**IF WE ARE ATTACKED, LET US BE PREPARED:
CANADA AND THE FAILURE OF CIVIL DEFENCE, 1945-1963**

by

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**If We Are Attacked, Let Us Be Prepared:
Canada and the Failure of Civil Defence, 1945-1963**

During the early years of the Cold War, Canada created a civil defence organization to prepare Canadians for a possible nuclear attack. This enormous task required the cooperation of the federal, provincial, and municipal governments. A key element to its success was persuading the public to incorporate the principles of preparation into everyday life. Through exhibits, exercises, and public appeals, Canada's civil defence agencies exhorted citizens to volunteer as air raid wardens, to stockpile essential supplies, and to build fallout shelters underground where they could wait out the nuclear storm. Drawing from the extensive records of the Department of National Defence, the Department of National Health and Welfare, the Emergency Measures Organization, along with other government and manuscript documents and media sources, this dissertation explains the evolution of Canada's CD policies and addresses the question of why governments, institutions, and the public consistently refused to make the preparations expected of them in the face of nuclear extinction.

Civil Defence proved to be a controversial and ultimately unsuccessful program. Its failure hinged on the nature of the CD relationship between the state and its citizenry, the inadequacies of government planning, and the balance of civil-military relations in Canada in the Cold War. In CD publicity, officials informed Canadians that their participation was a civic duty in the nuclear age, and equated community defence with guarding the values and freedoms associated with citizenship. Canadians rejected their prescribed obligation to support CD, some believing that an atomic defence was impossible, others arguing that the federal government or the armed forces should provide protection to civilians. The federal, provincial, and municipal governments could

never agreed on the proper division of financial and political responsibility, which led to bitter debates that undermined the credibility of CD programs and confused the public.

The Canadian military proved uninterested in assisting with CD, and, once enlisted by the federal government to lead national survival efforts, Canada's soldiers proved incapable of providing any meaningful support to the civilian population. As a result of all of these factors, Canadians were unconvinced of the efficacy of strategies proposed by governments for their protection, and Canada was completely unprepared to survive a nuclear war.

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Introduction

In the immediate post-1945 period, Canada established a civil defence organization to prepare the country for the threat of an atomic attack. The aims of this organization were straightforward: to reduce loss of life and damage to infrastructure caused by an enemy attack. The risks posed by the possibility of Canadian cities coming under attack by Soviet bombers armed with atomic weapons forced successive postwar governments to introduce civil defence (CD) into everyday life. This enormous task required the cooperation of multiple federal and provincial government agencies and their municipal counterparts, and the active participation of the public in the provision of their own defence. Canadians were asked to volunteer in great numbers in municipal CD corps, to stockpile essential supplies, and to build family fallout shelters to wait out the nuclear storm. Civil Defence, however, proved to be a controversial and ultimately unsuccessful program, its failure hinging on the nature of the CD relationship between the state and its citizenry, the inadequacies of government planning, and the balance of civil-military relations in Canada during the Cold War.

Civil Defence planning in Canada took shape over three stages, distinguished by the reach of CD policy into the public sphere and the strategy for defence each plan assumed. The first stage lasted from 1948 to 1954, where CD planners articulated a strategy of “self-help” for targeted Canadian cities, based loosely on the model of rescue and fire defence that British and German cities had adopted to survive the bombing campaigns of the Second World War. While planners recognized the power of the atomic bomb, it was viewed as a larger version of any other incendiary high-explosive. The federal government attempted to place most of the responsibility for organizing and

financing this model of CD organization on the shoulders of the target cities themselves. During the “self-help” stage, civil defence recruiting, public education, and training were mainly confined to the residents of Canadian cities, and reached a peak during the Korean War.

First detonated in 1952, the hydrogen bomb, with its vast destructive powers, made for a revolution in civil defence planning. The second stage of civil defence planning was thus defined by the evacuation strategy, which gradually replaced “self-help” from 1954 to 1959. The evacuation policy required preparations within target cities so that they could completely evacuate their populations with three hours’ notice, and a program that would feed, shelter, and care for nuclear refugees in rural “reception areas.” CD publicity and recruiting had to expand from the cities into the countryside. Canadian cities, with federal and provincial assistance, carried out major civil defence exercises involving tens of thousands of Canadians in both urban and rural areas, the largest of which took place in 1955. The evacuation policy encountered major obstacles as evacuation warning times drew shorter, and as the sinister threat of radioactive fallout came to be better appreciated by CD officials and the public alike.

The last stage of CD, which began in 1959 and receded as CD declined after 1962, shifted the focus from an evacuation to a “national survival” strategy. The problem of fallout was not easily resolved nor, because of its unpredictable nature, could CD planning be confined any longer to target areas. To prepare a capable warning system and to develop a network through which civil authorities could coordinate the survival and reconstruction effort, the federal government devised a comprehensive national survival program. It contained provisions for Continuity of Government (COG) measures,

designed to insure that the basic machinery of government could withstand the disruption of attack and continue to direct the country's wider survival efforts. R.B. Curry, the Director of the Emergency Measures Organization, explained the government's efforts succinctly in his public lectures: "If ... we are attacked, let us be prepared."¹ After 1959, the public was instructed to build fallout shelters within their homes that families could use to survive the most lethal period of radioactive fallout following a nuclear blast. Unlike previous plans, which had concentrated recruiting and publicity in a handful of cities across the country, national survival required that every citizen take on some responsibility for their own defence.

The obligations of citizenship form a major theme of civil defence policy and publicity in Canada during the early Cold War. Canada's civil defence structure, like that of the United States and the United Kingdom, depended on the voluntary participation of its citizens in local CD organizations and the relationship or implicit contract between the state and its citizens. The international literature of citizenship studies is wide and varied, sparked by post Second World War reflections on the relationship and exchanges between the individual, communities, and the state.² In Canada, the trajectory of these studies has flowed in two directions, the first examining the evolution of the political and social rights associated with changing citizenship regimes, and the second dissecting the

¹ Script – Tocsin 1961, LAC RG 57 1983-84/212 Box 17 File 2550-61 pt 2.

² T.H. Marshall, an early scholar of citizenship theory, argued in his well-known 1950 essay about citizenship and social class about the three-tiered nature of citizenship in post-war democracies: "The civil element is composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom – liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, and the right to justice....By the political element I meant the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body....By the social element I meant the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society." This last point is the most important, for it implies that the individual citizen takes an active part as a contributor to the civic order of which he or she is a part. As quoted in George Armstrong Kelly, "Who Needs a Theory of Citizenship?" in Ronald Beiner, ed. *Theorizing Citizenship*. (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), p. 95-96.

concept of citizenship as a form of belonging to the national polity, and its relationship and relevance to fragmented regional, ethnic, and linguistic identities.

Citizenship became a national project of the federal government in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. The passage of the Canadian Citizenship Act into law on 1 January 1947 created the legal definition of Canadian citizenship as a birthright, distinct from the status Canadians already enjoyed as British subjects. The legal precedent, however, constituted a less substantive change in the relationship between Canadians and the state than the massive social welfare program brought into effect at the end of the Second World War. The federal government, greatly strengthened by wartime centralization of economic and constitutional power, expanded its support for social security to meet the expectations of a public weary of the deprivation and uncertainty caused by a decade of depression and war.³

The social welfare program sought actively to use the power of the state and public monies to provide individuals with protection against want. In so doing, it effectively changed the nature of the contract between the public and its government.⁴ This Keynesian “civic bargain” was a system in which the universal contribution of taxes by the population undergirded political and legal rights with universal coverage of social welfare. This influential relationship characterized the citizen-state relationship through

³ Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond, and John English. *Canada Since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism*. (Toronto: University Press, 1981), pp. 91-101, 161-164.

⁴ While the remarkable change in attitudes towards the use of state power was central to the creation of the welfare state in Canada, social intervention was not necessarily motivated by altruism. Rather, as Dominique Marshall has shown, the workers’ movement and poor families had an important contribution to the network of social relations, including that between citizen and state, that laid the groundwork for the welfare state, and the extent to which state intervention was negotiated between governments, social workers, and families as political actors. Marshall, *The Social Origins of the Welfare State: Québec Families, Compulsory Education, and Family Allowances, 1940-1955*. Translated by Nicola Doone Danby. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), pp. x-xvi.

most of the Western world from 1945 to the 1970s, when it began to erode under economic pressure and social divisions.⁵

State responsibility for social welfare was complemented by similar forays into publicly-funded cultural projects and the ongoing struggles by immigration officials to define who counted as a citizen and who did not.⁶ All of this speaks to one of Jane Jenson's arguments, that "State institutions shape civil society as well as being the product of social relations." The policies of public agencies can have a role in determining not only the relationship between the citizen and the state, but also the relationships between citizens within their communities.⁷ State agencies have the potential to write their priorities into the social fabric of the country. They have the opportunity to define and redefine not just the rights privileged to citizens, but also the obligations expected of them.

After 1948, as Civil Defence Canada struggled to obtain public recognition, build its base of volunteers, and ensure that Canadians would comply with the policies developed to protect them, its officials developed a prescriptive, obligation-based model of citizenship. The concept of citizen-as-defender was in many respects a traditional ideal in Canada, with several historical precedents. During the siege of Quebec in 1759, for example, when the parish church bells sounded the alarm, it was the obligation of every

⁵ Michael Ignatieff, "The Myth of Citizenship," in Ronald Beiner, pp. 67, 75.

⁶ Artists found the Canadian government initially unwilling to enlist culture to create a distinct cultural form of belonging in the early postwar. However, Defence Minister Brooke Claxton, a dedicated arts promoter, was as instrumental to the creation of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences as Health Minister Paul Martin was to the passage of the Canadian Citizenship Act. Both men were mobilized by the accomplishments of Canadians during the Second World War. See Jonathan Vance, *A History of Canadian Culture*. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 357-364, See also Jane Jenson and Susan D. Phillips, "Regime Shift: New Citizenship Practices in Canada," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 14 (Fall 1996), pp. 115-116.

⁷ Jane Jenson, "Fated to Live in Interesting Times: Canada's Changing Citizenship Regimes," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 4 (December 1997), p. 630.

loyal *canadien* to rush to the scene of a fire with leather bucket in hand and work together to prevent flames from spreading.⁸ But firefighters in colonial Quebec could rely on the roar of incoming English cannonballs to compel their compatriots to participate.

The campaign for a Cold War civil defence had the ambition of preparing the populace, in the midst of optimistic postwar reconstruction, for the most damaging attack imaginable, in a country that had not seen a major war fought on its soil for over 100 years. Civil defence officials believed that their plans had little chance of succeeding unless the population prepared itself for the worst well in advance of the outbreak of the next war, because there would be no comfortable period of mobilization to make the transition from peacetime to wartime. CD officials attempted to instil the concept of participation in civil defence as a civic virtue: a responsibility towards which every patriotic Canadian would have to contribute if the country was to withstand an attack using weapons that could transform cities into craters and scatter lethal radiation over much of the country.

Civil Defence's appeal to civic virtue coloured virtually every contact between the Canadian civil defence organization and the public. These points of contact surfaced at CD exhibits, recruiting drives, the extensive publication program, civil defence exercises, and at hundreds of lectures in church basements, movie theatres, and mock shelters. As the reach of civil defence plans expanded beyond the borders of target cities into the countryside and ultimately to the nation as a whole, they were accompanied by an idealized official interpretation of organization for civil defence as participation in the civic duty of the community. The postwar concept of citizenship depended on the

⁸ "Urban planning in colonial Quebec had two principal goals: creating a suitably dignified capital and keeping it from burning down." D. Peter Macleod, *Northern Armageddon: The Battle of the Plains of Abraham*, (Toronto: Douglas & MacIntyre, 2008), pp. 89, 91-92.

equalization and defence of public rights, but public duties figured heavily into the citizen-state relationship.⁹ The Canadian government demanded support from the public for CD in the name of national security. That most citizens refused to take responsibility for this duty is remarkable; it suggests that they were unwilling to fulfill their obligation to defend the country. Yet Canadians could not imagine how a defence was possible, and they believed that the actions of government, whether through a change in foreign and defence policies or a publicly subsidized shelter construction program, would have more impact than the gestures of private citizens. The reverse proved true. Without the public's consent, the government's CD efforts could not succeed.

Since many Canadians perceived survival as a responsibility of the government, the limits of government planning and policy making in the nuclear age form another major theme of this work. The atomic bomb was considered a threat to national security, to be sure, but it was one that the federal government attempted to solve through planning. The national civil defence organization that resulted was a by-product of such thinking. Civil Defence planning entailed the preparation for disaster under the rubric of old and new government responsibilities such as communications, health care, and transport. The planning process involved many government departments with competing interests, and this resulted in much discussion and little action.

⁹ As T.H. Marshall wrote: "If citizenship is invoked in the defence of rights, the corresponding duties of citizenship cannot be ignored. These do not require a man to sacrifice his individual liberty or to submit without question to every demand made by government." *Citizenship and Social Class and other essays*. (Cambridge: University Press, 1950), p. 70. The study of citizenship obligations has been somewhat more controversial than the study of citizenship rights. The body of thinking surrounding citizenship obligation is known as civic republicanism. Civic republicanism became more prevalent in the 1980s concomitantly with neo-conservative successes in the United States and the United Kingdom. Studies in this genre tended to emphasize obligations over rights. Civic republicans attempted to identify what obligations the citizen should pay in exchange for rights, and in some cases demanded obligations be paid before rights were granted. See Ruth Lister, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives* 2nd Edition. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), pp. 19-42.

Once the federal government decided on a firm course of action, civil defence policy became politicized as CD officials and their ministers solicited the cooperation of provincial and municipal governments. With a few exceptions, the provinces refused federal government requests to finance civil defence efforts, and pointed to the federal government's constitutional responsibilities for the defence of the country. The municipalities were early adopters of civil defence, and in some cases they moved ahead of the federal government to create some form of defence against the atomic bomb, but most balked when they learned of the heavy costs needed to reinforce their cities and maintain a large body of volunteers.

