

*Supply—Privy Council*

in respect of these plans have been under way in the privy council office for the period mentioned. The basic plan is intended to provide for the control of mail and telecommunications entering and leaving Canada in the event of war so as to assure security with respect to information likely to be of value to the enemy in obtaining intelligence for wartime purposes, in connection with matters coming within the purview of the censors. In the field of press and broadcasting the basic plan provides for voluntary censorship at the outset on much the same lines that were followed during world war II, but flexible enough to meet new conditions.

As this is basically a security and intelligence function involving contacts with similar planning groups in the United Kingdom and the United States, all I have been able to give at this time is a very limited account of this aspect of our planning. If such a war should end shortly after this early shock period, then there would have to be a period of rehabilitation and reconstruction during which the functions of government would be more varied and complex as the immediate tasks gave way to those with longer term aspects. If war continued, however, the problem of government would be very difficult, particularly having regard to the necessity of allocating our surviving resources, if I may use that expression, among competing civilian and military demands.

To permit the government to adapt itself to the variety of contingencies which might arise in another major war, it is also necessary to develop organizational arrangements which, as I said a moment ago, must be flexible. Considering the possibility that there would be little or no warning of attack and having regard to the vulnerability of our communication and transportation facilities, the normal peacetime arrangements for government would be inadequate in the event of a major war. There is therefore a need, in our opinion, for the development of a decentralized federal system of emergency government with central, regional and some zonal elements. We intend to provide for a suitable central authority and to establish provincial, regional and zonal organizations through which a large amount of the work of the federal government could be carried on in time of war by the necessary delegation of authority to federal officers. We recognize, of course, that the assistance and co-operation of provincial and municipal governments will be necessary in the development of the regional and zonal organizations, and I expect very shortly to approach the provincial authorities and provincial governments in this connection.

In so far as the central authority is concerned—and the plans are still in a flexible

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

state—that authority would be based on a nucleus of ministers, officials, military officers and others at Ottawa and would operate, if necessary, with provision being made for such necessity through a number of dispersed locations outside of Ottawa.

As to the regional and zonal elements of organization, I think all hon. members will appreciate that it would be inappropriate, before discussions have been held with the provincial authorities, to say more than I have said in so far as the details are concerned.

The intention generally, however, is to have the federal regions correspond with the provincial boundaries as far as that is possible and practicable, and to recruit for each region on a stand-by basis a small staff of federal officers, mainly from the field organizations of the various federal departments who, in the event of war, would work in close co-operation with the essential elements of the provincial governments.

The zonal organizations may not be required everywhere in the country, but in the larger provinces at least there is a need for a level of wartime government to cover smaller areas than provinces but larger than the limits of one municipality. The zonal organization would require a mixed staff of federal and provincial officials as well as some representatives of elements of municipal governments within the zone.

Finally I would say that this concept of a decentralized federal system of emergency government, in which the provincial and municipal governments would be closely associated, will be sufficiently broad to accommodate considerable variation in its application to the differing situations across the country. It would also permit adjustment to whatever changes in civil defence policy arrangements might be considered desirable following the survey by General Graham as to civil defence requirements, announced to this house on June 11 last by the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

I think that in general represents a rather particular statement concerning a matter of which I gave the barest outline earlier this session. I dislike to repeat what I said at the beginning, but I feel that when announcements such as these are made there are some who might regard them as conveying potentialities which are not present. At the same time, the course of reality demands on the part of government the assurance to the people that should nuclear war come, government can be carried on.

**Mr. Pearson:** The Prime Minister has introduced into the quiet atmosphere of this committee a matter of—what shall I call it—almost cosmic importance. He has faced us