

Supply—National Defence

have been making them. No one on this side of the committee suggested exercising control or conscription or anything of that nature over the graduates from these courses. That is a ridiculous interpretation of what we have said, and the minister knows it.

Mr. Harkness: There can be no other interpretation.

Mr. Pearson: Moreover, no one on this side has said anything reflecting in any way on the calibre of the men who are taking these courses or on the calibre of the instruction.

Mr. Churchill: You are in full retreat now.

Mr. Pearson: I said a few moments ago that only a minority of these graduates joined the forces, and the minister has confirmed that statement.

The minister has said that the names and addresses of the men are taken and that they are available to the municipalities and to the E.M.O. as well as to other organizations. They are available, but has the government taken any steps with regard to those graduates who do not join the forces, either regular or militia, to make sure that their names are brought to the attention of those organizations which might be able to use the expert services of these men in an emergency? Has the government made any effort whatever to keep in touch with these people after they have graduated? Has the government, for example, told them "If you change your address keep in touch, because we might be able to use your services in the future"? It is one thing to say that the names are available. I suppose the names and addresses of most people in this country are available if you want to hunt them up. Has the government taken any initiative in making arrangements so that the experience gained by the graduates of these courses who do not join the forces will be available to those who may need that experience, or do they just wash their hands of the whole affair once they leave the courses?

Some hon. Members: Carried.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Can the minister tell us how many of these graduates have gone into the civil defence organization and how many have joined the St. John ambulance association? Has the minister those statistics?

Mr. Harkness: No.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): That shows how serious the government is.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member says "That shows how serious the situation is" or something along those lines.

[Mr. Pearson.]

When he was in charge of civil defence in this country he did practically nothing for a long period of several years. When the hon. member was the minister in charge of civil defence he did practically nothing. Now he makes implications along these lines.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I do not propose to get into an argument with the hon. gentleman, Mr. Chairman, as he always comes out second best. I would simply say this. Assuming the validity of his argument, may I say this; and I am just assuming it. Of course we all know that when I was in charge of civil defence I could not possibly warrant the accusation which the minister has made against me. However, I am not on trial now. It is the minister who is on trial. What we wish to know is not what I did but what the Minister of National Defence is now doing. He has said that this organization has served not only its designated purpose but that its personnel is available to civil defence establishments in local areas, that it is open to voluntary organizations like the St. John ambulance association, which do much civil defence work. That is a statement by the minister. What we are asking is how many have gone into those organizations. Let us see whether there is anything in the statement the minister has made. If he cannot tell us, the only conclusion to which we can come is that the government has not had a follow-up system, that it does not know how many of these individuals who have received this training have gone into these various auxiliary organizations. If that is the situation, obviously the government is not doing its job.

Mr. Harkness: It is quite evident, Mr. Chairman, that the hon. member is either talking about something about which he has no idea or that he is trying to make a case without having anything to substantiate it. Quite obviously I have not the roll of the St. John's ambulance association or of all these voluntary organizations.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): We had when we were in office.

Mr. Harkness: I therefore have no means of determining how many graduates of these special militia courses have gone into these organizations. I have no means whatever of knowing. If I tried to set up a means of doing that it would cost a very large amount of money, and the hon. member would be complaining that I was wasting the taxpayers' money on personnel who were not in fighting units.

The Deputy Chairman: I recognize the hon. member for Peterborough.