Intergovernmental battles over civil defence, often toxic, undermined public confidence in CD and forced the federal government into a steady retreat from its first principles that the provinces and municipalities needed to assume most of the responsibility for civil defence preparations. The federal treasury amended CD financing rules to provide incentives to other governments to prepare for disaster. As a result, federal funds initially provided half, and then three-quarters, of the cost of CD in Canada. CD officials in the federal office, at first determined not to work directly with the municipalities, soon found that if they did not, no city in Ontario or Quebec would have even the rudimentary tools it would need to build their defence. The Canadian government took on ever-greater responsibility for emergency planning, and never achieved the full cooperation of the provinces or municipalities in civil defence.

Disputes between Canada's levels of government complicated the development and implementation of civil defence plans to defend against new threats. The technology of the arms race underwent several revolutionary advancements during the Cold War,

none more important than the development of city-killing hydrogen bombs, and the creation of intercontinental ballistic missiles to deliver them. Civil defence plans lagged embarrassingly behind these developments. Secrecy shrouded nuclear weapons, and this led to a delay in the disclosure of their effects to civil defence agencies in Canada and in the United States, which in turn complicated strategies for public protection.

Compounding this central difficulty was the task of developing a practicable plan that the provinces and municipalities would accept. Moving from an atomic defence to a thermonuclear defence took nearly two years, while the introduction of the missile threat threw the Canadian system into a frenzy of confused activity and planning adjustment that lasted right up until the Cuban missile crisis very nearly rendered further discussion of the issue entirely academic.

The relationship between civilian and military authorities in the preparation of civil defence is the third major theme of this work. Questions frequently emerged during federal-provincial disputes about whether or not support for a CD organization was a matter of “self-help” or national defence. This question also plagued civil defence and military planners within the federal government when they mapped out which government departments would fulfill civil defence tasks. What if civil defence did not work, and could not protect Canadians? If civil defence was the country’s last line of defence, did the military have any responsibility to support or, if necessary, supplant the CD organization if it proved incapable of fulfilling the tasks assigned it? CD planners worried that civil defence would be perceived as a military endeavour. Greater involvement of the armed forces in CD would prove the provinces right, and seemed to say that CD was a military solution to a military threat; moreover, it posed the risk of

alienating support from voluntary civilian associations whose participation in CD was essential to local organizations' success. After all, if soldiers could be paid to assume CD duties, why should the public volunteer their own time? Military involvement also blurred the line between community preparedness and national defence. CD officials were concerned that, if CD became a military concern, it would prevent potential volunteers from registering lest they be conscripted or placed under military command. Canada's senior civil defence officials, most of whom were retired military officers, were asked not to invoke their old ranks, and debates persisted over whether to change the name of the agency to "Civil Disaster."

Despite these worries, Canada's civil defence agency was only too glad to accept greater support from the military in shoring up the country's passive defences. It was the military, indeed, that was most reluctant about its involvement in CD planning and organization. In the immediate postwar period, Canada's military was absorbed in the elaboration of a professional standing armed force whose aim was to fight alongside allies overseas. The Korean War, and immense government investment in rearmament, helped the armed forces to achieve this goal. The Canadian Chiefs of Staff viewed support for civil defence as an obligation that could irreparably damage their ability to support the Canadian forces stationed in France and West Germany. For most of the 1950s, the military fought to stay out of CD plans, with the exception of providing warning to Canadian cities.

Plans for "national survival" after 1959, however, altered this balance significantly. Local civil defence agencies had proven unable to attract and retain the volunteer manpower most observers believed was necessary to save lives in a nuclear

war. After 1959, the military was forced to take on full responsibility for rescue and re-entry, formerly the task of volunteers. The Canadian Army's Militia reserves were stripped of their role as reinforcements for the war in Western Europe and instead tasked with saving lives and fighting fires. The new civil-military relationship was uneasy and short-lived, as militia volunteers lost interest in "snakes and ladders" exercises, and the public grew wary of the risks posed by giving the military too much authority in an emergency.

There is an enormous body of North American literature dedicated to the study of the Cold War, and yet only a handful of works turn their attention to the history of civil defence. This is at once remarkable, considering the heated public debates held in Canada and the United States about civil defence during the early Cold War, and unsurprising, since the vast bulk of Cold War historiography has focused on the foreign policies and military strategies of the United States and the Soviet Union. It was only in the late 1970s and early 1980s, coinciding with a renewed public discussion of the alleged benefits of a civil defence program, that the literature began to engage civil defence as, *inter alia*, a domestic aftershock of the Cold War.

The first histories of civil defence appeared in the United States; and were written as security studies by political scientists. William H. Kincade addressed the civil defence question in light of intelligence indicating increased Soviet passive defences, the closure of U.S. anti-ballistic missile sites in 1977, and renewed calls for shelter construction in the United States. Kincade's work highlighted concerns that the United States' ability to protect itself might have been compromised by years of neglect during the *détente* period.

Kincade provided a brief organizational history of the American civil defence establishment, but his work concentrated on policy direction.¹⁰

The dominant school in the American literature about civil defence emerged as part of studies that addressed larger questions about how the atomic bomb and the concept of security were synthesized into American culture. Most American historians contend that federal and state governments deliberately misrepresented the effects of the atomic bomb and the feasibility of CD measures in order to reassure the public that they could survive a nuclear attack.¹¹ This act of deception, they allege, resulted in a “false consciousness.” The public, deceived into believing they could survive, supported American foreign policies against the Soviet Union.¹² These authors build upon the arguments of revisionist foreign policy historians such as Gabriel Kolko, who examined the economic underpinnings of American foreign policy to expose a self-interested, aggressive diplomacy aimed at asserting U.S. hegemony in the world by cowing allies and threatening the Soviet Union.¹³ With a few exceptions, most of the work done on civil defence in the United States castigates the program as an illiberal form of

¹⁰William H. Kincade, “Repeating History: the Civil Defence Debate Renewed,” *International Security* 2 (1978), pp. 99-120.

¹¹The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, in consultation with the United States military, did censor the effects of fallout and fought to keep nuclear weapons effects secret out of national security concerns and a fear of unnecessarily (and inconveniently) alarming the public. For example, AEC Chairman Lewis Strauss’s decision to censor the effects of fallout which resulted from the BRAVO test remains controversial, and American disarmament and test-ban advocates garnered much credibility in the late 1950s and early 1960s when they revealed flaws in the published findings of the AEC. Barton C. Hacker, “Radiation Safety, the AEC, and Nuclear Weapons Testing,” *The Public Historian* 14:1 (Winter 1992), p. 49-52.

¹²Michael J. Carey, “The Schools and Civil Defense: The Fifties Revisited” *Teachers College Record* 84 (Fall 1982), p. 122: “... extreme emotionalism could be the result of too much talk about the bomb. It was far better to give the American people Ike’s pleasant and reassuring smile.”

¹³J.L. Granatstein and R.D. Cuff applied revisionist arguments to Canadian foreign policy in the early 1970s, inspired by Kolko, who was then a colleague at York University. The revisionist interpretation did not stick in Canada, but an overtly economic nationalist interpretation emerged later in the decade through the work of progressive Canadian political scientists. See J.L. Granatstein and R.D. Cuff, “Looking Back at the Cold War: 1945-1954” *Canadian Forum* (July-August 1972), p. 9.

government control managed by the military and civil defence advocates, rather than studying the evolution of civil defence policies. All these historians work to correct the conception that Cold War America was uniformly quiescent, conservative, and supportive of the arms race.

Paul Boyer's 1985 work remains one of the most influential historical assessments of the Cold War's cultural impact. The author, raised as a pacifist and an active participant in the American disarmament movement in the 1960s, wrote at a time of renewed opposition to nuclear arms in the United States. Boyer investigated how the American public came to accept the atomic bomb, along with its horrific effects, as part of their lives during the Cold War. Boyer examined articles published in leading American periodicals and magazines by American scientists, works of science fiction dealing with atomic war, and other cultural forums to determine how, from the years 1945-1950, "Americans first confronted the bomb, struggled against it, and absorbed it into the fabric of the culture."¹⁴ He contended that government officials who emphasized the useful applications of the atom, and the atomic scientists and intellectuals who portrayed a destructive atomic future, used fear in an attempt to gain legitimacy.¹⁵ The responsible spokesmen for international control of atomic power, the atomic scientists, believed that there was no defence from the atomic bomb, but that they were gradually marginalized as the American government employed anti-communism as a weapon to dampen political dissent. Boyer argued that civil defence was offered to the public as an illusion of defence that lulled public concern about the atomic bomb, but he did not

¹⁴Paul Boyer, *By the Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age*. (New York: Pantheon, 1985), xviii.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 70.

conduct archival research to provide evidence of this manipulation. Instead, the public record provided the foundation of his work.¹⁶

Particularly relevant to Boyer's argument was the body of literature that emerged after the war from the medical community. Psychologists and sociologists wrote many reports in the postwar period indicating the dangers posed by mass panic and hysteria. Studies like that produced by Irving Janis, a Yale psychologist, in 1950, advised that preparedness for nuclear war could serve to "inoculate" the public against emotional overreaction to the bomb. These studies, paired with optimistic CD training booklets and films such as *Duck and Cover!*, form the bedrock of Boyer's thesis: "Reassuring and interconnected messages, emanating from so many authoritative sources as the decade ended, contributed powerfully to the emergence of a decisive and unsettling new stage in America's cultural and political engagement with atomic weapons."¹⁷ His argument that civil defence was a means to regulate "atomic anxiety" has become the standard interpretation of the purpose of civil defence in America's Cold War.¹⁸

¹⁶The articles that appeared in popular magazines were written by journalists, not civil defence officials. Ibid., p. 327. Boyer argued that in its publications, the government used strategic lingo to deceive the public. By referring to the atomic weapon in technical terms instead of emotional and visceral ones, the immediacy of the bomb's danger was reduced. This, Boyer argues, led to public apathy. Ibid., p. 357.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 333.

¹⁸William F. Vandercook applied Boyer's argument to his interpretation of the newly declassified 1956 Human Effects of Nuclear Weapons report in 1986. The report reflected internal directives within the Federal government about how to present the atomic threat by speaking frankly about the effects of fall-out. Eisenhower's decision not to implement the program's report, Vandercook argued, was based on his administration's "fear of arousing public opinion over nuclear weapons policy." Vandercook's study of the specific policy appears to support Boyer's argument that the government won acquiescence to a strategy of deterrence by downplaying the effects of nuclear weapons. "Making the Very Best of the Very Worst: The 'Human Effects of Nuclear Weapons' Report of 1956." *International Security* 11 (1986), p. 184. The use of civil defence as a selling point for deterrence was also argued by Guy Oakes in his 1992 article, "The Cold War Conception of Nuclear Reality: Mobilizing the American Imagination for Nuclear War in the 1950s" *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 6 (1992), pp. 339-363. Oakes renewed the point in his 1994 book, *The Imaginary War: Civil Defence and American Cold War Culture* (Oxford: University Press, 1994), pp. 8-9. In Oakes' interpretation, civil defense was not used only to sell the policy of deterrence, but to build a "Cold War ethic" that formed the resolve behind fighting the Cold War. In 1999, Anne Fisher imported Boyer's thesis and applied it to her interpretation of Canada's civil defence program. Like Boyer, Fisher mainly examined the public record, using newspaper coverage and magazine

Margot Henriksen, writing over ten years later, renewed Boyer's argument to explain why the American public supported nuclear arms for so long. She developed the thesis that the American obsession with nuclear weapons was a societal mental illness, a condition that saw Americans unified under the umbrella of the protection offered by the atomic bomb, yet at the same time fractured by a culture of dissent that viewed the weapon as a symbol of American insecurity.¹⁹ This internal, soul-searching cultural and political debate was mediated by the state, which used the reassuring voice of the American civil defence program to limit public discourse about the atomic problem and to silence critics.²⁰ Henriksen also offered the first explanation of why American civil defence programs failed over the course of the 1950s. She and others contended that this failure constituted evidence of the effectiveness of the culture of dissent, represented by domestic disarmament activists, who popularized opposition to civil defence measures as they attacked nuclear arms tests in the 1950s and 1960s. Henriksen goes so far as to absolve disarmament activists of the neuroses affecting the rest of the public: "the dissenters who inhabited this postwar culture offered some of the most sane and critical commentary on the diminishment of life in an anxious and schizoid atomic age."²¹

Scholars have built upon works like those of Boyer and Henriksen, which focus on the atomic question, to examine other aspects of normative Cold War culture. The

investigations of the civil defence program to conclude that the program was offered to convince Canadians to support a policy of deterrence. Anne Fisher, "Civil defence in Canada, 1939-1965: Garnering support for deterrence through the myth of protection," (Unpublished MA Thesis, Lakehead University, 1999).

¹⁹Margot Henriksen, *Dr. Strangelove's America: or How Americans Learned to Stop Worrying and Live with the Bomb*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), xxii.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 93.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 111. Adherents to this argument have published histories that are highly critical of American civil defence and complimentary to disarmament activists and groups. Dee Garrison, for example, claimed in her 2003 work that disarmament groups "decisively" defeated civil defence measures and "threatened the basic doctrines of American nuclear strategy." Dee Garrison, *Bracing for Armageddon*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 10-11.

revisionist school's early Cold War is not marked by economic prosperity, but repression and imperilled liberalism, and characterized by atomic and anti-communist paranoia. The apparatus of this system, the argument goes, was regulated by the agents of state authority who employed fear, whether through civil defence exercises or in chasing real and imagined subversives, to contain domestic cultures of dissent.²² In Canada, there is no evidence to suggest that civil defence operated in service to such a conspiratorial agenda. While CD officials were as concerned about public hysteria as their allies to the south, they always opted to disclose rather than censor whatever information they had about nuclear weapons, and used fear only to underline the severity of the consequences arising from a nuclear exchange.

