

*Supply—National Defence*

is no question but that the number of sirens in operation at the time of the last exercise was not sufficient. As far as the size and power of the siren are concerned, the sirens are considerably bigger and more powerful than those which were in existence under the program formerly in the Department of National Health and Welfare and which we have been replacing with bigger and better sirens.

As to the matter of testing the intensity of the sound of a siren, by any scientific means at all this can only be done at various distances outside buildings, because inside buildings the amount of sound that will be heard depends altogether on the construction of the building, the part of the building in which people are and so on. There is no doubt that if these sirens are sounded in summertime when doors and windows are open they will be heard in practically all households when the program is completed in those areas where sirens are installed. In the wintertime, however, when windows and doors are closed and when a radio or television set is perhaps operating, there will be houses in which the sirens will not be heard.

This is just one of the facts of life. If you are going to have a complete warning system it is realized, as has been said many times, that you need some other type of device. Several such devices have been under investigation, particularly one known as NEAR. I have forgotten what the letters stand for, but it is a small black box which you plug into any power outlet. This system has been installed in the state of Michigan and in some other places in the United States. Stations have to be established in the power system so that when the warning is sounded it actuates the box which gives off quite a loud warning note. There is no question but that something along this line is the only complete answer to ensuring that people in all buildings and all rooms in various buildings will be warned.

**Mr. Pitman:** Can the minister indicate when there will be some hope of installing these new devices? I am sure he will admit that if there were 500 sirens in exercise Tocsin B and 53 failed and there was partial failure of 70 others, according to the return which I received, that means that over one fifth of them were not working properly. This seems to me a terribly high rate of failure.

**Mr. Harkness:** This whole matter is under very active study, of course, and we are starting to conduct an experimental survey as to the practicalities of the NEAR system from the point of view of possibly making use of it. That will be under way fairly soon. With respect to the number of sirens that

failed, a large number of those failures were due to the fact that the telephone and other circuits by which the sirens were actuated were not properly connected. The thing had really just got under way and, as I think the hon. member realizes, any program of this sort will run into quite a few snags, but those snags are rapidly being ironed out.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Can the minister say whether he knows if there is any foundation for the allegation that has been made in British Columbia that social assistance recipients, are, notwithstanding provincial policy, being forced to join the army's civil defence corps or lose their social allowances? This was raised by a member of the provincial legislature of British Columbia on February 27 last. Can the minister say whether he knows of any such cases, and if there are any what steps has the government taken to avoid this kind of thing?

**Mr. Churchill:** Who was the member? Was he a Liberal?

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** No. One might well have expected it to be a Liberal, because a Liberal would always be on the job. In this case it was Mr. Randolph Harding, C.C.F. member for Kaslo-Slocan.

**Mr. Harkness:** As the hon. member knows, I have no means of having any knowledge of what is done by local welfare officials. All I know about anything along this line is the case at St. Boniface. I only know about that from what I read in the newspapers, which the hon. member also read. As far as we are concerned we have no responsibility for any action along that line, as the hon. member knows.

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Chairman, the minister said not long ago that the Prime Minister was responsible for the co-ordination of emergency measures and of the emergency measures organization, no doubt, with the survival course results and all other aspects of this problem. The minister was quite satisfied with the co-ordination that had been worked out. He thought that everything would be all right.

I take it that in the event of the awful emergency against which we are preparing—and against which some of these preparations are not likely to be very effective in view of the kind of threat we face—the co-ordination of survival operations and all that kind of thing would be centred in the government emergency headquarters which are now being constructed. They are of a nature which would give security, I suppose, against fall-out and against blast from some explosions—of course nothing could give security against a direct