

Supply—National Defence

This matter also has some importance from the point of view of defence. As I have indicated, Halifax is the headquarters of the three defence services in that area, and in addition there are very important defence installations in the city and the immediately surrounding country. If an emergency should arise during which important military operations had to be undertaken immediately, we might have the evacuation of casualties and the civil population going on at the same time. This would result in inadequate road facilities having to cope with the almost insuperable problem of evacuation, and the defence services using the same transportation and communications facilities for their very essential and important purposes.

I ask the minister to give this problem earnest consideration. We in Halifax and Nova Scotia recognize the share of responsibility that must be accepted by municipal and provincial governments in matters of this kind, but I would ask the minister to consider the problem from the point of view of both civil defence and national defence so that an early solution may be found. I think it is a problem that has to be faced by all levels of governments concerned, and I request the minister to give it his most serious consideration.

Mr. Fulton: As the minister pointed out in reply to the hon. member for Cape Breton South, his statement dealt with the basis of division as among dominion, provincial and municipal authorities of the financial and physical responsibility for the program of civil defence. There are, however, a certain number of questions of detail which remain unanswered and do not appear clearly at least from listening to the minister's statement; and I rather doubt if they will appear clearly when we have had an opportunity to read it. The most important question can be put in this form, perhaps. Have the civil defence authorities reached the point yet where they can estimate the total over-all cost of the program of civil defence they have outlined? I do not mean what it will cost to put a program of civil defence into effect in the event of enemy attack, because I am sure that could not be estimated with any degree of accuracy. I mean the cost of putting into organizational practicality the plans the minister now has on paper. Is there any estimate yet as to what those plans will cost, covering such things, for instance, as the adoption of a uniform coupling in fire-fighting services, the training of first aid personnel, and so on? These are things that can be estimated now. Has any estimate been made of the cost of placing this program in a state of readiness within the fiscal year?

[Mr. Dickey.]

If there is such an estimate, what shares are to be borne by the dominion, the province and the municipality respectively?

I think those questions should be answered if possible, so the authorities concerned may know approximately what they will have to meet in the way of expenditure in order to put this program on a practical basis. Then I would like to bring to the minister's attention the position of the smaller municipalities which normally would not be likely targets, certainly not targets with any high priority, but which by reason of defence installations in the purely military sense or defence production installations, which would not exist except in connection with either military or industrial preparedness, would have a much higher potential priority as targets than otherwise would be the case. Such a municipality, by virtue of its increased vulnerability and increased importance, must now undertake extra civil defence preparations. Is the cost of those preparations to be borne entirely by the municipality? In other words, is there simply a cut and dried program dividing the cost into such a percentage to be paid by the federal government, such a percentage by the provincial government, and such a percentage by the municipality, or will there be room for special cases to be dealt with on an individual basis? I agree with the hon. member for Lanark that it is not wise to alarm people unduly, but on the other hand neither is it wise to ignore these problems. Having that in mind I hesitate to name a particular area, but I have one very definitely in mind; and I think probably the minister knows what I mean. In that case the municipality, by reason of the sort of thing I have been describing, could certainly be expected now to have a very much higher priority as a target than it would otherwise. Therefore I think some special attention should be paid such places, both because of their higher priority and because of the fact that they are smaller centres and normally would not have available the resources necessary to meet this situation which has been thrust upon them. They should receive special attention from that point of view, and special assistance in working out civil defence preparations. I believe there should be some leeway so they might also receive a more generous proportion of assistance from the federal authorities than would be the case under a straight percentage basis which might be worked out for the over-all program. I would be grateful if the minister would deal with those questions in the course of this discussion.

Mr. Drew: If that covers the discussion of civil defence at this stage—