American gender historians have convincingly shifted the "containment" argument from the public sphere into the private, using the language and imagery of civil defence publicity to interrogate gender roles within private homes. Much like the works of Boyer and his disciples, feminist historians of civil defence concentrate on the connections between public policy, private life, and culture. For instance, using Ellen Tyler May's argument that containment of Communist aggression abroad was matched by containment of gender roles in the postwar American family, Susan Stoudinger Northcutt contended that the American civil defence organization provided the bridge

²²Political scientist Andrew Grossman, in his 2001 work *Neither Red nor Dead*, used civil defence as a case study to illustrate how the executive branch of government used Cold War crisis and national emergency legislation to centralize power and mobilize the American public for war. This long-term mobilization, Grossman argues, "produced at times a narrow and at times illiberal, even repressive, domestic political environment that configured, for good or ill, postwar political culture, citizenship rights, and law." Andrew Grossman, *Neither Dead nor Red: Civilian Defense and American Political Development during the Early Cold War*. (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. xii. See also Stephen Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991), and Michael Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry Truman and the National Security State*. (Cambridge: University Press, 2000). A Canadian equivalent to this study, though focused far more on the levers of government and policing than on the ephemera of culture, is Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse's *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-1957*. (Toronto: University Press, 1994).

between public policy and private homes.²³ The atomic bomb was gradually domesticated. Using an analysis of civil defence publications and popular media, Northcutt examined how women participating in defence activities were portrayed: “Mrs. Carlson attended to the canned food and supply of water. Daughter Charlene made beds. The shelter is a “temporary” home, a type of doomsday architecture. The photograph/portrait is symbolic: It is ordered, neat, focused, patriarchal. It is reassuring. It looks so “normal.”²⁴ Domestication simultaneously empowered women as the defenders of the domestic battlefield, encouraged conformity to current gender roles, and reduced the explicit threat of the bomb as the home itself, and the families within, became militarized. The insight of gender historians was applied in this dissertation to determine how CD officials structured their public appeals, and what roles they wished both men and women to play in the organization. The best examples of the gendered construction of the civil defence volunteer in Canada are found in Chapter 3.

Investigation into the major themes of this thesis was also inspired by issues explored by Laura McEnany in her examination of the Federal Civil Defence Administration (FCDA) and the impact of its programs on American family life. She argued that the voluntary participation of the public in civil defence raised questions about the responsibilities of citizens and the state in homeland defence. Unlike previous works that were more concerned with attacking civil defence, McEnany interpreted CD as a point of contact between the relatively peaceful Cold War homefront and the reality

²³Susan Stoudinger Northcutt, “Women and the Bomb: Domestication of the Atomic Bomb in the United States.” *International Social Science Review* 74 (1999), p. 3.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 5.

of international confrontation with the Soviet Union.²⁵ McEnany explained how the American government applied civil defence concepts to export responsibility for defence to private citizens, effectively creating a grass-roots approach to national security. This process, she argued, transformed the American family into a paramilitary reserve, and created a system designed to protect itself from external invaders and crush subversives within.

McEnany's interpretation of American civil defence publicity helped shape the treatment in this thesis of Canada's CD publicity program. She recognized that the work of civil defence was two-tiered, the first a secretive and bureaucratic policy planning process, and the second constituting the work necessary to enlist the public to adopt the prescribed measures. McEnany found that the civil defence publicity used to promote the concept of "self-help," with its emphasis on individual responsibilities and the defence of a distinctive way of life, "subtly transformed civil defense from a list of tasks into a set of desirable personality traits."²⁶ McEnany does not examine the FCDA's public appeals in great detail; however, her work was important in illustrating the prescriptive nature of civil defence publicity and the assumptions about the public that American CD officials often made. In this thesis, Canadian civil defence publicity is examined through the same lens, revealing what Canadian CD officials expected of their volunteers and, just as important, what type of volunteers were most sought after.²⁷

²⁵ Laura McEnany, *Civil Defence Begins at Home: militarization meets everyday life in the fifties*. (Princeton: University Press, 2000), p. 5

²⁶ Ibid., p. 37.

²⁷ Almost unique among civil defence studies, McEnany takes pains to illustrate that CD planners were genuinely concerned about the public, and often frustrated and puzzled by the hostile or apathetic reception their plans received in the public.

Tracy Davis, in her 2007 work *Stages of Emergency*, analyzed national histories of civil defence from an interdisciplinary, comparative, and international perspective. Davis examined civil defence organizations in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada, using the US and UK's National Archives, with most of her Canadian material drawn from the eclectic collections of the Diefenbunker Archive in Carp, Ontario. Despite the effort invested in this archival research, Davis, a theatre historian, did not wish her work to be seen as a history of civil defence. Rather, she presented "a historical treatment of how problems were investigated through theatrical techniques and rehearsal methodologies. The argument is not that [civil defence] was "performance" but a more sophisticated (and limited) claim that theatre... had a utility in twentieth-century governance... central to how people envisioned ways to identify and resolve anxious problems."²⁸

With her background in theatrical and performance theory, Davis identified where civil defence officials in each country employed the "toolkit" of theatrical performance, stage-setting, and playwriting to create plans and exercises with a sense of realism that would inculcate public preparedness. Davis' broad study eloquently picked out common threads in the North Atlantic triangle's public exercises for nuclear war, but her chapters, divided between civil defence activities in three countries, often did not account for the context in which these exercises were developed or received. While her general chapter on exercises provides an excellent explanation of why CD agencies planned these intricate imaginings of disaster, her account does not discuss the importance of such

²⁸ Tracy Davis, *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 4.

public interactions as publicity events, nor their use in citizenship education.²⁹ She does, however, present historians of civil defence with an understanding of the roots of the rhetorical devices and performative strategies that CD officials drew upon to perform their work. Furthermore, Davis provides the study of civil defence with a meaningful and novel theoretical foundation that may help scholars of the Cold War to interpret CD as more than “kitsch” history or public manipulation. The theatrical tools used in exercises were nevertheless of secondary importance to the goals CD officials hoped to achieve by their efforts during these civic events.³⁰

While in the past decade historians have begun to build a richer understanding of Canada’s own Cold War homefront, focusing particularly on the national security state as it affected immigration and political culture, civil defence has escaped the attention of all but a few.³¹ With the exception of an unpublished organizational survey written for the 50th anniversary of Emergency Preparedness Canada, there is not even an official history of Canadian civil defence for today’s revisionists to revise.³² There are, however, two

²⁹ Ibid., Chapter 2, “Rehearsals for Nuclear War,” pp. 58-104.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 351.

³¹ Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse’s important 1994 work *Cold War Canada: The Making of the National Insecurity State* examined the state of Canada’s postwar political discourse through the lens of American scholars such as Whitfield and others. Whitaker and Marcuse posit that Canada’s domestic Cold War cannot be interpreted as a struggle between communists and democrats, but between “winners and losers” in a struggle for control of Canadian culture. The winners in this case were those who articulated a vision of a deeply conservative society over a liberal or progressive one. This struggle, waged by civil service mandarins, officers of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and cultural and political dissenters, took place in the civil service, in labour unions, in the entertainment industry, in the provinces, and within Canadian homes. The conservative values that underpinned the practices of the Canadian security services, however, also served to prevent the excesses of the populist McCarthyist witch-hunt that most Canadians observed unfolding in the United States. In contrast, most of Canada’s anti-communist activities took place in private. There was no list of subversives announced publicly, and little public outcry over those whose careers were ruined by RCMP security screening, surveillance, and official disapproval. Their work did not discuss civil defence even in passing. Whitaker and Marcuse, p. 187.

³² David McConnell, *Plan for tomorrow.... Today! The Story of Emergency Preparedness Canada 1948-1998*, “Preface”, *The Diefenbunker - Cold War Education*, accessed 12 February 2005, <http://www.diefenbunker.ca/english/docs/0/120/234/9/133/197/198.asp?type=Web&id=198>. McConnell’s work employed records from the concerned government departments, as well as public information pamphlets, departmental newsletters, and newspapers. Half of the work consists of an edited draft history

published sources that deal exclusively with Canada's civil defence program, although these presented dated arguments. These surveyed CD's regional development in British Columbia and Alberta, the provinces that showed the greatest enthusiasm for organization during the early Cold War.

Costia Nikitiuk's 1978 short history of the challenges faced by civil defence in British Columbia questioned why the organization faced such difficulty in sustaining interest throughout her period of study, 1946-1974. She applied organizational legitimacy theory to British Columbia's Provincial Civil Defence (PCD) to assess whether it was able to create a policy envelope in which to function, demonstrate its utility to the public, and create enduring support.³³ Her work provides a useful if cursory survey of civil defence in the province, but is limited by her lack of access to archival documents. With the province's documents still restricted, Nikituk was forced to rely on PCD's published annual reports and the documents and recollections of a long-serving provincial civil defence official whom she interviewed for her article.³⁴ Organizational legitimacy theory, furthermore, was only lightly applied to the subject matter. Though her argument was not proven by the evidence provided, Nikitiuk's work revealed that interest and investment in civil defence in the province was cyclical, and coincided with nuclear war scares in the 1950s and 1960s. During the lulls between periods of public anxiety, civil defence

of the civil defence program found in the National Archives, written by Health and Welfare employees. The history of the department after 1968 is based on McConnell's own research, mainly in the Privy Council Office and Emergency Measures Organization Record Groups at the Library and Archives of Canada.

³³ Costia Nikitiuk, "Emergency and Organizational Legitimacy: The Dilemma of Emergency Planning in B.C." *B.C. Studies* 38 (1978), p. 47.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-61.

officials were forced to refashion their organization for natural disaster planning in order to appear relevant to their publics.³⁵

Marijan Salopek's study of Western Canadian civil defence was the product of renewed interest in emergency measures in the 1980s. Salopek made use of unrestricted documents in the Alberta and British Columbia provincial archives, as well as municipal archives, to probe Western Canadians' surge of interest in civil defence during the Korean War. He argued that the war spurred speculation about the outbreak of a Third World War, especially in Alberta, and led citizens and the press to demand increased support for civil defence in these provinces.³⁶ Salopek also discussed how civil defence spending became politicized, such as in Western protest against the federal government's allocations of anti-aircraft resources to protect targets in the East.³⁷ The work is disappointing, however, because it presents evidence of the public's interest but no conclusions, and Salopek cannot explain why Alberta and British Columbia in particular were eager to participate in civil defence. Salopek provided evidence that the West's intense public interest was linked, at least initially, to the onset of the Korean War, but his contention that the war's end led to the organization's decline and disappearance is demonstrably false. Neither Salopek nor Nikitiuk attempted to link developments in Canada's civil defence to the programs of its allies (except for a brief reference to Sweden's strategy), or to the prevalent trends of the arms race.

³⁵Nikitiuk argued that Manitoba's civil defence agency, which proved its value to the public by co-ordinating rescue efforts during the 1950 Red River flood emergency, outlasted British Columbia's agency, which had no equivalent opportunity to demonstrate its peacetime application. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

³⁶Marijan Salopek, "Western Canadians and Civil Defence: The Korean War Years, 1950-1953," *Prairie Forum* 14 (1989), p. 75.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 79. Many in Western cities such as Calgary and Vancouver were convinced that they would be at just as much risk as the Eastern industrial targets of Toronto and Montreal, and repeatedly protested to both the Department of National Defence and to the Federal Civil Defence Co-ordinator over what they perceived as an imbalance.

Since the 1994 decommissioning of Canada's largest and most sophisticated bomb shelter, Canadian Forces Station Carp, colloquially known as the Diefenbunker, and its subsequent re-opening as a Cold War heritage museum in 1997, there has been increased public interest in Canadian emergency planning. This is reflected in a number of publications focusing exclusively on civil-military plans for local evacuation, such as Sean Maloney's examination of the COG shelter program.³⁸ Bill Manning and others have examined the smaller bunkers scattered across Ottawa and attached to military bases across the country.³⁹ These works place specific civil defence strategies in the context of the international tensions of the Cuban missile crisis, and argue that Canadians were not as well protected in the event of an emergency as their American counterparts.⁴⁰ Manning approached civil defence from the standpoint of material history, and sought out elements of Canada's Cold War heritage that should be preserved and adequately presented to the public. There is a danger in the renewed interest in emergency planning because of the tendency to treat the bunkers as tourist attractions, with little understanding of how specific installations and plans affected the communities in which they were established.

Civil defence has also attracted the attention of a number of scholars who have not published their work. Steven Lee's 1987 master's thesis considered civil defence in the context of U.S. and British planning, and argued that Canada "worked out its program in conjunction with the broader goals of its major allies in World War and Cold War." Lee used CD to measure Canada's foreign policy influence, and found that the Canadian program, adopted in whole or in part from its larger and more powerful allies, reflected

³⁸ Sean Maloney, "Dr. Strangelove Visits Canada: Projects RUSTIC, EASE, and BRIDGE, 1958-1963," *Canadian Military History* 6:1 (1997), pp. 42-56.

³⁹ Bill Manning, "Beyond the Diefenbunker: Canada's Forgotten Little Bunkers", *Material History Review* 57 (Spring 2003), pp. 79-92.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

Canada's status as a junior partner in international Cold War politics. Lee's research at the Department of National Defence's Directorate of History was helpful in the writing of this dissertation's treatment of Canada's early Cold War civil defence planning.⁴¹

Anne Fisher's 1999 thesis applied the American revisionist interpretation of civil defence planning to Canadian efforts. Fisher mainly used periodicals such as *Macleans*, *Saturday Night*, and newspaper reports, and concluded that the civil defence program was a propaganda tool, "carefully manufactured for very purposeful utilitarian reasons; to demystify an atomic bombing without discussing the human cost."⁴² Fisher adopted the Boyer position that the purpose of civil defence was to obtain support for the nuclear arms build-up and the policy of deterrence as it developed in the 1950s. This policy, she argued, lost support after the Cuban missile crisis as the Canadian public began to realize that the proposed defences for nuclear war were unrealistic.

In her 2004 doctoral thesis, Jennifer Hunter compared public support for the civil defence organization and the Canadian disarmament movement between 1945 to 1963. Her goal was to determine how the nuclear weapon shaped Canadian society in the early Cold War. Her study concluded, from the failure of both organizations to gain lasting public support, that Canadians did not take the threat of nuclear war seriously.⁴³ While Hunter's comparison was innovative – both organizations struggled for funds, the attention of volunteers, and public legitimacy – she ultimately placed greater emphasis in her study on the disarmament movement and its impact on the political debate about

⁴¹Steven Lee, "Power, Politics, and the Cold War: the Canadian civil defence program and the North Atlantic Alliance 1945-1959," (Montreal: McGill University M.A. Thesis, 1987.)

⁴²Anne Fisher, "Civil Defence in Canada 1939-1965: garnering support for war and nuclear weapons through the myth of protection," (Thunder Bay: Lakehead University MA Thesis, 1999.)

