

*Supply—National Defence*

If one can believe even General Worthington himself or the President of the United States, this is a matter of vital importance. It does not look to me as though this would be really an expensive arm of defence, because a great deal of it depends on training. While the minister is training in the school at Connaught men who will bring out an organization of civil defence, or he cited the fact that at some time in the future four hundred people would be well trained in civil defence, it is going to take a great deal longer to train people in their capacity as fire wardens and above all—and I emphasize the phrase “above all”—to train people in first aid to attend to casualties. You cannot train first-aid people overnight. It just cannot be done. The longer they train, the more efficient they become. If it is necessary at all to train people, and if this horrible thing should ever happen to us, you are going to need many skilled workers, so far as courses in first aid or the St. John Ambulance type of course in first aid is concerned. You are going to have to train practically a whole populace, because everybody must understand this. Then you must thoroughly train those people who are capable of dealing with the type of injuries received under bombing attacks—and that will give you any type of injury, stuff that you never see except in mine accidents or in very severe industrial accidents nowadays. That is what you are going to have to do, and that is going to take time; because if a city is going to receive a bombing attack, certainly the hospitals can be obliterated at the same time. So far, I have not seen any sign in Canada, or in the Ottawa valley, that any person has made a practical survey of anything that could act as a shelter for these people.

I pointed out that problem last September, and I have not seen or heard of any person in my own town, or in the adjacent towns in my own constituency, making a survey so far as town halls, church halls or anything of that type is concerned where casualties could be accommodated.

So far there has been no move to reorganize the excellent work done by the Red Cross in the blood donor service. Once or twice I have heard of some enthusiastic groups who said they were going to blood test and group test all the people in a certain place. That is not going to solve the problem, because in a bomb attack all communications would be disrupted. It would be absolutely foolish to attempt to take a list of blood donor volunteers, call them up and get them to come into a certain point, because, with communications disrupted, and that sort of thing, it would be absolutely impossible. It

[Mr. Blair.]

would be an excellent thing if every person had a tag around his neck giving his blood grouping.

Depots must be established, and those depots should contain plasma in large quantities. If this thing is going to happen then we must not be caught napping. We would need depots for plasma, for blood, for medical supplies and there should be even depots with possible food supplies. Therefore I look at this picture as it might occur in the Ottawa valley if the capital here were bombed. Work should be done in all the towns in the surrounding area. Every town should be surveyed to find out the possible hospital accommodation, the possible shelter for civilians. That sort of thing should be done. I say to the minister it is discouraging when you find in a large town a group of enthusiastic people who, in all good faith, formed an organization last year, sometime around February or March, and were ready to do anything, ready to go ahead and do something—they had another small meeting—and now the whole matter is dropped. Nothing was done about training people in first-aid courses of the St. John Ambulance, in the Red Cross courses or in anything like that. As I said last fall, I do not believe that people will lose their keenness, so far as this matter is concerned, if the government will say, as President Truman has said to the people of the United States: there is a danger. That is something that has gone through my head. I may say I am absolutely frustrated so far as this is concerned when I think that we enlist people to go to war, and casualty lists are appearing in the papers, but when you ask the average citizen of this country if we are at war he will say: “I don’t know.” Nothing has been done. Some time ago a great man said that “eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.” I certainly think that if this matter is worth touching at all it is worth getting at right now, and right down to the roots of the matter, and that would be the organizations in these towns.

Certainly the first big thing that could be done is the training of people to handle casualties. As I said before, you are not going to do that in two or three days. If a medical course takes about six or eight years to complete, it is not possible to organize and train civilians to deal with the type of casualties that we are going to have in a matter of a week or two after we have had some intimation that there might be a bombing attack or a diversionary raid on this country.

I am disappointed, having brought this matter to the attention of the house last year, and in all honesty covered all the