

The Need for Continued Effort

While the record of the past five years is marked with progress, there is still room for improvement. Development across the country has been by no means uniform. Some provinces and some cities have done an outstanding job; others have fallen somewhat short of what might be expected of them; a small minority have little or nothing to report in the way of concrete progress.

The objective of the period immediately ahead is to consolidate our gains and to encourage those provinces and those communities which have not yet reached the national standard to catch up with the others. This is of the utmost importance for, in civil defence, the safety and security of one community, or even of one country, may depend to a very large extent on the ability of its neighbouring community or country to come to its aid in the event of emergency.

In conclusion, let me stress that the value of civil defence to a community goes far beyond its immediate objectives. Besides their potential for protection in time of war, civil defence measures can have valuable peace-time application as well. In a serious peace-time disaster, a well-equipped and properly-trained civil defence force can be of inestimable value in maintaining public morale and in restoring normal conditions quickly in the stricken community. Recent disaster experiences have demonstrated conclusively that cities with well-organized civil defence services are able to cope with the situation much more effectively than those where civil defence organizations are deficient or non-existent.

The peace-time application of civil defence measures serves to underline one essential fact: that every civil defence activity has a humanitarian purpose, for the object of civil defence is not destruction but restoration - not to take life but to save it.

Preparation for civil defence is an immense task that can only succeed with widespread public interest and support. The best shield for Canada's civilian population is for this country and for other free countries to make sure, by growing strong, that war does not come. If, tragically, in company with the free nations, our efforts to keep the peace should fail, then we must be ready to meet the full weight of enemy attack. This can only be done if Canadians are prepared to stand up to any disaster in mature awareness of their responsibilities of citizenship.

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