⁴³Jennifer Hunter, "'Is it even worthwhile doing the dishes?' Canadians and the Nuclear Threat, 1945-1963," (Montreal: McGill University PhD Dissertation, 2004), p. 315.

whether Canada should accept nuclear weapons, a subject that did not touch on civil defence plans or publicity. Though she made extensive use of periodicals and public opinion polls, she did not exploit the wealth of civil defence material held in Canadian government record groups at the Library and Archives of Canada (LAC), and as such offered limited information about the development of Canada's CD policies that were meant to win over the public she sought to understand.

This dissertation is the result of research conducted primarily in the Government Collection of LAC between 2004 and 2006. The majority of the research effort was directed at the files of the federal government departments directly and indirectly concerned with planning Canada's civil defence policies, such as the departments of National Health and Welfare, Defence, External Affairs, the Privy Council Office, and the Emergency Measures Organization itself. Many of the dissertation's findings are based on evidence found in formerly classified departmental documents that were opened through requests to the Access to Information and Privacy staff at LAC. Because of the extent of intergovernmental cooperation (and confrontation) over civil defence, this material contains a wealth of information about not just federal but also provincial and municipal CD exercises and plans.

The manuscript group collections at LAC contain many references to CD, specifically the Prime Ministerial fonds, those of cabinet ministers such as Paul Martin and Douglas Harkness, and the files of senior civil defence staff Jack Wallace and Major-Generals Matthew Penhale and Howard Graham, who were all deeply involved in CD planning and training in the 1950s and 1960s. This research has been complemented with work in the files of professional and voluntary associations, such as the files of the

Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, and other groups. LAC's special media collection was plumbed for Canadian and American civil defence films, and archival CBC television and radio broadcasts. Microfilmed Canadian newspapers and magazines were extensively consulted to discern public and editorial reaction to Canadian civil defence planning, as were the published results of surveys and polls conducted by the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

The Department of National Defence's Directorate of History in Ottawa, among other repositories used in this dissertation, retains the seven-volume diary of Major-General Frank Worthington, who held the post of Federal Civil Defence Co-ordinator from 1948 until his retirement in 1959. These volumes contain many documents and reflections that are indispensable for the study of civil defence in Canada. The Canadian War Museum's Military History Research Centre's Library and the George Metcalf Archival Collection were also plumbed to find original oral histories, training manuals, and personal document collections. Similar research was performed in the Doug Beaton Library at the Diefenbunker museum in Carp, Ontario.

The thesis is organized into chapters that explore the different aspects of Canadian civil defence planning from CD's post-war establishment in 1948 to the moment when it began its retreat from public life in 1963. The first three chapters examine the "self-help" period of CD planning, lasting from 1948 to 1954. Chapter 1 traces the wartime roots of Canada's civil defence, and the decision taken by a reluctant government to establish a peacetime CD body to address the critical problem of how to prepare the public to survive an atomic attack. The second chapter reveals the difficult process of creating civil

defence organizations across the country during the Korean War, and the importance of provincial cooperation and leadership by local CD officials to determine these agencies' early performance. Chapter 3 focuses on the development of the first national Canadian civil defence publicity campaign, the "On Guard, Canada!" convoy, its role as a herald of CD's message of responsible citizenship, and the pageantry that accompanied most CD publicity exercises.

The fourth chapter of this work is concerned with the shift in civil defence policy from the outdated "self-help" strategy to tactical evacuation, and illustrates how CD planners put plans into action through large-scale public exercises such as "Operation Lifesaver," the largest such exercise, which was carried out in Calgary in 1955. Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the crisis of planning created by the advent of the intercontinental ballistic missile that led to the establishment of the national survival policy and Continuity of Government under the 1959 Civil Defence Order. This chapter also examines the extensive public confusion that resulted from an extended period of uncertainty in civil defence planning.

The final chapters of this work investigate the most active period of Canadian civil defence activity during the "national survival" stage, as the Diefenbaker government struggled to prepare Canadians for a likely war over Berlin, from 1958 to 1961, and Cuba in 1962. Chapter 6 discusses the history of the Canadian Army's resistance to participate in CD, and their critical (if temporary) role after 1959 in attempting to form a sustainable force of blended civil-military rescue corps for wartime national survival, an effort that peaked during the 1961 Berlin Crisis. Chapters 7 and 8 consider the origins and implications of the federal government's fallout shelter policy, and the complex nature of

the public's largely negative response to this policy, and by extension to civil defence as a whole. Finally, Chapter 9 examines the emergency measures taken by the Canadian government during the Cuban missile crisis, and the brief and almost immediately forgotten surge in public interest in CD that resulted from this period of intense public anxiety.

Canada's civil defence program failed for a constellation of reasons that will be explored in the following pages, but the primary cause was the failure of the government to uphold its part of the new social contract it presented to its citizenry. Successive governments pursued and altered the policy, and drafted plans behind closed doors, but never provided the public with the tools required to create a meaningful defence. Civil defence and its officials limped by on a fraction of a percentage of the billions of dollars committed to the military defence of the country during the same period. This support was insufficient to provide concrete evidence to the public of progress in civil defence measures implemented for their defence, and made it an easy target for criticism and ridicule. Nor was civil defence and its self-help message compatible with the paternalistic underpinnings of the welfare state, which was the dominant postwar model of civil society. In the public eye, air raid sirens, additional fire trucks and do-it-yourself shelter designs were no match for Soviet thermonuclear bombs and intercontinental ballistic missiles, and were never enough to convince Canadians that their contribution to civil defence would satisfy the public good. Civil Defence was remembered by the public most often when international crises made the theoretical threat of annihilation in war frighteningly real, and forgotten just as quickly when these menaces passed.

Chapter 1

Civil Defence in the Transition from World War to Cold War

The two 20 kiloton-yield atomic blasts that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki hastened the end of the Second World War, and cast a long shadow over the world. Atomic bombs reshaped international relations, military strategy, and how the world imagined a future war fought with the weapons. The terrible potential lurking in the atom bomb threatened the balance of international relations and, in time, the very future of civilization itself. As military professionals around the world struggled to incorporate the weapon into their plans for future war, governments were forced to grapple with the prospect of the destruction of civilian targets on a massive scale.

The principal domestic concern of the Canadian and American governments in the summer of 1945 was the rapid reconversion of wartime industry to peacetime use. The Canadian government was determined to ensure that returning soldiers would be given education, training, housing and employment. The war had exacted a terrible price, but geography ensured that Canadians were spared the physical destruction of the strategic bombing campaign and urban warfare that had left European cities in ruins. With the end of the war, Canada's domestic defence forces, including two full army divisions, were gradually demobilized.

The Second World War had proved the extent of the civilian home front's vulnerability to enemy action.¹ In most countries threatened by enemy attack, a passive defence organization was established to minimize casualties caused by bombing, provide first aid to the wounded and shelter the homeless. The Canadian government maintained

¹ Almost half of the dead from the Second World War were civilian, a massive increase over First World War figures. Brian Bond, *War and Society in Europe, 1870-1970*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998), pp. 168-169, 197.

an Air Raid Precautions (ARP) organization for this end from 1939 to 1945, though an attack against Canada was considered increasingly unlikely as the war drew on. The substantial challenges posed by creating and maintaining an effective wartime passive defence organization figured heavily in postwar planning.

The Canadian government established plans for its postwar civilian defence organization in 1947. Planners believed that preparation was a prudent investment that might save Canadian lives and industrial potential, permitting the country to prosecute a third world war. Civil defence preparations proved more contentious, complicated, and costly than the government had anticipated, particularly during the transition from a wartime to a peacetime economy. The federal government's civil defence agency became mired in financial and bureaucratic restrictions. The federal government had hoped that the Cold War would not derail its postwar agenda, and was slow to rearm. Plans for civil defence, too, proceeded slowly, as governments weighed the benefits of preparedness against the risk of provoking public alarm. Some Canadian cities, under pressure from an anxious public, pushed ahead with their own preparations without federal guidance. It was not until the Soviet Union demonstrated its nuclear capability in 1949 that the threat of nuclear war passed from the theoretical to the real. Civil Defence plans were accelerated as a result of the government's rearmament efforts the following year.

Wartime Air Raid Precautions

International rearmament prompted Canadian government planning for passive defence in August 1936. The planned organization existed only on paper until August 1939, when it became clear that Canada would soon be involved in a war with Germany. Wartime ARP was managed by the Department of Pensions and National Health, which

was headed by Ian Mackenzie. When the war arrived, Mackenzie delegated his authority over Air Raid Precautions to provincial premiers in the Maritimes and in British Columbia, who formed provincial ARP committees.² The provincial organizations in turn advised municipalities in vulnerable areas to set up their own ARP organizations using volunteers. The federal government provided money to these areas to purchase fire prevention and safety equipment. In addition, the federal ARP organization distributed reprints of training manuals and information pamphlets published by its British counterpart, which had gained much operational experience during the Battle of Britain.³

Voluntary ARP organizations were established in what were considered the most vulnerable communities in Canada.⁴ One of the first and most enduring problems in executing ARP plans was the distinction between targets in Canada defended by the Canadian army (federal) and those defended by ARP organizations (provincial and local). Following the fall of France in June 1940, ARP efforts were intensified under the Defence of Canada Regulations.⁵ These regulations gave provincial premiers or designated officials the power to conduct air raid drills, blackout or dimout exercises, so

² Conference of District Officers Commanding and Representatives of General Officers Commanding-in-Chief and Chief of General Staff, 15 March 1942, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC) RG 24 C-1 Reel C-5283, 8880-1.

³ The United Kingdom had the skeleton of a functional air raid precautions organization before the war began as a result of its population coming under attack during the First World War and anxiety over civilian casualties from bomber aircraft and gas attacks that emerged in the interwar years. Public anxiety over these subjects peaked during the 1938 Munich crisis. The UK Parliament accordingly went further in its prewar ARP planning, which included making ARP a statutory responsibility of local councils and government departments, but before the war local ARP councils made little progress. Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, regional commissioners were assigned to coordinate sections of UK ARP and casualty services, but it was not until the first massed air raids against British civilian centres that major operational gaps were identified and concerted action taken to resolve them. Canada's ARP was modelled extensively on the British example. For a full accounting of the British civil defence system in the Second World War, see the official history, written by Terence O'Brien, *Civil Defence*. (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1955), pp. 120-121, 292-317, 379-420.

⁴ William Richard Feasby, *Official History of the Canadian Medical Services, 1939-1945*. (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 1953), p. 513. For instance, ARP committees formed in St. John, New Brunswick, Halifax, Victoria, Vancouver, Montreal and Quebec.

⁵ P.C. 3962, 2 June 1941, LAC RG 24 C-1 Reel C-5283 File 8880-7.

long as they did not interfere with activities of local military forces. In the event of a real or apprehended attack, the premier would transfer control of the area's lighting and civilian defences to the senior defence official in the area, usually the District Officer commanding the geographical boundaries of the Military Districts designated by the Department of National Defence.⁶ Though the provinces were not enthusiastic about their newfound responsibility for ARP, under wartime regulations they had little choice but to accept the duties. Apart from encouraging municipalities to organize for their own defence, Ontario and Quebec largely ignored the directives. Only 14 voluntary ARP organizations were established in Ontario in 1940. Those that did establish ARP or Civilian Protection Committees (CPC) did so as much out of imperial sentiment as fear. For example, in Verdun, Quebec, most of those who joined initially were British-born Canadians with a keen connection with the cities in Britain under threat from Nazi bombers.⁷

Coastal areas in the Maritimes and in British Columbia initially embraced ARP because the threat from enemy action, whether by air or sea, appeared to be credible. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 frightened municipal and provincial authorities, who argued that ARP organizations made up of volunteer fire fighters were insufficient protection for industrial port cities. F. Maclure Solanders, Commissioner of the Saint John Board of Trade, wrote Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King to

⁶ These regulations had been around in one form or another since 4 July 1938, and were amended to become progressively stronger as the war crises deepened. Dr. W.L. Gliddon, ARP Officer, to Col. R.D. Gibson, 4 September, 1941, LAC RG 24 C-1Reel C-5283 File 8880-7.

⁷ Serge Durflinger, *Fighting From Home* (Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2006) p. 80-81.

assert that Saint John's industrial contribution to the war demanded protection from modern anti-aircraft and coastal gun emplacements, not unarmed citizen volunteers.⁸

On the Pacific Coast, British Columbians were quick to black out their windows at night because they feared attack by Japanese submarines or airplanes. Provincial officials in Alberta were also concerned about their vulnerability, because of the work underway to build the Alaska Highway through their territory. The Premier of Alberta, William Aberhart, wrote to King on 16 April 1942 to demand additional military protection and resources for ARP, because "the citizens of this province have been warned continually by persons in authority of the danger of attack from the Japanese bases established in the Aleutians as well as by carrier-based planes off the Pacific Coast...."⁹ The request was rejected because Alberta was considered too far inland to be targeted. Demands for military assistance came from the lower echelons of the ARP organization as well. Air raid wardens in other inland cities pestered the military for additional training and material to better defend their homes. These requests were universally rejected on the grounds that wardens, however determined to protect civilians, were not soldiers.¹⁰ The level of interest Canadians actually had in ARP measures, and whether they believed that they would be subject to attack, led to a wide disparity in the level of ARP activity across the country during the war.

Attracting and retaining the interest of volunteers in the ARP organization during the war was a problem for local and provincial officials. The fear of an attack had prompted communities across the country to take some form of caution early on in the

⁸ F. MacLure Solanders to Rt. Hon. W.L. Mackenzie King, 31 Jan 1942, LAC RG 24 C-1 Reel C-5283 File 8880-7.

⁹ Aberhart to King, 16 April 1942, LAC RG-24 C-1 C-5283 File 8880-9.

¹⁰ The chairman of Ottawa's ARP Executive Committee demanded training for wardens on light machine guns, to be posted on the rooftops to repel enemy bombers. A.K. Hay to District Officer Commanding, 22 December 1941; ACGS to DMO&I, 8 January 1952, LAC RG 24 C-1 C-5283 File 8880-3.

crisis. At its peak, 634 ARP units operated across the county, staffed by approximately 218,511 volunteer and paid personnel, but these numbers were highly fluid from month to month.¹¹ Participation in the ARP organization did not translate into compliance with ARP directives. Public interest in following the rules fluctuated depending on the overall direction of the war, and the proximity of the threat to Canada. Results consequently varied across the country. Local officials in Ontario and Quebec were frustrated by the unwillingness of civilians to abide by blackout regulations or to pay any attention to local ARP exercises.¹² There was, for example, a long chain of correspondence between the RCMP in the Gaspé region, local CD officials, and the Military District Command over whether or not drivers who failed to observe roadblocks or dim their headlights should be charged. In the end no action was taken, but the correspondence reveals some of the confusion and irritation over the inability of the civilian to comprehend risk. In many centres with ARP organizations, officials considered publicity to be the answer for a wide range of problems from recruitment to compliance with ARP measures.

