

*Supply—National Defence*

can be mulled over and discussed in a sensible businesslike way in order to arrive at a solution that will mean something to the people of Petawawa.

**Mr. Fisher:** I should like to ask the minister a question with relation to special training. I have to set it against the context of the area I represent. In the southwest corner of the constituency of Port Arthur, which represents about one third of the land area of Ontario, we have a city in which there has been a rather successful response with regard to this special training program. However, across the constituency to the north we have the main arterial routes of the country in the trans-Canada highway, the Canadian National Railway, the Canadian Pacific Railway—the main transcontinental factors—plus the emergency and real air bases which form, as you might say, part of the spine of trans-Canada air transportation. I think we must assume that in any emergency measures program some consideration must be given to keeping this transportation system open.

I would ask the minister what provisions have gone into the planning of these courses in order to ensure that in the small transportation points across this, as you might say, spine of Canada, there are people who have training and background in emergency measures response. I would point out to him, for example, that we have six railway divisional points in the constituency, or eight if you wish to count subdivisional points. What arrangements have been made or what steps have been taken to encourage the employees of the two major railways who live in these places to have this training and in that way to make sure that in an emergency these centres will be able to respond?

I may tell him frankly that I raise the question because in going to these divisional points I find a certain interest in the course but a realization that from the financial point of view, very few of these employees are in a position to give up their work on their own and move say to Port Arthur, in most cases a distance of at least 150 miles, in order to take the training.

If the organization is to be effective, it seems to me that at those points which are important from the point of view of emergency transportation we should have people with training. It may be to the advantage of the lakehead cities that the 250 people who are being turned out from the course will assist the militia there in this development and will also be available in any emergency, but in terms of a real national emergency it

[Mr. Forgie.]

seems to me that transportation is quite important, and I have seen nothing to indicate that the department has any plans in this regard.

I will repeat the question. Can the minister indicate to us just what steps have been taken to ensure that in those areas without armouries or militia training centres there will be people who have had this training?

**Mr. Harkness:** Mr. Chairman, first of all I should like to make it clear that I am not the minister responsible for emergency measures generally. That falls under the Prime Minister's office. I am responsible for the survival and rescue operations and communications, by which I mean wireless communication and so forth, and the warning system. The training of people in places such as those to which the hon. member has referred would come under the emergency measures organization.

As far as the special militia training program is concerned, we are only in a position, of course, to carry it on where armouries and people who can act as instructors and administrative personnel actually are available.

**Mr. Fisher:** I am not going to argue that the course has no validity and is not worth while, but if it has validity should it not be particularly worth while to the people who live in these places? I want to know what steps have been taken—the minister must surely be aware of them—to encourage people from these important but distant transportation centres to take the training.

I will be quite candid as to why I am asking. I tried to find out from the department through the minister's office and really found out nothing. The whole thing seems to be up in the air. When I say it is up in the air I mean the provision of these plans across the country. The whole emphasis seems to be merely upon getting bodies into these courses. Surely it dovetails into some kind of plan, and that is what I am curious about. Can I put the question this way. Am I to understand from the minister's response that there is no plan to provide some modicum of trained people in transportation centres across the country if these centres do not happen to have armoury or militia training facilities?

**Mr. Harkness:** I can only repeat that as far as the special militia training program carried on by the army is concerned there is no plan. As I indicated, the training has been carried on and can be carried on only where armouries exist and where personnel are available to carry on the courses. What the emergency measures people as such may have done in order to train people in such places, I do not know. I do know they have made an