

Supply—Privy Council

Surely that is a sensible and reasonable step for any government to take. That will involve, of course, very special preparations and operations. We had assumed that at this national command post there would be very special methods of protection, as, indeed, there must be, and very special methods of communication, as, indeed, there must be. While everyone would sympathize with the desire of anyone, whatever position he might hold, to share in the dangers of the people, nevertheless a position of responsibility does require certain protection in order that that responsibility might be discharged. We had assumed that that responsibility could best be discharged from these particular posts upon which a great deal of money is, I think rightly, being spent.

The Prime Minister has told us this afternoon, and this is the first time we have been so informed, that there is no single place to which the government would be dispersed. I think he said there are half a dozen places from which government activity might be conducted during an emergency, in addition to the residence of the Prime Minister himself, and we had assumed that that was a national command post. This throws a new light on this problem. It is not possible, of course, to discuss this awful problem and what should be done about it without trying to reach some conclusion as to the nature of the destruction which would be visited on us if we ever allowed ourselves—and by “ourselves” I mean humanity—to drift or be pushed into the catastrophe of nuclear war. We cannot know what will happen. All we can do is protect ourselves to the best of our ability under the leadership of the government in readiness for whatever is thought most likely to happen. The extent of the menace and of the possibilities of destruction are changing month by month and I suppose government attitudes and policies have to change as the capacity for destruction changes. What might have been and, indeed, was a kind of protection against bombing in the second world war would amount to nothing at all now, and the kind of protection we are now considering might be worth nothing at all in a few months time. We have been informed, and I think it is no longer a matter of secrecy, that the communist empire of Russia, from which an attack would likely come should it ever take place, has developed a thermonuclear weapon equivalent to 100 million tons of t.n.t. One hundred million tons; that is startling enough, but it is even more startling when one realizes it would be the equivalent of an attack by ten million bombers carrying the average bomb load of the last war. All this, as the Prime Minister and others have pointed out, certainly makes

[Mr. Pearson.]

for fear and it imposes an obligation not only to do something about survival in case of an attack, but also to do something about removing the fear itself. The aim, of course, is peace, but peace cannot be achieved unless we remove this awful fear. Yet when we give publicity to statistics showing the nature of the destruction which would occur in the event of nuclear attack we are, in a sense, increasing fear. That is a result which, in one sense, one does not like to see because fear can itself be an enemy of the resolution required to bring about the policies which may remove the fear politically. In that sense the fear we created in trying to convince our people of the necessity of measures for their protection can be used against us in the form of blackmail. That is the destructive circle we are up against.

The Rand Corporation, which has done a great deal of investigation into nuclear warfare and civil defence, and especially Herman Kahn, a member of that corporation, I believe, have told us that in the United States under the present circumstances they have to assume that 90 million people would be killed in any major nuclear attack and that it would take 60 years for economic recovery to take place after such an attack. However, according to this report, if they spent a minimum of \$500 millions on their protection they could reduce that figure of casualties to 50 million and reduce the period of 60 years to 15 years. The report is embodied in a long book which perhaps some of the members of the committee have read, and it goes on to say that major evacuation, added to the other measures, could reduce the figure of casualties to 15 million. That apparently, is the irreducible minimum. Then, as the author says, when you cut it down to 15 millions it becomes credible.

It is very important, according to him and others, to maintain what is called the credibility of the deterrent. One aspect of the credibility of the deterrent is the credibility of the people to accept the acceptability of destruction. I do not think anyone can get much comfort out of that, yet the fact that the figure could be reduced, by protective action, from 90 million to 15 million, according to this report, does, I suggest, underline the necessity for the government taking whatever action is possible and it does emphasize the fact that civil defence becomes a part of the deterrent. That is another reason why, I suppose, something has to be done about it in addition to the obligation to do what we can to ensure survival.

We assume that while there is no protection against a hit from a nuclear weapon, or practically none, except by an arrangement