

Supply—Civil Defence

great majority of mankind is very limited, and that in the case the best civil defence is to make sure that such a war does not break out.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Mr. Chairman, I have a few remarks to make on civil defence in connection with the specific problem which exists in Montreal. But before making them I should like to express my regret that the minister, on a problem of such national importance as is civil defence, saw fit to give this house such a dose of warmed-over soothing syrup as he delivered a few minutes ago in what were, I dare say, his preliminary remarks on the matter.

The danger about this approach of the minister and of his presentation at this time, Mr. Chairman, is that it leaves the house and the people of Canada with the impression that the minister is saying something new or something different or indicating that some progress has been made. The major tenor of the minister's remarks was to the effect that the government has decided that in this age of thermonuclear warfare it was necessary to evacuate the cities and that the government and the civil defence organization had prepared evacuation plans for Montreal, Toronto and so on across the country.

It sounds like progress but it is nothing but a rehash of exactly the same thing the minister has been saying for the last 18 months and which the minister has been working on for the past two and a half years. The minister can go back to the discussion on the estimates last year at about this same time when I dealt with this subject and when, by a comparison of speeches delivered at a meeting of the mayors and municipalities of Canada—speeches made by the minister, the head of the civil defence organization and by Val Peters, the head of the United States civil defence organization—I showed conclusively that we were undecided and unprepared in this matter of evacuation while the United States has been working on it for a year.

But let me introduce another proof at this point. Just a few minutes ago we heard the minister giving us the thrilling details—in his estimation, undoubtedly—of an evacuation plan. I hold in my hand a clipping from the *Montreal Gazette* of March 14, 1955. That would be 16 months ago. The heading is, "One-Way Traffic Out of City Included in Ottawa's Master Plan." I will just read you two or three short quotations to show you how the minister warms up this subject and dishes it out again and again:

"The only defence against the hydrogen bomb—if the enemy is going to drop a bomb on a city—is distance," Dr. G. F. Davidson, Canada's deputy minister of health and welfare and a civil defence expert, said last week.

[Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North).]

With this in mind, P. H. Fox, the federal government's chief civil defence transportation and communications officer, has prepared a blueprint for the evacuation of Montreal . . .

I interject at that point that the minister just a few minutes ago was talking about a blueprint for evacuation. We heard about "progressive evacuation" in the committee and again this morning as if progressive evacuation was something new. The minister finds new terms for old things. That is all he is doing. Sixteen months ago it was "pre-thinning" of the population. I quote again from this newspaper story:

However, Mr. Fox said there would be a certain amount of "pre-thinning" of the population. If the international situation grew worse and war appeared likely, 30 per cent of the population—331,500 people—would be evacuated from the danger area before any radar warning.

In order to show why I questioned the usefulness of the minister's remarks this morning, a final quotation from this article reads as follows:

The federal plan for the evacuation of Montreal has been shown to officials in this city. No action has been taken.

All of that is 16½ months ago. Mr. Chairman, in fairness to this house and in fairness to the devoted people across Canada who are giving of their time, energy and ability and are sometimes risking their lives in training to prepare themselves for civil defence, what right has the minister to come here and to stand up today and, under the guise of giving us something new, dish out material which was published in every newspaper in Canada 17 months ago? Had I the time and the inclination—and I may say I am not going to do it—I could go back and deal with the minutes of the special committee on estimates which dealt with civil defence. I am almost sure that every statement which is on that record can be traced back to previous announcements by the minister.

Mr. Martin: May I just intervene here, Mr. Chairman, in order to make an explanation to my hon. friend. I am sure he would wish it. I just walked across the floor to speak to the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich who I think would agree with what I am going to say. What I have said this morning has been said before. But the significance of what I said this morning was that this is now defined government policy. The hon. gentleman had asked me several months ago, in the special committee on estimates whether that was the case and my reply to him was that it was not, that the department was engaged in these tests. But since then the government of Canada as a whole has confirmed the desirability of maintaining these tests. That is the significance of