

*Supply—Civil Defence*

judging from our previous experience and the previous times when our expectations have fallen to the ground.

Some of the citizens of Montreal have realized and accepted their responsibilities in civil defence, their responsibilities to their fellow citizens. They have taken action and formed, in the city of Montreal, a civil defence organization without any help from anybody. I would pay tribute in that respect to the Notre Dame de Grace community council from which, as the minister well knows, this whole approach stems. This civil defence organization is meeting regularly and it is representative of a fairly large group in the city. It is doing its best to make what progress it can.

However, Mr. Chairman, I come now to my direct plea to the minister. No organization of this kind can continue without support from somebody official. It seems to me quite obvious that in the immediate future the city of Montreal is not going to give it the necessary support. I would remind the minister that the financial support cannot be forthcoming until next June because the city budget which was passed last March, 1956, covers the period until next June. This organization cannot then, at the present time, look to the city for immediate assistance. On the other hand, it urgently requires, as I understand it, three things. It requires a place to meet, it requires equipment with which to work, and it requires protection for its members in the course of their work and in the course of their duties.

Now the minister has always claimed that the only way to help local organizations in the field, such as the one I have suggested, is through the municipalities and through the provinces. But the minister will also admit that these restrictions have been arrived at as part of the regulations and not as part of the legislation. To the best of my knowledge—I was only able to make a quick search this morning—there is no legislation on the law books of Canada, which would prohibit the minister moving tomorrow if he wished to do so to assist an individual local organization which is separate from its municipality. That is exactly the case we have here now. We have a civil defence organization which cannot get assistance through the regular channels. It wants to do a job and it needs help from the federal government, help which is being doled out in the hundreds of thousands of dollars right across the rest of this country.

I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that the minister has a very clear-cut decision in front of him. Is he going to allow the over 1 million citizens of the city of Montreal to be put in

[Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace).]

imminent peril through the non-existence of a civil defence organization there because he refuses to make the necessary regulations to assist the local civil defence organization, or is he going to take the statesmanlike step of assisting this organization in its work? Otherwise, at this moment I see no hope for it to grow, no hope for it to prosper and little expectation for it to continue beyond—

**Mr. Martin:** May I ask a question?

**Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace):** Yes.

**Mr. Martin:** I have been very interested in what my hon. friend has said because he knows that I share his concern about Montreal. Has the voluntary group to which he refers established any connection as yet with the municipal government, or does he know?

**Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace):** They have definitely established no official connection.

**Mr. Martin:** But there have been talks?

**Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace):** To the best of my knowledge, there have been talks; in fact specifically there have been talks between this defence organization and certain city councillors, which led to the motion that I told the committee about a little while ago.

But, as I was pointing out, it is now the decision of the minister. It is unfortunate that he has been put into this position because the civic authorities in Montreal have chosen to follow a course of action which many people question, but we must face realities.

In the minister's estimates last night there were such sums as several thousand dollars for each of various organizations. There was \$4,500, if I remember correctly,—and it was very much appreciated and very much needed—for the Montreal institute for the blind. There is no impediment, legislative or otherwise, to give similar help to a civil defence organization in Montreal. Later on when the day of danger and reckoning comes, it could be a potent factor in saving hundreds of thousands of lives. If the minister really believes that civil defence is necessary in the major centres of Canada he cannot refuse this request.

**Mr. Leboe:** I do not intend to take more than a minute of the committee's time, but I should like to say that I do agree with what the hon. member for Wetaskiwin said about evacuation. Anyone travelling west from here, who travels through the city of Spokane, Washington, will realize the advantage of having some scheme by which