

Supply—National Defence

an hon. member makes a statement, what the other hon. member has to do is to accept it. The hon. member for Trinity has accepted the statement, and that is the end of it. The hon. member had better read the rules.

Mr. Harkness: He did not accept it. He repeated it. He repeated the falsehood.

Mr. Hellyer: The minister is obliged to accept the statement I made.

Mr. Harkness: I do not need to accept hearsay evidence such as that put forward by the hon. member for Trinity. I know of my own knowledge that this statement is an absolute falsehood. The hon. member should apologize for having made that statement in this chamber.

Mr. Hellyer: The minister gave us a good deal of hearsay evidence in this House of Commons.

An hon. Member: Withdraw.

The Deputy Chairman: I recognize the hon. member for Peterborough.

Mr. Pitman: Under the responsibilities given the Canadian army comes the system of warning. Although I raised this matter previously, I feel that I cannot leave it on the present basis. I feel that there is something wrong with the system of warning that we are at present using. There are a great many sirens spread across this nation, and they have become something of a joke in many communities which I have visited. I do not know when the decision was taken to use this type of siren. I should like to have that information. I should like to know who produces these sirens, whether this type of siren is used in the United Kingdom or the United States, and the total cost of the siren system so far. I do know that these sirens do not have the confidence of a great many of the people who are working in the emergency measures organization.

At page 293 of *Hansard* for January 29, 1962 hon. members will find a question I asked with regard to siren failures during exercise Tocsin B last fall. Across this nation 53 of these sirens failed to sound at all and there were 70 partial failures. The centres involved were Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Belleville, Toronto, Fort William, Oshawa, Sault Ste. Marie, Windsor and Essex among others. All these areas were affected by siren failures.

I do not think those of which have sounded have ever been very successful, and the only procedure that has been adopted has been simply to throw in more sirens at a cost which I think is becoming almost unreasonable. The sirens have a high pitched tone

[Mr. Chevrier.]

which I think is extremely unfortunate. During the debate last year, on September 14, 1961 I asked the minister a question with regard to the testing of these sirens. His reply was that the only way in which you can get a test which will be valid in various parts of Peterborough or anywhere else is on outside audibility. Later he said that the only way in which you can get any sort of test which is standard or uniform is on outside audibility. I have here in my hand a form which was circulated in my city with regard to siren audibility.

Mr. Chambers: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I do not want to restrict the hon. member too much but there are no funds provided in this vote for the purchase of equipment and, specifically, no funds for the purchase of sirens.

Mr. Pitman: I am sure the parliamentary secretary will agree that this money for the Canadian army will be spent in part on the salaries of those who are maintaining these sirens. Perhaps we can go on. With regard to siren audibility, there was on that form a place for comment respecting both outside and inside audibility. I think this should be made very clear. It certainly was not made clear in the minister's remarks last year, when he indicated that the tests were made on the basis of outside audibility and that so far as inside audibility was concerned the sirens simply were not heard.

I have some indication that something is being done in this area with regard to some possible form of non-siren warning system. I express the sincere hope that something very important is taking place in this field, because to my way of thinking the sirens which have been bought are not very worth while. I can cite the opinions of several of my constituents who were overseas during the last war and who are familiar with sirens which certainly were loud enough almost to wake a person from the dead. They tell stories of hearing 10 or 15 different sirens turned on. This is certainly not true of the sirens we are using now.

I should like some information on why this type of siren was used. Are there any other countries using it? I should also like more information on what the alternatives are to this siren, and when we may expect an alternative warning device to be in use across the country.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Chairman, at the time of the last exercise we had over 500 sirens in operation. At the present time we have upward of 1,000 and by the end of July we will have something over 1,600 in operation. There