

*Supply—National Defence*

measures organization which has been co-ordinating the activities of all departments and the provinces for the past two years. I think everybody who is really actively concerned in this program and knows anything about it, particularly all the people concerned in the provinces, would be very ready to tell the hon. member that a very great deal of progress has been achieved during this past two year period, and the whole emergency measures set-up and organization is in such a far better state of health now than it was that there is just no comparison.

**Mr. Peters:** Does the minister not read the local newspapers? Does he not remember that it was only very recently that we had this difficulty in the city of Ottawa with the emergency measures co-ordinator? This also happened in the city of Toronto. It has happened in my area at least three times. It has happened in the Timmins area, and it has happened in every area with which I am familiar. While I am aware that on paper we may have this organization, it does not appear to me from reading the newspapers that we are really accomplishing this end. If when this course is given there is an indication that these people will be fitted into a niche in the emergency measures organization, I am quite sure they would avail themselves of that opportunity. It is because I do not think it is working, in a practical sense, in many areas that I think this training should be geared to that particular program.

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Chairman, the minister's reaction to the criticism that has been advanced about this operation and the suggestions that have been made confirm the suspicion in the minds of some of us that one aspect of survival which was in the minds of the government when they put this program into effect was the survival of the government itself.

In respect of the co-ordination of civil defence and survival measures, the minister says everything is fine, things are being co-ordinated beautifully; that we do not really know what is happening when we make these criticisms this afternoon. The minister would have a very difficult time substantiating that position from the evidence and the information we have received in the house about the way these survival courses have been carried on and the continuing value to survival work of those who have been trained in these courses. We have learned that only a minority of those who graduate from these courses sign up for either the regular forces or the militia, and therefore only with respect to

[Mr. Harkness.]

that minority is there any assurance that the training which has been received will be of value to the population. I have not got the exact figures; I believe the minority is a substantial one, and I am not criticizing the quality of the training these people receive. Perhaps it has been most effective. But the minister says nothing can be done about those who have graduated and who do not join the forces. He says we can exercise no control over them. That may, of course, be right, but it does not answer the question. The minister says we have a wonderfully co-ordinated emergency measures organization. If that is the case, surely those in the government who are planning these survival courses should at least have taken steps to ensure that those who graduate from these courses, and who have acquired the experience and the skills which will be of such great value in the event of the awful tragedy of war, should somehow or other be made available for the purpose for which they were trained; at least to the extent that information about them would be sent to the local authorities and organizations which have been mentioned today. Surely it would not have been too difficult for those in charge of these courses to have got that information and made it available to those concerned—

**Mr. Harkness:** I said yesterday that this information is available.

**Mr. Pearson:** —and to have kept in touch with the people who have graduated from the courses to see that their services were of continuing benefit to the community. The government has apparently done nothing at all in this field.

**Mr. Harkness:** The hon. member should have been here yesterday to hear my speech.

**Mr. Churchill:** He has been away for ten days.

**Mr. Pearson:** I read the minister's speech in *Hansard*, and that is one reason I am speaking this afternoon. The minister has not given in his speeches an answer to the points I am making. He has given us no assurance that those who graduate from these courses will be made available in an emergency to those who might need their services. No effort is being made to keep in touch with them once they graduate. Does the minister deny that? If he does, perhaps he will tell us what is being done to keep in touch with these people.

As is so often the case with this government, they prefer a one shot operation to something that is planned, or to something which has a continued value and benefit.