Publicity for the ARP organization resembled the publicity drives used to influence Canadians to purchase Victory Bonds, support salvage drives, and abide by rationing regulations. Like the merchant marine, industrial workers, and salvage-savvy housewives, ARP was publicly touted as the “Fourth Arm of the Services.” Convincing the public of the possible threat from distant enemy aircraft proved to be a sizeable obstacle to gaining their support. RCAF stations in Canada sometimes contributed “bombers” to blackout exercises and mock air raids, but the most popular way of reminding the public about the threat was to draw attention of the good work of ARP

¹¹ In 1942, during the height of interest in CPC in Verdun, for instance, the city’s chief warden could not provide a precise number of volunteers the organization had to hand. Durflinger, p. 84.

¹² Ibid., p. 85

organizations in Great Britain during nightly air raids. For instance, in March 1943, Stanley Lewis, the Mayor of Ottawa, addressed a “monster rally” to discuss his experiences in the United Kingdom during an air raid. The Ottawa Drama League organized a dramatization of the ARP in action for the rally, and hoped that the event “should not only give encouragement to all those in the ARP but also inspiration in the important and useful work in which they are engaged.”¹³ The rally, and others like it, was held to win over a skeptical public, and to persuade idle volunteers that their contribution was valuable, and still needed.¹⁴ As Allied fortunes improved by the end of 1943, however, the public became increasingly unconvinced of the need for the organization.

In August 1943, W.C. Mainwaring, Chairman of the British Columbia ARP Advisory Council, pleaded with Ian Mackenzie (who was also a British Columbian) for a strong message in support of ARP measures in BC by the federal government. He lamented that favourable war news in Europe and Alaska and negative press editorials about ARP had caused the public and ARP personnel in the province to become “alarmingly apathetic.”¹⁵ A month later, Lieutenant-General Kenneth Stuart, Chief of the General Staff, advised Mackenzie that the publicity battle was already lost. “Nothing short of a strong statement,” Stuart argued, would do much good, “and it then becomes tantamount to crying wolf wolf.”¹⁶ Local military and ARP officials continued to publicly stress the need for inconvenient ARP measures and exercises, but plans to dismantle the organization were already well under way. In November 1943, the Canadian Chiefs of

¹³ Memorandum: Air Raid Precautions Federal District Area, 5 March 1943, LAC RG 24 C-1 C-5283 File 8880-3.

¹⁴ In Verdun, Chief Warden Charles H. Barr, a Liberal Party organizer, “admitted as early as October 1941 that his organization’s primary mission was to foster a ‘win the war’ attitude among the population.” Durflinger, p. 87.

¹⁵ W.C. Mainwaring to Ian Mackenzie, 24 August 1943, LAC RG 24 C-1 C-5283 File 8880-3.

¹⁶ CGS to Mackenzie, 3 September 1943 Ibid., pt. 2.

Staffs Committee (CCSC) concluded that there was little threat to Canada's interior, but that the organization might yet be useful on the coasts in response to potential raids. Most of Ontario, Quebec, and Alberta were removed from the vulnerable areas list; these provinces demobilized their ARP units in 1944.¹⁷ On 3 October 1944, the CCSC ruled that attack against British Columbia was considered "Possible but highly improbable." The Cabinet War Committee concluded several days later that the Department of Pensions and National Health should discontinue support for ARP in Canada.¹⁸ General demobilization of ARP volunteers did not occur until March 1945. The Cabinet War Committee gave a reprieve to certain areas, like Halifax, where war risks remained. The Halifax ARP organization proved its worth in the last days of the war, when volunteers saved many lives during an evacuation of residents located close to an armoury that exploded in a fire. The organization was officially disbanded by an Order-in-Council issued on 11 September 1945, after hostilities were fully ended.

Not everyone was convinced that dismantling the entire ARP organization was a good idea. In January 1945, Brigadier-General Alexander Ross, Mackenzie's Director of Air Raid Precautions from 1943-1945, contemplated the future of continental defence. In a letter to Mackenzie, Ross argued that it "might be considered advisable" to maintain a skeletal Civil Defence organization for postwar defence arrangement, and offered his services for future consideration.¹⁹

Others were more vocal, and lobbied for continued vigilance. In an editorial in *The Post: Official Organ of the Civil Defence Guild of British Columbia*, one ARP

¹⁷ Several communities sharing the border with the United States remained active, Ibid, p. 515. Minutes of Joint Planning Sub-Committee of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 5 October 1943. LAC RG 24 C-1 C-5283 File 8880-9.

¹⁸ Minutes of Meeting of the Joint Planning Sub-Committee of the Chiefs of Staff Committee 3 October 1944; Cabinet War Committee Meeting, 5 October 1944, Ibid.

¹⁹ Brigadier General Alexander Ross to Ian Mackenzie, 25 January 1945, Ibid.

advocate denounced the government's decision to disband the organization. To *The Post* editorialist, the detonation of the atom bombs over Japan clearly signaled a new era:

Every week we read in the Press of the diabolical inventiveness of scientists and ordnance experts in producing newer and more lethal weapons with ranges of over 3000 miles. Does anyone doubt that these weapons will soon be in the hands of all nations and that in a war of the future they will be mainly directed against civil populations? Does anyone doubt that, if there is another war, air attack on civilians will be intensified and whole cities will be suddenly destroyed long before the main armies come to grips, let alone the reserve forces? Does anyone think that should the Four Horsemen again be let loose on an unhappy world that any country would have as much as one month's grace to perfect its Civil Defence?

Like Ross, the editorialist considered a small, well-trained cadre, in cooperation with the armed forces and local police and fire organizations, would be a sufficient basis upon which to train the rest of the population in the event of a future war.²⁰ However, in the relatively optimistic atmosphere of the immediate postwar period, the unknown editorialist went unheard. In most areas of the country, whatever ARP organization had existed was already forgotten, or transformed into voluntary fire departments.

Wartime ARP organization encountered many problems that postwar civil defence planners could expect to face. These included tension between federal and provincial areas of responsibility, the vague role of the military in defending civilian targets, and the difficulty of attracting and retaining public interest over a prolonged period with no crisis, but most of these problems appear to have been ignored when the Cold War loomed. Postwar federal planners contended with many of the same problems that had affected their ARP predecessors, without being able to invoke the spectre of

²⁰ It seems that the newspaper began publication late in the war, its first issue in August, 1945. It is unclear how long it remained in circulation. Unknown Author, "Editorial" *The Post: Official Organ of the Civil Defence Guild of British Columbia*. Vol 1, No. 2, (October 1945) p. 1.

pressing wartime emergency to pressure their provincial counterparts or to win over the public.

Atomic Anxiety and Civil Defence Planning 1946-1948

Defence planning in the immediate postwar period mirrored the Canadian government's response to peace in the new international order. Both were cautious, frugal, and attentive to the demands of a war-weary public. As thousands of servicemen and women were demobilized, the Army's Joint Chiefs of Staff drafted plans that were directed towards the creation of a force prepared to act in concert with the United Nations abroad.²¹ The plans contradicted the government's priorities and political position because they proposed the use of forces in a future war and, even worse, demanded compulsory military service to maintain an Active Reserve. Proposals from the military for a large standing force to support the United Nations were rejected out of hand by Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, who believed the government should plan "on the basis of a better order of things and not assume serious obligations as suggested."²² The Cabinet Defence Committee decided in September 1945 that there was no reason to reassess future defence needs.²³ The Soviet Union's espionage efforts, posturing at the United Nations, and invective towards the West aside, few Canadian observers seriously believed that the Russians had any intention or ability to start a war until their own crumbling economy was in order.²⁴

The detonation of the atomic bomb, however, had ignited the public's imagination, and during 1946 there was a torrent of speculation about what the bomb's

²¹ Such plans called for the enlistment of a Permanent Active Force of 55,788 men. J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's Army* (Toronto: University Press, 2004), p. 313.

²² Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King, 3 August 1945.

²³ Granatstein, p. 316.

²⁴ James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: Growing Up Allied*. (Toronto: University Press, 1980), p. 7.

power meant for military strategy and international relations. In 1946, American journalists published the first bestselling books dealing with the power of the atomic bomb and radioactivity. Among the most influential was John Hersey's narrative *Hiroshima*, which described the carnage and chaos caused by the bomb in unflinching tones. Hersey described the personal and social effects of radiation poisoning on Japanese civilians in vivid detail.²⁵ His account, originally serialized in *The New Yorker* and later published in book form, was widely read and distributed. A more chilling perspective of future warfare was found David Bradley's account of the first postwar atomic bomb tests in the Pacific. Bradley described the lethal radioactivity that coated warships after the tests. What he observed convinced him that defence against the atomic bomb was impossible, and that "the devastating influence of the bomb and its unborn relatives may affect the land and its wealth – and therefore its people – for centuries through the persistence of radioactivity."²⁶ Other authors, predicting the future character of war, also resorted to rhetorical device to describe scenes that had previously been the domain of science fiction.

Some of the hyperbole about atomic weapons filtered into parliamentary debates about Canadian defence policy. The modest establishment of the post-war armed services was designed to furnish Canada with a core balanced force of army, air force, and navy, which would train volunteers as they joined to fight any future conflict. The foremost duty of the permanent force was to defend Canadian territory under the conditions of the Canada/US Basic Security Plan agreed to at the Permanent Joint Board of Defence.²⁷ Douglas Abbott, the Minister of Defence, defended this "flexible" policy, which he

²⁵ John Hersey, *Hiroshima*. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1946), pp. 94-95.

²⁶ David Bradley, *No Place to Hide*. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1948), p. 165.

²⁷ Granatstein, p. 317.

argued could meet the challenges posed by changing international conditions and military technology. Abbott dismissed opposition demands for a greater defence investment by stating that if a war broke out in the next few years, any Canadian contribution would not have any “perceptible effect.”²⁸ Quoting a widely-read article by Albert Einstein published in the *New York Times* magazine, CCF critic Henry Archibald argued that “a few more tanks or a few more aeroplanes is useless ... where will your army be? It will be away out somewhere with all the cities and communications cut out behind it.”²⁹ Archibald’s solution to the gap between present planning and future warfare, however, was to inaugurate a planned society, a proposal the government dismissed as “nothing but indoctrinated communism,” a charge that became increasingly useful in Cold War politics as relations with the Soviet Union crumbled.³⁰

Nevertheless, the Canadian government and the Canadian armed services were becoming worried about the possible impact of unchecked “atomic anxiety.” Beginning in 1947, the government considered the revival of a civilian defence organization to meet the hazards of the new weapons.³¹ In March, the Chief of Staff Committee asked the newly-created Defence Research Board (DRB) to investigate civilian defence measures conducted during the Second World War.³² As research progressed, Brooke Claxton, who

²⁸ The debate in the House of Commons centred around Supply for National Defence, but continued difficulties with demobilization also arose in the discussion. Abbott, *Debates*, 19 August 1946, p. 5059.

²⁹ Henry Archibald, *Debates*, 19 August 1946, p. 5057. The Einstein article contended that “Rifle Bullets kill men, but atomic bombs kill cities. A tank is a defence against a bullet but there is no defence in science against the weapon which can destroy civilization.” *New York Times*, 23 June 1946.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ During debates over amendments to the National Defence act in February 1947, Minister of Defence Brooke Claxton responded to a question about civil defence with a promise that “we have that in mind,” but offered no concrete proposals about how defence would be organized. House of Commons, *Debates*, 17 February 1947, p. 521.

³² CSC Meeting No. 384, 21 March 1947, LAC RG 24 Vol. 5256, File 22-7-1 pt 1.

succeeded Abbott as Minister of National Defence in 1946, unveiled the government's first statement of post-war defence policy in the House of Commons four months later.³³

Though Ottawa hoped to preserve peace, Claxton observed that the lack of progress at the United Nations in 1946 demanded that the government prepare some form of insurance in the event of war. The last of his department's long-term objectives was the "organization of government departments and civilian agencies capable of putting into immediate effect a plan for civil defence."³⁴ Claxton promised the House of Commons that Canada's CD would be based on a firmly grounded, practical planning process based on reliable intelligence, and would not entertain the hysterical diatribes about "push-button wars" and other future threats often featured in press accounts.³⁵

The DRB's initial research led the Board to recommend to Claxton that steps should be taken to assign authority and responsibility for "planning civil defence arrangements in light of recent scientific developments in war."³⁶ The recommendation attracted the attention of cabinet ministers and Lieutenant-General Charles Foulkes, Chief of General Staff, who attended the fifth meeting of the DRB. Claxton was convinced that planning for Civil Defence should proceed "without delay," but did not want to provoke public alarm about nuclear war preparations. Dr. O.M. Solandt, the Chairman of the DRB, agreed with Claxton's cautious approach to CD, and advised that the planned civil

³³ Douglas Bland, *Canada's National Defence*, Volume 1. (Kingston: Queen's University School of Policy Studies, 1997), p. 3.

³⁴ *Debates*, 9 July 1947, p. 5272.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5299. A Social Credit MP from Lethbridge, John Blackmore, demanded that a sensible first step in preparing Canada for future war was in widespread first-aid training, and the erection of first-aid shelters all over the country, as well as the need to begin planning for fire defence. Blackmore recommended a more decentralized armed forces, composed of local defence units with citizen soldiers properly armed and trained across the country. *Ibid.*, p. 5303-4. Questions about concrete steps taken were similarly dismissed, such as when Conservative member Howard Green cited Col. W.W. Goforth's plan to prepare for atomic assault disclosed in public lectures in Vancouver. *Ibid.*, p. 5330-1.

