

*Civil Defence Responsibilities*

a real change, apart from the exceptions I have already noted, in the functions of the armed forces in the matter of civil defence except that they are to be carried out by virtue of receiving their authority presumably from the Minister of National Defence himself although the Prime Minister, so far as I can recall from the statement he read, did not say so specifically.

I note that the hospital and welfare services are to continue under the Minister of National Health and Welfare. This is as it should be and as I expected it would be, for obviously that department is best equipped to deal in a co-operative way with the provinces and the municipalities in the matter of medical and welfare care as part of the civil defence program.

The Prime Minister gives notice of the government's intention to provide, within certain categories of effort, increased financial assistance to the provinces, but I was not clear whether this also applied directly to the municipalities or whether this was an arrangement to be worked out by the provincial governments themselves. Such matters as traffic control and others that normally might be expected to reside with the provinces are to continue as before. In this connection the Prime Minister indicated that further use would be made of the police. One wonders whether or not this really represents an innovation, because under existing civil defence arrangements—and I think the Minister of National Health and Welfare will agree with me—the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, as indeed the armed forces of our country and certainly the militia under the militia act, are available by law and practice to the provincial governments in the discharge of civil defence functions.

The percentage of financial assistance to the provinces for certain phases of effort is now to be increased from 50 to 75 per cent. One wonders, however, whether that applies to the whole co-ordinated program of the federal government and the provinces. Under the arrangement which prevailed before these transfers of duties were announced, certain financial burdens were assumed by the three levels of government. With respect to the great proportion of civil defence obligations the federal government assumed 100 per cent. We presume that in the matter of certain supplies the 100 per cent arrangement will continue as heretofore.

Certain functions are now to be turned over to the office of the privy council. As the Minister of National Health and Welfare will attest, this matter was under consideration prior to June of 1957, and the step now taken is in principle one which I am sure

will commend itself to the house. The Prime Minister has indicated his view as head of the government of Canada that civil defence is a matter to be taken seriously.

All hon. members will acknowledge, of course, the very difficult assignment that is now reposed in the three divisions of the federal government, the Department of National Health and Welfare, the Department of National Defence, and the office of the privy council, whose duties and the results of whose duties likewise, I presume, will be reported to this house by the Prime Minister. If that is not the case we have yet to be told which minister will be responsible for reporting to the house and exercising ministerial jurisdiction over the co-ordinating role of the office of the privy council.

Nothing is said, of course, in the statement made by the Prime Minister as to the views of the government regarding the matter of evacuation. It will be remembered that when this matter was last discussed the present Minister of National Defence, who acted as spokesman for the then opposition in the matter of civil defence, basically, I think, agreed with the general position taken by the civil defence authorities as of two years ago with regard to evacuation. Great events have taken place since that time. The intercontinental ballistic missile is now a fact. The Soviet union has successfully launched projects involving the use of intercontinental ballistic missiles. What effect does this new scientific advance in war mean in terms of the policy of the government with regard to evacuation? Does evacuation continue, in the opinion of the government, to be its policy under, of course, now admittedly certain restricted circumstances?

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the house will welcome the statement in so far as it delineates the transfer of functions that has now taken place from the ministry of health and welfare to the two other departments of the government. But I am sure it would be both the Prime Minister's view and that of every hon. member in this house that this announcement today will not clearly establish the future character of civil defence in Canada. We will want to know what is to be the position of the civil defence council made up of the Minister of National Health and Welfare and his opposite numbers in the ten provincial governments. Is that council to continue? Is it going to have the same power which it had previously, or is it going to be subjected to the limitations involved in the transfer of functions from one minister to the two other departments? How many civil defence workers are there now in Canada? There were, as of June, 1957 some 250,000. Does that number still prevail? These and