

*Supply—Civil Defence*

misled into thinking that we are in a position to do all of these things. We have carried out certain tests at Brandon, Calgary, Brockville and St. John's, Newfoundland. We are now giving some consideration with the United States to another evacuation.

This is a very difficult problem, but at the present time in the face of this cataclysmic potential—let us put it that way—there is nothing we can do other than to think in these terms. That is the view of other NATO countries which recently had a meeting; the collective view was that we should go on doing our best in the free world with these plans, perhaps predicating our view that in such preparations we were providing a deterrent of some sort, a discouragement of some sort, an insurance premium in any event, that might mean that some day these things would never be necessary.

The provinces are playing their part in this matter, generally speaking, and so are the communities. In what is admittedly a very difficult assignment, I am sure we shall continue to do the best we can. There can be no activity that would result, if war ever broke out, in our being able to save everyone. All we can do is minimize the blow and be prepared to minimize the horror that would result.

Again I wish to thank my hon. friend and the members of the committee for the valuable discussion and the help every one of them gave in this very difficult matter.

**Mr. Thomas:** I wish to thank the minister for the statement that he made regarding compensation for those defence workers. I certainly hope that the active consideration that he said was being given comes to a satisfactory conclusion and that those people do obtain compensation for their time and the damage and so on that they may suffer in the line of work, because those people are doing a wonderful service to their community and to Canada in general. They willingly give their time and labour in order to see that the communities in which they live are looked after in the event of not only an atomic attack or an enemy attack but, as has been pointed out, cases of a civilian disaster. The training they have received along those lines is the kind of training necessary for them to carry out their jobs in the best possible way.

Now I wish to make one suggestion to the minister. With regard to evacuation, I notice in the larger cities in the United States the highways are generally marked, "This highway will be closed in the event of air attack or enemy attack" or something like that. I should like to put this to the minister, that the highways around the major

cities in Canada could be marked in such a way, not necessarily that they will be closed but so that they will be laid out in a systematic way and so that some highways will lead in and some out. As far as a disaster area is concerned, they should be clearly marked in that way and left marked at all times so that the people in those areas, in the event of a disaster or an air attack, would know exactly which highways they would be able to take out of the area. Then there would not be interference with assistance or reinforcements coming into that area.

I cannot think of any more orderly way to carry out evacuation. In the evacuation of an area, we all know that the biggest trouble comes about as a result of people flocking out of the cities and getting in the way of reinforcements and assistance coming in, and you find nothing but chaos. If the highways were clearly marked so that some of them lead in for the assistance coming in and others lead out for the evacuees going out, it would make for an orderly evacuation of any city in the event of catastrophe.

**Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North):** I am not sure that the suggestion advanced by the previous speaker really has very much validity and I should have preferred it if the minister had been much more outspoken in what he had to say. It is all very well to talk about the cataclysmic potential of a thermonuclear war. It would be a cataclysmic reality. What has to be realized is this. The facts have been given by, I suppose, informed witnesses in the United States appearing there before committees. One of them only recently said that if there was a massive attack on the Soviet union, tens of million of people who were not subject to the thermonuclear blast would nevertheless have no hope of survival because of radioactivity fall-out and that this would extend into other countries and into other continents. We must realize this. If there is a massive thermonuclear attack on North America, we will only be able to decide on that day to which area we are going to evacuate our people. It will depend surely entirely on the wind. If the wind is blowing from the north and the attack is primarily on the United States, I suppose we in Canada might have some safety. But if the wind is blowing from the south, then even although we survive or escape the thermonuclear blast, nevertheless the effects on our people—if this American witness is correct—will be such that the outlook will be more than grim for the great majority of them. I agree that we must try to prepare for eventualities. But I think the people of Canada ought to know clearly and without any question that if this thermonuclear war takes place, the possibility of survival of the