³⁶ Defence Research Board Meeting No. 4, 16 September 1947, LAC RG 24 Vol 5256, File 22-7-1 pt 1.

defence agency should act as a limited advisory body to hospitals and industry about the location of buildings near likely target areas. Foulkes wanted a stronger organization and better intelligence about the atomic bomb. The general was particularly concerned about

alarmist statements being made in the press concerning the effects of atomic bombs in which people were being told that there was no defence against these weapons, thus building up a defeatist attitude in the country. He felt that someone in authority should be in a position to give information to groups of informed people that steps are being taken to protect the country in the case of another war.³⁷

Health Minister Ian Mackenzie agreed with the CGS, but disagreed with the DRB, which had concluded earlier that the Department of National Defence should not coordinate the activities of the civil defence agency. Mackenzie contended that civil defence was not just an issue of public welfare, but a matter of national security best handled by the armed forces.³⁸ Mackenzie's advice, which was based on his own frustration in dealing with the provinces about ARP during the war, went ignored. The unresolved questions about whether CD was a civilian or military, federal or provincial responsibility created numerous obstacles to CD planning and preparations in the following years. In the initial planning discussions, however, alleviating the public's concern about the bomb without creating a panic was a greater priority than clarifying roles and responsibilities.

Mackenzie perhaps also had in mind a disturbing article in *Macleans* magazine. Colonel Wallace Goforth produced a short piece in October 1947 titled "If Atomic War Comes." Goforth's work was the most accurate description of an atomic attack against Canada produced in the immediate post-war years. The author was ideally placed to comment: having been partly responsible for the creation of the Defence Research Board,

³⁷ Defence Research Board Meeting No. 5, 15 December 1947, Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

he benefitted from his own personal experience in armament research during the Second World War and from access to Canadian defence scientists. As a result, Goforth's public offering contained the most accurate predictions about the trouble the Canadian government would encounter when preparing civilians for war. On the first page of his article, a crude drawing of an atomic fireball was superimposed on an aerial photograph of Winnipeg's downtown core. Concentric rings illustrated blast damage leading two and a half miles from ground zero, and the image's caption explained that a bomb dropped over Portage and Main streets would kill 40,000, injure 60,000, and render 200,000 homeless. To those who were among the 27% of Canadians living in a major urban centre, *Macleans* claimed that the article was written "especially for you."³⁹

Goforth supposed that if even 25 bombers managed to penetrate Canada's then non-existent anti-aircraft defences, 17 of 20 major centres would be destroyed, and the largest electric power plants and industries would cease production. Canada would suffer 1,450,000 killed and wounded, with a further 650,000 homeless. These casualties would clog the hospitals and Canada would be finished as a political entity. Goforth explained, "The bleeding remnant of this Dominion would be set back economically and socially to the equivalent of its position at Confederation 80 years ago."⁴⁰ He wrote the article to sway public opinion in favour of establishing an effective civil defence agency over the next 10 years. Goforth derided fantastic options such as rebuilding cities into subterranean "rabbit warrens," and instead offered an accurate prediction that some government facilities would be forced to go underground. He doubted that any government, whether federal or municipal, had the patience, foresight, and the budget to

³⁹ Wallace Goforth, "If Atomic War Comes..." *Macleans*, 15 October 1947, p. 9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

adopt long-term protective measures. He predicted that the main impetus for a future civil defence organization would come through service clubs, women's institutes, chambers of commerce, and other "public-spirited" associations devoted to the welfare of their cities.⁴¹

The Chiefs of Staff Committee forwarded the DRB's final report to the Cabinet Defence Committee on 22 April 1948. The Defence Research Board presented more conservative recommendations for action in civil defence than had Goforth. The DRB believed that international conflict in the future would include aerial attacks against continental North America and sabotage by enemy spies; therefore, it was essential to begin planning for civil defence. The DRB defined CD as "all those defensive measures that can be taken by or on behalf of the civil population to ensure that when such an attack is made the will to resist is maintained, and the economic and social organization of the community will function effectively in support of offensive operations."⁴² The DRB had examined CD planning in the United States and the United Kingdom and advised against importing either country's plan unaltered, because of Canada's unique climate and federal-provincial relations over matters essential to civil defence, such as the provision of health services. Most importantly, the DRB recommended that CD should *not* be planned locally, as it was during the Second World War. The problems an atomic blast would cause meant that CD efforts would have to be supervised and coordinated over a wider area through national centralized planning. Constitutional restrictions on federal powers forced the DRB to recommend that responsibility for the organization and

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 71.

⁴² Cabinet Document D177: Civil Defence Planning, 22 April 1948, LAC RG 24 Vol 5256 File 22-7-1 pt 1. An earlier draft was much more aggressive in its wording of the threat: "No aggressor can hope to dominate the world unless he has knocked out the productive capacity of the North American continent."

operation of civil defence agencies had to remain at the provincial and municipal levels, unless the federal government was prepared to intervene extensively in areas of provincial control, such as health, welfare, and disaster relief, or in areas of municipal control, such as firefighting and policing.

The DRB report's authors ultimately assigned federal responsibility for CD planning to both civilian and military authorities. DRB researchers concluded that the Armed Forces, and especially the Army, would have to carry out CD tasks, including rescue and emergency medical treatment immediately following an attack. They argued that the nucleus of the initial CD agency should be created within the Department of National Defence, since CD plans could be shared directly with the Chiefs of Staff and Cabinet Defence Committees, and could be approved without the need to pass legislation through the House of Commons.

The DRB urged the immediate appointment of a civilian Civil Defence Advisor as a first step towards the creation of a civil defence organization. The Advisor's role would be to assist the Minister of National Defence. The ideal candidate required experience in administration, public relations, and army experience, and would be capable of leading Civil Defence volunteers into a war. The Advisor was responsible for federal planning, but would delegate action to other government departments and agencies as often as possible, precluding the need for a large support staff.⁴³ Cabinet approved most of the recommendations because no major expenditures or alarmist measures were required immediately. Rapid progress would be impossible in any case, since coordinating federal

⁴³ Ibid.

CD alone meant coordinating tasks between over 12 government departments and agencies.⁴⁴

A suitable appointment for the position of Civil Defence Advisor was not found until 7 October 1948, when Claxton selected retired Major-General Frederic Frank Worthington. Worthington was a career army officer who had served in both world wars. He came to Claxton's attention as a result of his command of the Pacific Coast Militia Rangers home defence force at the end of the war and, after he had resigned his commission, for his capable work as Commissioner of the Canadian Red Cross during the Fraser River Valley flood in June 1948, where he supervised distribution of food aid. Worthington was suitable for the post because he was a distinguished veteran, a proven leader, and administrator who had demonstrated his active interest in civilian defence.⁴⁵

Claxton announced Worthington's appointment on 19 October 1948. When first approached by the press, he stressed that he planned to establish something resembling a permanent disaster committee as a "sensible precaution," but one not worth getting excited over.⁴⁶ Press editorials welcomed Worthington's appointment and approved of his experience, but were critical of the government's emphasis on general planning, and questioned whether there would be time in a future war to translate plans on paper into action that would save lives.⁴⁷ Worthington's work to create such a plan meant reaching

⁴⁴ The agencies considered for deputation were as follows: the RCMP/Army for sabotage and internal security, the RCAF for Air Raid Warning, the Dept of Health and Welfare and Veterans' Affairs for Medical and Social Services, the Dominion Fire Prevention Association for Fire Fighting, Department of Public Works for Structural Protection, Dept of Transport for Communications and transport, alongside various telephone and telegraph companies, Industry planning to be done by Department of Finance, and Research by the DRB and National Research Council. Ibid.

⁴⁵ Biographical Notes: Major-General F.F. Worthington, CB, MC, MM, CD, LAC RG 32 Vol 853 File Worthington, FF.

⁴⁶ "Civil Defence Head is Named," *Montreal Gazette*, 20 October 1948

⁴⁷ "Modest First Move in Civil Defence," *Montreal Gazette*, 20 October 1948; "Just a Precaution" *St. John's Daily News*, 22 October 1948.

agreement within the federal government and with the provinces about the form and function of a Cold War civil defence organization, a task which proved to be a long, painful, and complicated process.

Worthington's Plan for Civil Defence

In early November 1948, Worthington returned to Ottawa to meet with Claxton to determine an outline of a Canadian civil defence organization to discuss with the provinces, whose participation and support was vital for creating an effective agency. Claxton and Worthington agreed to pursue a decentralized civil defence plan. The federal agency would provide training and educational materials, gather intelligence about threats, and provide information and attack warning to provincial agencies, for transmission to the concerned municipalities. Canadian cities would be directly responsible for recruiting and maintaining their own civil defence organizations, with their activities overseen and coordinated by provincial CD agencies.⁴⁸ After meeting with Claxton, Worthington first crossed the country to meet with provincial premiers and convince them to support the federal CD concept.

Worthington's meetings with the provincial premiers in November-December 1948 served two purposes. The first was to obtain their provisional support for the federal concept of the national organization. The second was to ensure that no individual province would implement its own civil defence plans prematurely, without federal input.⁴⁹ The proposed organization received a mixed reception from the provinces. The Premiers of New Brunswick (J.B. McNair), Nova Scotia (Angus L. Macdonald), and Manitoba (D.L. Campbell) offered the full support of their government for a

⁴⁸ FF Worthington Diary, 22 November 1949, Directorate of History (hereafter DHist) 112.3S4 (D29) pt 1.

⁴⁹ Brooke Claxton to Premier J.W. Jones, PEI, 21 March 1950, LAC RG 29 Vol 693 File 110-1-1.

decentralized civilian defence organization managed mainly by the provinces but directed by the federal government. Macdonald and McNair in particular welcomed the renewed federal interest in CD, since both men had been involved in wartime ARP.⁵⁰

The remaining provinces offered conditional support. The Attorney General for Ontario, Leslie Blackwell, agreed with the proposed layout in principle, but told Worthington that Ontario would defer participation until it could evaluate a full and official federal CD policy. He gave Worthington his assurances that CD could be rapidly organized in the province once the proposed federal-provincial relationship was finalized.⁵¹

Alberta's premier, E.C. Manning, was anxious to have a civil defence agency as soon as possible, but only on condition that the federal government assume the entire responsibility for planning, coordination, and organization. Manning explained that the municipalities would not otherwise follow the provincial government on what they believed to be a matter of national defence. He suggested that the government's best solution was to appoint experienced federal employees as heads of regional civil defence agencies which encompassed multiple municipalities.⁵² A centralized organization, he believed, would prevent regional parochialism in planning. By contrast, Saskatchewan's representative demanded a strong provincial voice in civil defence decisions. Quebec officials were alone in refusing to extend any support to the program. Premier Maurice Duplessis stated that Quebec would decide when the time was appropriate to take any

⁵⁰ Worthington to Claxton, 4 December 1948, LAC RG 29 Vol 698 File 110-3-1.

⁵¹ Report on Initial Civil Defence Discussions with Honourable Leslie E. Blackwell, Attorney General of Ontario, 6 December 1948, LAC RG 29 Vol 700 File 110-5-1.

⁵² Report on Initial Civil Defence Discussions with the Premier of Alberta, 20 December 1948, LAC RG 29 Vol 706 File 110-8-1 pt 1

action in civil defence.⁵³ Duplessis and the other provincial representatives required little prompting to acknowledge threats against the civilian population. Only Prince Edward Island believed that it was immune to attack, but the premier agreed with Worthington that a civil defence organization in the province might be useful to prevent public hysteria if other areas in the country were bombed.

Worthington had been cautioned by the Deputy Ministers for National Health and Welfare, Dr. Graham Cameron and Dr. George Davidson, that the provinces would not want to provide any money in support of the proposed civil defence agency. Therefore, Worthington wisely avoided the subject in his initial discussions, seeking mainly to obtain general support among the provinces.⁵⁴ Only Black raised the question, declaring that the federal government should bear full responsibility for financing Civil Defence. Several provincial representatives argued that measures to prepare for civil disaster should take priority over measures for nuclear civil defence. They reasoned that most of the population would volunteer their time to an organization designed to defeat a threat that they understood. Though they were approached individually, the provinces had already reached a consensus that investing in a program with peacetime applications would produce greater dividends than a standing force to meet a threat that may never arrive.

Most provincial governments also informed Worthington that they wanted greater support for infrastructure improvements, especially the standardization of fire-fighting equipment across the country. In Canada, every municipality purchased its own fire-fighting equipment, and purchased for economy rather than compatibility. As a result,

⁵³ Report on Initial Civil Defence Discussions with the Premier of Quebec, 29 November 1948, LAC RG 29 Vol 698 File 110-4-1 pt 1.

⁵⁴ FF Worthington Diary, 23 November 1949 DHist 112.3S4 (D29) pt 1.

over 50 types of fire hose and hydrant couplings were in use in Ontario alone. In the event of a conflagration covering a wide area, municipalities whose stock of couplings was insufficient or destroyed would find themselves with hydrants they were unable to use, since their neighbours used different equipment.⁵⁵ Saskatchewan's and British Columbia's demands were more extensive, because they hoped federal money would build a wider highway networks and more hospitals, both of which would be useful during an attack but fell under provincial jurisdiction. Worthington received their proposals with heavy skepticism: "it rather smacks to me of endeavouring to obtain something for the Province under the guise of Civil Defence without too much expense, although... the Trans-Canada highway certainly is important... for any type of defence."⁵⁶

Over the course of his two-month tour of the provinces, Worthington also met with representatives of national volunteer organizations to negotiate their support in assuming aspects of training and organization for civil defence purposes. He was most interested in obtaining the cooperation of the Canadian Red Cross and the St. John's Ambulance; he would determine later how their organizations would be linked to municipal civil defence organizations.⁵⁷ The last step in Worthington's intelligence-

⁵⁵ The fire hose standardization project was a fascinating, if low-key, aspect of the Canadian civil defence program. Worthington and provincial fire officials such as Ontario Fire Marshal W.J. Scott, a former wartime civil defence warden, worked together to convince the Canadian Standards Association to adopt one standard coupling for use with all fire hoses and hydrants. Scott had denounced unequal practices on logical terms: if a major fire exceeded the control of one community, its neighbour would be powerless to help if its couplings did not match those of that caught in the blaze. The prospect of atomic attack, with the accompanying firestorm, multiplied the problem. By 1950, the Canadian Standards Association had begrudgingly decided on a standard to be used in Canada, but only Ontario had begun the preliminary stages of conversion. Worthington to Claxton, 20 January 1950, DHist 112.3S4 (D29) pt 2.

