

Supply—National Defence

done in connection with the national survival course. I am not going to congratulate him with respect to the purpose of the course particularly, but simply for the work which was done with some 50,000 to 75,000 men who have been given some survival training.

I assume that this course has given some work to a great many people who had no work. I am not at all sure what the over-all effect is going to be from the point of view of the purpose of the course. The first thing I am concerned about is the concept of the course. As the minister suggested, I believe it was to try to encourage people who have employment to take the course, and the expectation was that possibly business or industry or the area of employment in which the person worked would contribute something to the maintenance of the individual while he was taking the course. That was my understanding of the whole program as it came to fruition last fall.

I am not at all sure that very many people actually left their jobs. Possibly the minister can say just how many people fit into this particular box. How many took a six weeks leave of absence and were paid by their employers? I think this is important because it seems to me that the whole justification for paying these men on the basis of single recruits, as they were paid, was that the rest would be made up by the business institutions with which they were at that time employed.

If I may take the first survival course, I think the figures indicate to what extent this did not come about. The reason I am concerned about this matter is that I would certainly feel, as I am sure the government would feel, that any time a man signs up for any kind of government employment the government should surely assume its full responsibility to that individual. Many of these people were married and the majority were not in a position to receive additional income from employment. Of the 20,523 who started the first survival course 14,000 or nearly 75 per cent were unemployed. Some 10,000 of the 17,000 who finished were unemployed. There were 1,234 of those who started who were in receipt of welfare assistance and 828 of those who actually completed the course were in that category. Actually the situation was that some of them were making more money from welfare payments than they were from the national survival course.

To me this is a situation which should not be tolerated. In many cases it happened that because the course started shortly after the beginning of the month and their welfare payments covered part of the period in which they were actually on the survival course

[Mr. Pitman.]

some of them did come out even, or a little better than even. But it seems to me that when the government takes over the life of a person for six weeks, they have a responsibility to that person.

Out of the 20,523 people on this course, 6,798, nearly 7,000, were married. About 4,406 of those who completed the course were married and a good many of them, I am convinced, were married and unemployed and on welfare. I think that this—

An hon. Member: I don't believe it.

Mr. Pitman: I am sorry; I did not hear that comment which came from the back of the chamber. I may say if you do not believe it, I am only quoting figures from a report which was sent to me by the Department of National Defence. I am sure you would believe the figures which came from your own sources.

Now, that is one problem. I do not want to go into that problem or the mess that occurred near the end, when the pay cheques came out and a great many people found they had not made as much money as they expected. I am sure the minister is sorry about that. A pamphlet was printed, which was later destroyed, at a cost of some \$5,000—

Mr. Harkness: No.

Mr. Pitman: I stand corrected; I understood from a return I had that that was—

Mr. Harkness: That is the total cost.

Mr. Pitman: The total cost of the pamphlet? I understand the pamphlets were destroyed.

Mr. Harkness: No, quite a large portion of the pamphlets were put out.

Mr. Pitman: I am sorry, I am mistaken. I base that mistake upon a misreading of the return I received from the minister. It is unfortunate that something could not have been said to those men so that this thing would not have happened. So many of them were enthusiastic about that course right up to the last day, and I think it was very unfortunate.

There is a final matter about which I am concerned. I cannot feel that there is any real connection between these survival troops and the emergency measures organizations in these various areas. For example, one coordinator of an emergency measures organization did not have the names, addresses or any real concept of how these men were going to fit into his emergency measures organization.

Of the 17,000 men who completed the first course, some 6,857 have been recruited into the militia. Surely, if there is a nuclear attack, the militia are going to have a certain job to do. Will it not be different from the job of those people who were trained in