

*Supply—Health and Welfare*

provide protection for our civilian population in the event of war, they really serve a dual purpose. Communities and individuals who are prepared and trained in civil defence are ready to play their part in other forms of disaster as well. Nothing could possibly have illustrated this more graphically than the disaster which struck the town of Lanark on June 15th last. In that disaster trained civil defence workers from our civil defence headquarters at Arnprior did credit to themselves and to the service they represent, and I should like to conclude by reading this brief letter received by the college commandant, which pays a well deserved tribute to the work they did in Lanark. It is addressed to Major General M. H. S. Penhale and reads as follows:

I have just returned from unfortunate Lanark where the scene of devastation is, as you are well aware, one that till now at least we have comparatively seldom been called upon to face up to in this country.

While talking to old friends in the village—some had lost all they possessed—I particularly noted their unanimous and unsolicited praise for the work done by the civil defence college group that appeared so promptly on the scene. I gathered that this group, among other accomplishments, gave the shattered inhabitants a feeling that amongst disaster a foundation was being established for them from which to hold on to reality again.

As a rule, I am not a letter writer, but the reaction of these people was so favourable to the work of your organization that I thought that perhaps you, your staff and students might be interested in receiving these comments from a disinterested source when all too frequently your efforts are apparently received with apathy by the public.

Yours very truly

Ewan R. Caldwell

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I hope the minister will not resent my saying that this has indeed been a most disappointing statement if this is all that the minister intends to say on the matter of civil defence.

**Mr. Monteith (Perth):** May I interrupt one moment, Mr. Chairman, before the hon. member goes on further in this particular vein. I did have quite a lengthy statement prepared. But here again, as I expressed myself when my first item of estimates was before the committee I felt that the special circumstances of the situation that exist today call for me to abbreviate my statement somewhat. If there are any questions to be asked I should be glad to answer them and to give a detailed answer in every respect.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Notwithstanding the qualification made by the minister I must say that I think that what he has said so far is extremely disappointing. I was about to observe that it may be that the division of responsibility in four departments

[Mr. Monteith (Perth).]

of government and the fact that the Minister of National Defence will be the spokesman in the matter of civil defence puts the minister in a rather difficult position. He spoke of shelters and he spoke of some of the achievements of the civil defence college. But not a word was said about evacuation; not a word was said about whether there is to be a co-ordinator in his own department; not a word was said about his own concept of the role of the army or about the extent of the participation by the province. It is true that a reference was made to the necessity of individual citizen participation but there was no indication of where the army would step in whether it would continue to have an over-all authority, whether the civil power would have the over-all authority over the armed forces or whether the situation is as I now believe it to be—although the minister did not indicate it—that in stricken areas the primary responsibility will be that of the army with power to call on the welfare services, hospital services and the like.

All these things are matters which are essential to an understanding of the details of the kind of policy announced by the Prime Minister in May and referred to by him a few moments ago in the adjustments that he made. This government has been in office now for two years. I fully appreciate the difficulty of the problem. It is an extremely difficult one. No matter who is in charge, will not be able to meet all the suggestions that are made as to what should be done in the matter of civil defence.

I know the difficulty of the government and the difficulties of the minister and his colleagues who will be involved in this matter. We are living at a time when we are spending on a national defence something less than \$2 billion. We all realize that in the event of war—something that we all hope will not eventuate, but nevertheless having in mind what General Norstad talked about the other day, namely the possibility of mistake—we must think of the effect of this on the civilian population.

Are we now decided that we must take an awful risk? Are we to take the position that nothing really can be done? Are we to abandon the possibilities of evacuation because of the new phase that we are now in as compared with the situation which prevailed in 1953? I would have been happy to know exactly what is going to be the role of the army. I would like to know what would be the relation of the army to the civil power. At the present time the primary authority rests with the civil power who may under the Militia Act call upon the use of