⁵⁶ Report on Initial Civil Defence Discussions with the Honourable J.H. Sturdy, Minister of Reconstruction for the Province of Saskatchewan, 17 December 1948, LAC RG 29 Vol 704 File 110-7-1 pt 1.

⁵⁷ In November, a representative of the Canadian Boy Scouts offered the use of his organization's volunteers as messengers, and in December, Worthington met with representatives of both St. John's

gathering was to examine civil defence organizations in other countries, especially those of the United Kingdom and the United States. In early January, Worthington flew to London to meet with Sir John Hodsoll, the Director General of Civil Defence Training in the Home Office, and spent a week meeting with British civilian and military officials concerned with different elements of civil defence, such as shelters and training. In early February, Worthington flew to West Germany to examine their anti-aircraft fortifications and air raid bunkers, but was dismayed to learn that they had been destroyed.⁵⁸

Worthington concluded his travels with a short visit with representatives of the Office of Civil Defense Planning in Washington to examine the American civil defence organization. Armed with newfound intelligence from abroad and support for the proposed civil defence program, however provisional, from the provinces, Worthington returned to Ottawa and prepared to draft his report for Claxton.

Worthington worked with the Deputy Minister of Defence, C.M. Drury, to produce final recommendations to the Cabinet for Canadian civil defence on 17 March 1949. His report provided a basic plan for the organization of CD in Canada, which formed the basis for all future administration and planning. Worthington argued that a National Office of Civil Defence should be established immediately as a section of the Department of National Defence, and its responsibilities should be closely related to CD organizations already operating in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Worthington informed Claxton that “the basic fundamentals of civil defence as provided by the British system have been adopted. The terminology leans slightly towards the United States due to the fact that Canada is geographically joined to the United States and

Ambulance and the Red Cross at their respective national headquarters. FF Worthington Diary, 22 November 1948, 6 December 1948, 14 December 1948, DHist 112.3S4 (D29) pt 1.

⁵⁸ FF Worthington Diary, 13 January-16 February 1949, DHist 112.3S4 (D29) pt 2.

for an emergency we must ensure joint understanding of methods and means adopted for the overall benefit of both countries.”⁵⁹ The National Office would be designed to meet “present requirements,” meaning it would carry on with the minimal staff for immediate planning. Worthington recommended that the federal CD agency should have directors to oversee three major activities: plans and operations, technical services, and training. The federal office would be headed by a Civil Defence Coordinator, accountable to the minister and responsible for developing national CD policy, and coordinating activities with other government departments, provincial and municipal governments, public and private agencies including industry, and to act as a liaison with counterparts in the United Kingdom and the United States.⁶⁰

The Coordinator’s responsibilities were consistent with the overall role envisioned for the federal CD office: to act as an advisory and coordinating body, while using the resources of existing federal government departments to make national preparations for civil defence, “these problems being simply an extension of the department’s normal functions.”⁶¹ The national office, for example, relied on intelligence from the Chiefs of Staff Committee and the DRB to ensure that civil defence plans did not conflict with existing or future mobilization plans for the army, navy or air force.

The three proposed divisions operated in a similar fashion. The Director of Plans and Operations was tasked with coordinating plans with other agencies and departments, working closely with other divisions to develop and implement CD plans. Planning for the organization of medical, hospital, and health aspects of civil defence fell under this

⁵⁹ Letter CDS 2-10 from General Worthington to Claxton 17 March 1949, LAC RG 29 Vol 52 File 100-1-1 pt 1.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

directorship that used resources from across the government. The Department of Health and Welfare provided advice about patient care and hospital policy, the Department of Transport information to establish evacuation plans, and the Royal Canadian Air Force the infrastructure for the all-important early warning system.⁶²

The Director of Technical Services supervised the technical aspects of the civil defence program, and developed and approved designs for shelters or other tools for public protection against the effects of atomic, biological, and chemical warfare. Worthington called on the Departments of Reconstruction and Public Works to assist Technical Services with shelter designs and strategies for housing refugees from stricken cities, and develop a national communication system to coordinate resources in the event of attack.

The Training division developed and maintained a CD training curriculum which focused on leadership training for wardens and rescue teams. In his report, Worthington proposed that this could lead to a chain of national, regional, and municipal civil defence schools to train professional planners and volunteers alike in basic principles. The Training Director also coordinated training with the Armed forces in the field, and worked to produce promotional material for the Director of Public Relations at DND for use in public education about “the risks involved and the means of self-protection in order to minimize panic and loss of life.” This material was sent to provincial CD education and publicity agencies for national distribution.⁶³

⁶² Ibid. The Warden services were considered the most important aspect of civil defence, and the spot where most volunteers would be required, since wardens would be needed to organize cities on a block by block basis and coordinate their activities with the assistance of the police in the event of attack. See Civil Defence Manual No. 13, *Operations and Control of the Civil Defence Services*. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1952), pp. 26-28.

⁶³ Letter CDS 2-10 from General Worthington to Claxton 17 March 1949, LAC RG 29 Vol 52 File 100-1-1 pt 1.

Worthington's plan could not account for the forms provincial organizations would take, since most of the premiers he spoke with were reluctant to appoint provincial CD directors. He believed that the complexity of the preparations needed across a large area required dedicated provincial directors to interpret the national policy effectively, to secure cooperation from the responsible provincial departments, and to ensure that resources and information found their way to the cities. Worthington agreed with the DRB's earlier assessment that this structure was the only constitutionally legitimate way forward. Worthington's planning could not include specific provisions for the cities, because the federal government could not dictate municipal affairs. He hoped that the federal and provincial governments could negotiate a solution to constitutional obstacles standing in the way of rapid progress, before the cities, acting from anxiety or public pressure, acted to create civil defence organizations independently.

Worthington believed that his plan, which reflected many of the DRB's original recommendations, would prevent duplication of effort, unnecessary expenses, and conflict with provincial rights. The final phase of his program assumed that sufficient leaders and key personnel would be trained to take part in civil defence exercises and, if necessary, rapid recruitment of volunteer personnel to meet a wartime emergency. The final phase required interoperability between the Canadian and American civil defence organizations. The close proximity and shared defence infrastructure of North American target cities necessitated mutual support and cooperation of agencies across the border.⁶⁴ Worthington concluded his report to Claxton with the assurance that if his plan was approved by the Cabinet, Canada's CD would be ready when required.

⁶⁴Phases of Civil Defence Organization, 29 March 1949 LAC RG 2 Series 18 Vol 247 File D-100-C 1946-1949.

CD Delayed...

Claxton presented Worthington's program to the Cabinet Defence Committee on 21 March 1949. There, it met with considerable criticism from Brigadier J.D.B. Smith, the Committee's Military Secretary. Smith noted that, Worthington's provincial and international consultations aside, there was no evidence in his report of any agreement between government departments about how to proceed. Smith proposed the formation of a Joint Civil Defence Planning Staff. This Staff would define the object of civil defence, determine the effective preparations needed, and make the final organizational recommendations.⁶⁵ A.D.P. Heeney, Clerk of the Privy Council and Cabinet Secretary, agreed, and recommended the formation of an interdepartmental Sub-committee of the Cabinet War Book Committee to reach agreement among interested departments and agencies. Heeney noted a tension in the government's motives:

The whole matter is complicated not only because of interdepartmental ramifications but also because of the direct interest and responsibility of the provinces and of the local authorities. It will be hard to give the appearance of doing enough to satisfy the ebb and flow of public opinion and at the same time to provide against an emergency a really useful organization.⁶⁶

Worthington was frustrated that the Cabinet did not act on his recommendations immediately, and held numerous meetings with representatives from concerned government departments in anticipation of Cabinet's approval. On 21 June 1949, he asked Norman Robertson, the Chairman of the War Book Committee, to form a sub-committee as Heeney had advised. The committee was expanded to admit deputy ministers (DM) from the Departments of National Defence, National Health and Welfare,

⁶⁵ JDB Smith, CDC 31 March 1949, LAC RG 2 Series 18 Vol 247 File D-100-C 1946-1949.

⁶⁶ ADP Heeney to Brooke Claxton, 8 April 1949, LAC RG 2 Series 18 Vol 247 File D-100-C 1946-1949.

Transport, Reconstruction and Development, Public Works, Veterans Affairs, Justice, and the Post Office.⁶⁷

The first meeting of the Sub-Committee on Civil Defence was held on 8 September, chaired by Worthington. The DMs in attendance agreed that a plan should be finalized, and generally agreed to examine those areas that fell under their department's mandate, but rejected an approach to the provincial governments as premature.⁶⁸

Worthington left the first meeting vexed by the Committee's cumbersome structure, which in his view neglected provincial interests in vital areas and would ultimately delay the implementation of his recommendations. Claxton was informed about these problems, but was apparently satisfied with progress and told Worthington not to worry about the time element.⁶⁹

... And then accelerated

Municipal activities in late 1949 motivated the federal government's decision to take civil defence more seriously. In the preceding year, Worthington had made contact with another retired general, Churchill Mann, who had also been involved with the Red Cross after the war, and who had been asked by the city of Toronto to chair their Civil Defence Planning Committee. The city's request followed the passage of draft CD legislation in the Ontario parliament. The CD bill reformed existing fire safety regulations and permitted the province to cooperate with the federal government and other provinces in fire equipment standardization, but it also prompted some

⁶⁷ Worthington to Norman Robertson, 21 June 1949, Ibid.

⁶⁸ For example, the Department of Reconstruction and Supply would look into shelters, Manpower into mobilization plans, Health and Welfare into hospital plans and dispersal, etc. Minutes of the First Meeting of the Civil Defence Joint Sub-Committee of the War Book Committee, 8 September 1949, LAC MG 32 B12 Vol 25 File 15.

⁶⁹ FF Worthington Diary, 10 September 1949, DHH 112.3S4 (D29) pt 2.

municipalities to begin organizing civil defence in their communities.⁷⁰ Mann produced a plan using wartime Canadian and British publications, and early postwar American reports and pamphlets, to protect Toronto against atomic attack and sabotage with a blended force of Civil Defence volunteers and local Militia. On 23 September 1949, he completed the first draft of his plan, and contacted Worthington's office to obtain the federal government's input.⁷¹

The following day, U.S. President Harry Truman announced to the public that the Soviet Union had successfully detonated their first atomic bomb in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan.⁷² The news, arriving so shortly after Toronto had completed its plan, caused Worthington great concern. The coordinator worried that Toronto's example could lead to privately organized civil defence organizations in the municipalities guided more by public anxiety than by federally-developed standards. During an urgent visit, he persuaded Mann to stop his activity until a federal plan had been worked out. Worthington feared that Toronto's planning might highlight to the press the federal civil defence program's lack of progress.⁷³ At the Second Meeting of the Civil Defence Sub-Committee, Worthington used Mann's example to agitate for quicker action in civil defence planning, before the municipalities attempted it on their own.⁷⁴ His remarks proved prescient; a week later, Vancouver's mayor authorized a local organization

⁷⁰ Brooke Claxton, *Debates*, 17 March 1949, found in LAC RG 25 Vol 5942 File 50217-40 Pt 1

⁷¹ Mann was pessimistic that any speedy action would be obtained from Council which was, on the whole, disinterested about his deliberations, "do not see the slightest urgency for such a project, and are loathe to give the matter any attention at all. They would," Mann suggested, "perhaps benefit by some indicated need from Cabinet speakers." C.C. Mann to W.J. McCallum, 23 September 1949, LAC RG 29 Vol 726 File 112-T1

⁷² Roger Greene, "Soviets Had One Bomb: Can't Catch Us: U.S." *The Globe and Mail* 24 September 1949.

⁷³ Worthington also convinced Mann to separate Reserve forces from Civil Defence forces in his planning, so as to avoid conflicts over manpower between the military and civilian occupations, and to work with the Red Cross's Disaster Relief Committee to cover a wider area than Toronto. Second Meeting of the War Book Civil Defence Sub-Committee, 4 October 1949. Appendix G – Toronto and York County Civil Defence Committee, LAC RG 29 Vol 726 File 112-T1.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

because “the people were getting restive and a great deal of pressure was being brought on the city council.”⁷⁵ As Worthington had feared, Toronto and Vancouver’s planning and approaches already appeared to be at odds with one another. While Toronto gave Civil Defence to a retired general, Vancouver’s Police Commission took on the job. The Commission’s draft plan overestimated the extent of damage a single atomic bomb would cause to Vancouver, and federal planners became concerned that their report, if unchanged, would only further incite public concern. Worthington went to the west to urge the police commission to adopt Toronto’s draft plan and appoint an experienced coordinator, the retired Air Vice Marshal F.V. Heakes.⁷⁶

To his committee, Worthington argued forcefully that it was only a matter of time before Vancouver and Toronto’s efforts were duplicated elsewhere. He was able to point to examples in the United States, where their central planning had to be revised as the result of individual cities’ pursuit of irrelevant preparations without reference to the federal government.⁷⁷ The time had arrived for a federal plan to be developed in cooperation with the provinces, to ensure an integrated and even approach to civilian defence that would avoid hysteria and heavy financial commitments before an emergency arose.

On 20 October, the revised scales of attack expected by the Canadian armed forces were disclosed to the Civil Defence Planning Committee, lending additional

⁷⁵ FF Worthington Diary, 13 October 1949, DHist 112.3S4 (D29) pt 2.

⁷⁶ Report No 53: Vancouver Civil Defence Plan, 26 October 1949, LAC RG 29 Vol 707 File 110-9-1 pt 1. Heakes was the Chief Air Officer for the Pacific during the war, and was considered useful for the task since he was connected with local voluntary agencies, was involved with the handling of refugees during the Fraser River Valley flood, and was ‘a little bored’ since retirement. Worthington to Charlie Thompson, 28 November 1949, Ibid.

⁷⁷ One example cited was the City of Chicago’s planning staff, which decided to prepare for biological warfare as a result of a claim that the atomic bomb was obsolete. Worthington to the Members of the Civil Defence Planning Committee, 17 October 1949, LAC RG 2 Series 18 Vol 247 File D-100-C 1946-1949.

weight to Worthington's concerns. The newly revealed atomic capability of the Soviet Union led the Chiefs of Staff Committee to conclude that the USSR would soon be able to initiate long-range atomic strikes against urban and industrial areas using one-way bomber attacks that would break down civilian morale and cripple Canada's military potential.⁷⁸ Worthington used the opportunity offered by the CSCC's estimate to reform the Civil Defence Sub-Committee, and to submit a plan for immediate action to accelerate civil defence development.

