the shelters under this program is to go to schools, universities and other non-profit institutions.

As I say, this marks a sharp reversal in United States policy. It no longer makes the provision of shelter the responsibility of the individual citizen; the government of that country now accepts this responsibility, and this proposal appears to be the first step in a much larger program. What is the attitude of our government?

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Has that received congressional approval?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I think it is still being discussed in congress, but it went from the president to congress. I think I saw something only the other day about there having been an increase in the amount proposed. The president proposed \$700 million and I think it was Senator Douglas who has almost doubled that amount to take care of a much wider area of shelters.