

*Supply—Privy Council*

There was a mention made of the exercise in November and I think the hon. gentleman from Peterborough said that there should be some report given to the house. The exercise was planned to practise manning and operation of emergency government headquarters at all levels and, in particular, to test the capability for emergency government in those aspects where weaknesses were revealed in the May exercise. When I last spoke in the house on this subject I quite frankly admitted that there were shortcomings in the May exercise. I did not conceal them. We did not try to paper over the cracks in the wall. We realized that there were shortcomings and we had a further exercise based on the experience of May, designed not only to remove those shortcomings that had been ascertained earlier, but also to expand and extend the field of operations. Special informative programs on radio and television were arranged. The provincial premiers were advised of the decision to hold the exercise and their co-operation was requested. Each and every one of them gave that co-operation very fully. The initial assessment, and this is one that has not been arrived at loosely, is that the exercise fulfilled its primary purpose.

There was some comment that it was unrealistic because of the short duration and the nature of the assumed attack. The hon. member for Peterborough said they had not purported to use as large bombs as could have been used. I do not really get the point of that. It was the exercise and not the size of the cause of the exercise with which we were concerned.

The general purpose of the exercise was not to test the size of the instruments that would be used against us or their effectiveness. Indeed the effects of a bomb do not increase in proportion to the increase in size. The exercise was designed to test our basic arrangements for survival. We recognize that should nuclear war ever take place there may well be longer periods of attack and greater disorganization that was apparent from the exercise. Nevertheless I want to emphasize that not only we, but also those responsible in the provinces, agree that these exercises have helped greatly to develop a basic capability of ensuring that there will be in existence a framework of government services to provide guidance and leadership to the country.

As in the May exercise, federal participation was quite complete with maximum numbers participating. Provincial participation, especially at the senior level, represented a considerable advance over the May exercise, and reflected substantial progress in provincial planning between May and November.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

At the central federal exercise headquarters, 17 federal departments and agencies actively participated in the exercise. I remained at 24 Sussex street, in continuing communication. An exercise cabinet consisting of the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Defence, the Postmaster General, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, the Minister of Defence Production and the Minister without Portfolio met on a shift basis throughout the 24 hour period of the exercise. They were supported by a staff, including deputy ministers and other senior officers, of some 215 persons.

With regard to the previous exercise, it was noted and commented on by the hon. member for Vancouver East that during the time in which the federal government moved from Ottawa to the exercise headquarters it risked being ineffective, due to a lack of communications. This problem was met in Tocsin B by reorganizing the advance party to include in it members of cabinet and an improved staff capability. This solved the problem to which the hon. member made reference, after a very complete and thoroughgoing examination of the May exercise.

As well as the reinforced advance party, additional measures and safeguards may be necessary and are being investigated. Furthermore—and I have already mentioned the question of the drafting of federal emergency regulations and orders—in the May exercise there were difficulties. As a result of that experience sets of these draft regulations and orders were made available in all the provinces when the emergency exercise began. There was a complete review of all the possible contingencies that could arise that required regulations. These were drafted by a committee, the Clerk of the Privy Council assuming a large degree of responsibility in this connection. All these draft regulations, extensive as they are, are now being reviewed in the light of the comments received on the November exercise.

There was also a considerable improvement in departmental organization and training. There has been considerable continuity in staff from previous exercises, and as a result all departments were able to make advances in exercising their emergency organization and fulfilling their functions at such a time.

Many departments, in addition to their staffs at central and regional facilities, operated for the first time comparatively large operational staffs at departmental relocation sites. It is probable that most of these latter departments came out of the exercise with a clear view of the steps they need to take in