

*The Address—Mr. McCusker*

Having briefly referred to matters of interest to my constituents, I should like to direct the attention of hon. members to a matter of interest to all parts of Canada. I refer to civil defence. Since I became parliamentary assistant to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) my interest as a medical man naturally has been primarily in the health aspects of this department's important and varied work. However, as one who has played some part in military activity during the two wars, especially on the medical side, I am also intensely interested in what is being done in the department in the field of civil defence. Since I have followed new developments in this field closely from day to day I thought it might be of interest to this house to report in some detail the progress being made in Canada's civil defence preparations because the responsibility in this field was transferred in February to the Department of National Health and Welfare. The primary purpose of civil defence is to reduce the effects of enemy attack upon the lives of our people and their property. But there is also an important although a secondary purpose, and that is to improve our facilities and organization to deal with certain day-to-day hazards to our communities such as fire, and for major disasters such as those caused by fires, windstorms, or floods. Much of the training given for civil defence, much of the equipment purchased and many of these facilities established can serve useful stand-by purposes in peacetime disasters if, as we hope and trust, our communities are never subjected to enemy attack.

Preparations for civil defence embrace many fields of action: health and welfare services, advance warning, communications, fire fighting, public information, liaison with the armed forces and so on. Before considering any of these aspects of the problem in any detail perhaps it would be best if I described briefly to the house the way in which civil defence facilities in Canada are organized. As every hon. member knows, civil defence is a complex of overlapping responsibilities involving the participation of federal, provincial and municipal government authorities. Let me briefly indicate the organizational structure on each level. First, the civil defence organization of the federal government:

1. The cabinet and cabinet defence committee: Matters of major policy respecting federal responsibilities in the civil defence field are decided by cabinet and the cabinet defence committee, subject always to the control of this parliament.

2. The Minister of National Health and Welfare: The Minister of National Health and

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Welfare has immediate and direct responsibility for all civil defence matters and reports to this house, as he did in May, on all questions of policy or administration. Both the cabinet and the minister are continually advised by the chiefs of staff committee on questions of defence policy as it relates to civil defence planning.

3. The co-ordinator of civil defence: The co-ordinator of civil defence, Major General F. F. Worthington, who is responsible, through the deputy ministers, to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, is chairman of the civil defence co-ordinating committee. He co-ordinates all federal planning and action in this field, and maintains close contact with provincial civil defence authorities in Canada and with federal agencies in the United States, the United Kingdom and other countries.

4. The civil defence co-ordinating committee: The federal co-ordinator is assisted and advised by the civil defence co-ordinating committee, which has permanent members representative of all government departments concerned with the problem of civil defence. For example, public works, resources and development, trade and commerce, finance, transport, labour, agriculture, the R.C.M.P., and, of course, national health and welfare. The secretary of the chiefs of staff committee and the dominion fire commissioner also sit on this committee. From time to time, representatives of agencies such as the national research council, the atomic energy control board and the defence research board are called in when matters affecting this field are under consideration. These latter organizations, of course, have a continuing responsibility to keep the Minister of National Health and Welfare advised on scientific developments applicable to civil defence in this and other countries.

To act in an advisory and planning capacity, there are a number of important federal committees in such fields as telecommunications, transportation, health planning, welfare planning, food, fire fighting, information and research. These committees are composed of federal civil defence and other specialist officers, representatives of national voluntary and professional associations, and representatives of industry.

5. We have a federal-provincial advisory council on civil defence. Before turning to a discussion of provincial organization I think I should add that there is a continuing committee known as the federal-provincial advisory council on civil defence, which was set up following the first federal-provincial conference on civil defence in August, 1950. This council is made up of federal and