

Supply—Privy Council

on reflection he must agree that in those circumstances his place would be where the government is.

There are some highly important questions that have to be resolved. Some direction not now in existence must be given by the government particularly with regard to shelters. Are we to have public shelters or are we not? Are we to allow shelters to be built now under the principle of perhaps unintended but actual discrimination as is the inevitable consequence of the present policy? Are we still to regard evacuation as a practical course to adopt in certain circumstances? What are those circumstances?

These and other questions are in the public mind. Although this is a small item involving a relatively minor portion of the budget for civil defence, it does afford an opportunity to express our views on this vital matter, and to invite the Prime Minister to make a statement with respect to this question, one which is of urgent concern. We should receive a statement from the Prime Minister who is in charge of civil defence, who is the co-ordinator in this area over the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Justice, the Minister of National Health and Welfare and their colleagues in other departments of government concerned.

This is not make believe. This is necessary preparation for something we hope will never happen, and to the extent we are prepared in a practical way we have added to our strength in a defensive way.

Mr. Pitman: Surely the Prime Minister is going to answer some of the questions directed from this side. It seems to me the people of Canada are seeking direction in this connection. We now have the worst of two possible worlds. We have a shelter policy which gives us some hope of survival and defending our freedom, but to be of use in our defence posture the program must be related to the real effects of a nuclear attack. If our enemies believe that civil defence is for us a mere posture and that we are going through the motions of constructing basement shelters with their having no relationship to the effects of real danger, surely this is simply a provocation to war. It is virtually an exposing, an opening up, of our defence posture. We must prove that what we are doing in civil defence is as sensible and realistic as what we are doing in our relationship with NATO and the various elements of our total defence position.

I would hope the Prime Minister would indicate whether he would be willing to establish a committee of this house to consider the whole matter of civil defence. Certainly he should be willing to indicate whether there have been any discussions with respect to

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

community shelters. Is there any doubt in his mind about their value especially when the United States in their greater wisdom have undertaken a program of this kind? If we are to be a part of NATO and NORAD our civil defence should be related to our total defence position since we will be facing equal danger. Our policies should go hand in hand. I hope we may receive an indication of the Prime Minister's thinking on these points.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, I listened with a great deal of interest to the hon. member for Essex East while he reviewed the problem in a way which revealed the knowledge of the subject he gained during the period he was in charge of this particular phase of defence in the former administration. I had been waiting to hear suggestions from hon. members opposite and have not wished in any way to see the debate restricted to discussion of the item under consideration.

This item has to do with civil defence. I would be the last person to transgress the rules of the house by engaging in a discussion of the whole question of E.M.O., the emergency measures organization, at a time like this. However, there have been some observations made which I believe deserve attention.

As I understood the hon. member for Peterborough he suggested that a committee be set up for the purpose of considering this whole question. When one considers what progress has been made in this house in the last two or three weeks it is found that thus far approximately 16 days have been spent considering supplementary estimates—

Mr. Pallett: It is more than that. It is 19 days.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Nineteen days? Oh, well, I always believe in being "conservative". Considering the progress made within the last two or three weeks one realizes that it is absolutely impossible for hon. members opposite to accord important matters that remain to be considered at this session the attention they deserve in a reasonable length of time. However, the manner in which the hon. member for Peterborough dealt with this question has impelled me to say something in regard to it.

I am most anxious not to deny any hon. member the opportunity of placing his ideas before the government. But having waited in order to give everyone the opportunity, I might review one or two matters to which reference has been made.

Reference was made to the general subject of fall-out shelters. As I followed his argument, the hon. member for Essex East stated that there should be an equality for all in survival. I accept that principle. But I notice