

Supply—Health and Welfare

undertaking upon which we have embarked this year. We must have the co-operation of the provincial governments, and a set of regulations was drafted after consultation with those governments.

Like the hon. member for Selkirk I have encountered a number of these cases, and it is my opinion that either the regulations are too strict or their administration is too strict. I had a letter this morning from the parents of a boy I know very well. This boy is not able to go out alone and bring in the cows because he would probably get lost, but he can dress himself. Because he can dress himself it has been ruled that he is not permanently and totally disabled, and the parents are not receiving anything. I shall not elaborate on it at all, as I know the minister has a problem to deal with.

However, I hope that come next year, after a year's experience in the administration of these regulations, the minister will be able to call another conference and relax either the regulations or their administration so as to avoid many hardships of this kind.

Item agreed to.

Civil defence—

283. To provide for the civil defence program, \$7,001,034.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Before I make any remarks I should like to ask the minister if he is going to make a statement on this important matter. The minister shakes his head, and as a rule that means no.

It is difficult to evaluate civil defence. The verdict as to its final effect is a matter for history. Perhaps 50 years hence we shall know whether it was the most unnecessary or the most necessary expenditure that could have been made. But this can be said, that those of us who stand here today and consider civil defence in Canada find it essentially in an unsatisfactory condition.

In making that remark I want to make a distinction respecting the civil defence organization as such. This organization contains a great many devoted people who put a great deal of voluntary effort into this operation. In general we can perhaps say that the civil defence organization as such has achieved a great deal.

But after all civil defence is not essentially an organization of a few thousand people; it is a matter of public preparedness for attack. It is in that field primarily that I feel our civil defence is unsatisfactory, because it is in that field that we find almost complete apathy on the part of the general public. In order to find out why that apathy exists and

what corrective measures might be taken to deal with it, I think we might for a moment look at civil defence.

In world war II civil defence was essentially a matter of rescue, fire fighting, first aid and that type of thing. For the first few years afterward after the end of world war II we thought of civil defence in terms of atomic weapons, and our thinking was essentially along the same lines as in world war II; that is rescue, fire prevention, first aid with the addition of provision for individual protection, the fact that one must go underground where you were at the time of the warning signal.

When the world learned of the H-bomb and its effects there was a complete line of demarcation between the old and the new concepts of civil defence. The considerations I have already mentioned had to be laid to one side, and civil defence had to focus on mass evacuation of cities. There was no other solution. There was no other civil defence measure, with the advent of the H-bomb, which ranked in importance with this matter of the evacuation of the cities. Canada, and particularly the Department of National Health and Welfare, did not grasp that important concept in time. Whilst in recent weeks and months they have begun to think and work along those lines, they have been pitifully and unreasonably far behind—I am trying not to use too strong words; perhaps the strongest that would be appropriate would be that they have been painfully far behind—the United States.

I want to demonstrate the situation as briefly as I can by taking excerpts from three speeches delivered before the congress of the Canadian federation of mayors and municipalities in Windsor on the 30th of August, 1954. The interesting thing about these speeches is that one was delivered by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, who heads our civil defence program; the second was delivered by his deputy, General Worthington, who is in charge of the program; and the third was delivered by Mr. Val Peterson, who is the federal civil defence administrator of the United States.

Let us take Mr. Peterson first, because he gives the United States position. In his speech he says:

In June a year ago—

That was in June of 1953.

—I began urging publicly that states and cities start planning for evacuation and public tests of evacuation.

In the face of the increased destructive capacity of hydrogen bombs, planned evacuation of cities—as a new dimension in civil defence—now becomes an urgent necessity. We recognize that evacuation of people from large cities poses staggering prob-