His first measure was to cut the committee's responsibilities to the bare minimum: deciding on important policy matters that required ministerial approval.⁷⁹ He successfully recast the immediate and long-term objectives of the federal civil defence office to parallel the new military planning assumptions and public anxiety over the atomic bomb. Worthington recommended to defence minister Claxton that the time had come to involve the provinces, the municipalities, and outside agencies such as the Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance in a joint planning process, with clear divisions of responsibility.⁸⁰ The threat also demanded CD organizations in Halifax, Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, Windsor, Sault Ste Marie, Sarnia, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Calgary. Cooperation from these cities and their provincial representatives was required immediately to develop a nation-wide warning system, plans for blast shelters in target cities, national coordination of the medical and fire services, and the construction of stockpiles of medical and alimentary provisions to support internally displaced persons.

⁷⁸ CSC 5-1-2 Memorandum for the Sub-Committee on Civil Defence, JDB Smith, 20 October 1949, Ibid.

⁷⁹ E.W.T. Gill to Norman Robertson, 20 October 1949, Ibid.

⁸⁰ Worthington to Claxton, 9 November 1949, LAC RG 25 Vol 5942 File 50217-40 pt 1.

In order to be fully effective, federal, provincial, and municipal plans would need to consider the preparations conducted in the United States, especially in the case of border cities such as Windsor, Sault Ste Marie, and Sarnia. The only immediate federal expenditure would be in the development of civil defence bulletins and advisory warnings to pass to the provinces and municipalities to guide their planning and execution of the immediate priorities. The financial estimates could be revisited later on a cost-sharing basis once the immediate priorities had been planned with the provinces.⁸¹ If no action was taken, Worthington warned, public apprehension and overreaction to the atomic threat would continue, and most likely, “they will be critical of the federal government for not taking the initiative and giving some guidance.”⁸²

Claxton submitted Worthington’s suggestions to the Cabinet Defence Committee for approval, recommending another round of provincial consultations to resolve the pressing problems he had identified. His most important recommendation was that the federal government formally request each province to appoint a Provincial Civil Defence Coordinator to liaise with Worthington, begin planning for provincial services, and provide guidance to municipalities anxious to begin some form of preparation.⁸³ Civil defence planning, cautious and halting during the first years of the Cold War, took another small step forward into the public arena.

Over the following year, Worthington concentrated on the mobilization of provincial allies to support joint projects, and he obtained the cooperation of the RCAF in planning for an early warning system. He also initiated discussions with the Canadian medical profession to obtain their support for a plan to disperse new hospital construction

⁸¹ Worthington to Claxton, 9 November 1949, LAC RG 25 Vol 5942 File 50217-40 pt 1.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Claxton to Cabinet Defence Committee, 21 November 1949, Ibid.

away from likely blast areas in target cities. Worthington's progress continued to be limited by a lack of formal channels of communication between his agency, other government departments, and their provincial counterparts. Another obstacle to properly coordinating activities across the federal government was the reluctance of senior civil servants to co-operate without a ruling from Cabinet about their specific responsibilities.⁸⁴

Co-operation from the Cabinet was no more forthcoming. Worthington had hoped that the Cabinet Defence Committee (CDC) would approve the organization he had spent nearly two years crafting in interdepartmental committees. He aimed to gain leverage with other government departments who had been reluctant to offer their full cooperation, and set provinces and communities across the country into action. Worthington's diary provides insight into the Committee's deliberations. By his own account, his presentation to the CDC in March 1950 was disastrous. Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent examined his proposed plan silently before making "rather a long dissertation on the impracticability of building a lot of underground shelters in the city." Brooke Claxton had provisionally approved Worthington's plan, and during the meeting, he attempted, unsuccessfully, to persuade St. Laurent of the plan's validity and the limited risks to the government of adopting it.

Worthington insisted that it was necessary to study the subject *before* a war, since measures could not be put into effect after a bomb had fallen. St. Laurent moved on to the early warning system, and suggested that planning would be acceptable as long as it did not involve more than "looking around until such time as war might come." Worthington

⁸⁴ The Deputy Minister of Health, G.D.W. Cameron, was reportedly "peeved" with Worthington's intrusions into the hospital planning field. Worthington, Diary Entry 15 January 1950, DHist 112/3S4 (D29) pt 2.

interjected that the installation of an early warning system after the war had started was utterly meaningless, and added that the Americans would do it for Canada if Cabinet refused. An unidentified member of the committee reiterated that the Canadian civil defence program would have time to mobilize and plan after war was declared. An incredulous Worthington responded, "I was willing to lay my life [*sic*] that if war came an attack on this country would come with little or no warning." When asked whether evacuation plans were necessary, he replied that having a plan to evacuate the living before an attack would be easier and more hygienic than having to clean up the dead afterwards. An embarrassed Claxton intervened to "smooth the ruffled feathers."⁸⁵

As the discussion continued, it became apparent that the government was opposed to taking any action that might provoke undue public alarm. Lester B. Pearson, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, argued that the draft letter to the provinces concerning the need for civil defence was too alarmist, and might frighten people. Worthington countered by claiming that the people were more likely to be frightened by a lack of direction. He later added to his diary that "the only frightened people I knew of were sitting in the room." St. Laurent ignored Worthington's bluster and demanded a redrafted letter. Norman Robertson, Heeney's successor as Cabinet Secretary, suggested instead that the military should take over civil defence. This would eliminate the need to involve the provinces and would enable the government to keep planning quiet for a while longer. Claxton and Worthington both leapt to the defence of the military, which had already considered and rejected extensive involvement in CD. They asserted that one of the principal tasks of civil defenders was to provide for the protection of civilians so that the armed forces would be free for military operations against the Soviets.

⁸⁵ FF Worthington Diary, 9 March 1950, DHH 112.3S4 (D29) pt 2.

Despondent, Worthington asked the Cabinet if it had decided to reject his plan, but the CDC did not send Worthington away empty-handed. The committee record noted that they approved Claxton's planned organization, authorizing the defence minister to deal directly with the provinces and for Worthington to work with provincial civil defence chairmen.⁸⁶ In discussing the committee's decision with his staff, Worthington clarified the government's instructions. Cabinet had merely permitted further planning activities and consultation with provinces and national agencies, but the civil defence office was forbidden to offer "firm commitments" to anyone.⁸⁷ Worthington later reflected that the Prime Minister had no idea what civil defence was and had likely not been briefed on any of the pressing matters the advisor had come to discuss. He remarked sourly that nothing short of a catastrophe would secure any more support from the Cabinet.⁸⁸

Conclusion

Early threats of atomic annihilation in the post-war period inspired the federal and government, some provinces, and several cities to establish a peacetime civil defence organization. Yet the form that Canada's CD would take, and the extent of its responsibilities, was far from settled in the five years after the end of the Second World War. Planners drew on Canada's wartime passive defence and from similar organizations in the United Kingdom and the United States to draft initial plans, but these ran into conflict with the federal government's postwar priorities, provincial rights, and the Canadian military's mobilization plans. In 1949, the federal civil defence office used the

⁸⁶ LAC RG 29 Vol 722 File 112-F1 pt 1.

⁸⁷ Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the Civil Defence Planning Committee, 16 March 1950, LAC RG 29 Vol 718 File 112-C8.

⁸⁸ FF Worthington Diary, 9 March 1950, DHist 112.3S4 (D29) pt 2.

period following the detonation of a Soviet atomic bomb, which brought about independent, unsanctioned CD planning in Canadian cities, to accelerate federal plans. Civil defence's slow progress was characteristic of the Canadian government's hesitant and cautious awakening to the stakes of the Cold War conflict. Canada had pledged support for collective security in both the United Nations and in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization by 1949, but this did not translate to any substantial infusion of funding for the armed forces, nor was it matched by any concrete civil defence preparations. This changed with the Communist invasion of South Korea the following year, which forced civil defence to expand past planning tables and reach into the communities as the Canadian government raced to rearm in preparation for a possible Third World War.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ The whole matter feeds into a larger historiographical question: when did Canada begin to take the Cold War seriously? The answer appears to be that it began far earlier and with more urgency for some in government than others. King's hesitant and cautious policy-making lingered long after his retirement in 1948, when the Cold War was on in earnest. By the time that Korea became an issue, public opinion again significantly outpaced the government, which was taken by surprise by the United States' determination to fight. As Robert Bothwell illustrates, it took time for Pearson's symbolic support for collective security to transform into the material and military support urgently required. Canada waited nearly two months to consider sending soldiers to fight for the United Nations command. Less than a week after the crisis broke out, the government allowed Parliament to close down for the summer. See Robert Bothwell, "The cold war and the curate's egg" *International Journal* 53 (Summer 1998). See also his *Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945-1984*. (Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 86-87.

Chapter 2

The Expansion of Civil Defence during the Korean War

On 25 June 1950, the forces of the North Korean People's Army crossed the 38th parallel into South Korea, and a tiny country in Southeast Asia became the Cold War's first battlefield. This development forced the West to invest substantial resources in rearmament. The United Nations, led by the United States, waged an initially successful campaign against the North Koreans. In November 1950, the People's Republic of China's army intervened, drove back the United Nations advance, and threatened to escalate a local conflict into a global war.¹ The invasion of South Korea shocked the Canadian government onto a Cold War footing.² Previously preoccupied by a domestic postwar agenda to build Canadian prosperity and create the welfare state, the government authorized huge budgetary increases for a rearmament program which reactivated the Canadian defence industry and doubled the size of the Canadian armed services.³

Civil Defence Canada benefitted from the rearmament program, as it moved to a new department and received new spending powers. The publication of civil defence manuals began to give CD an official voice to put an end to speculation and uncertainty in the press. Provinces and municipalities undertook extensive civil defence preparations which reached into communities for volunteers. Rapid expansion, however, brought

¹ Less than a week before the attack, the CIA had concluded that there was no risk of war in Korea. The conflict prompted intense security review in the United States. There is substantial evidence to suggest that the USSR was not itself prepared for the backlash over the invasion, though it had hesitantly supported its initiation. Neither the USSR nor the Chinese were interested in a heavy engagement with the West so soon after the Second World War. John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*. (Oxford: University Press, 1997), pp. 74-79.

² Canadian diplomat Escott Reid remarked upon hearing the news of the invasion that "This phoney cold war has now turned into a war which is neither phoney nor altogether cold." Quoted in James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: Growing Up Allied* (Toronto: University Press, 1980), p. 200.

³ Robert Bothwell, "The Cold War and the curate's egg: when did Canada's cold war really begin? Later than you might think." *International Journal* 53 (Summer 1998), p. 4

about protracted debates over fiscal and constitutional responsibility for civilian defence, which in turn led to confusion and inaction. Civil defence was kept alive in many communities only through the effective leadership and strong personalities of full-time and volunteer coordinators, most of whom were retired senior military officers. For these newly minted civic leaders, progress in CD was most evident when the public's attention was keenly focused on the possible consequences of nuclear war. As the Korean War settled slowly to an armistice, even the best CD coordinators' personal charm and leadership proved insufficient to sustain public interest in war preparations.

The first public sign of an escalation of the federal government's civil defence program was defence minister Brooke Claxton's decision to host the first Dominion-Provincial conference on CD in Ottawa on 24 August 1950.⁴ Previously, federal civil defence's discussions with the provinces were confined to face-to-face meetings between F.F. Worthington, the federal civil defence coordinator, his staff, and provincial representatives. The Dominion-Provincial conference was the first forum held between the federal government and all provincial leaders; the government's aim was to advise the premiers or their delegates about recent developments affecting CD planning. Claxton offered a short welcome to the delegates, and informed them that the reason for holding the conference was that the time had come to convert preliminary CD plans into concrete action, and to formalize federal-provincial-municipal lines of communication and responsibility. In spite of the importance placed on the cooperation of local governments in the creation of all civil defence plans, no municipal representatives were invited to the conference.

⁴ Claxton to McNair, 5 July 1950, LAC RG 29 Vol 648 File 110-3-1.

Lester Pearson, Secretary of State for External Affairs, provided the meeting with his department's assessment of the dangers Canada could expect to face from the Soviet Union in 1951. The Soviets, he explained, marched behind the mask of international communism to advance what were basically the historically expansionist Eastern European and Asian policies of the tsars. The Korean episode merely provided further evidence of their goals to enslave the world "by subversion within and aggression from without." While swift action by the United Nations Security Council, and the United States' successful if beleaguered defence of South Korea, had checked Moscow's ambitions for the moment, Pearson believed that the Soviet Union might still strike at Western Europe before its rearmament program could shore up its defences. "In any event," Pearson warned, "danger of war in the next twelve to eighteen months is unquestionably very grave. The present objective of democracies is to shorten this period of major risk by building up strength."⁵

Worthington finished the federal government's presentation with an explanation of how the country should organize its civil defences. As a result of his study of British and American CD organizations, Worthington envisioned a system based on local target surveys, which divided the country into "target areas," "cushion areas," and "reception areas." Defining regions of the country in these terms had an important effect on civil defence funding, planning assumptions, and public acceptance. Target areas were those major population or industrial centres most likely to come under attack, such as Montreal or Sudbury. Target cities required organizations capable of taking immediate action to minimize destruction, including an extensive warden, rescue, firefighting, engineering,

⁵ Dominion-Provincial Conference on Civil Defence, 24 August 1950, LAC RG 25 Vol 5942 File 50217-A-40 pt 1.

and first-aid establishment to coordinate evacuation and rescue civilians trapped in crumbling or burning buildings. Cushion areas were towns and villages that surrounded population and industrial centres in a 50-mile concentric ring outside the area of devastation. CD operations in these towns depended on sufficient personnel to communicate effectively with each other across municipal boundaries so that they could support rescue efforts over a wide area, and accommodate displaced persons for immediate treatment and refuge.

Outside these two areas, which together formed a “civil defence zone,” the reception area needed volunteers for welfare work, who could provide long-term relief and shelter to displaced and injured people who were evacuated during the post-attack period. In the event that all three area organizations failed, the armed forces would have to be called in as a last resort, but Worthington informed the provincial delegates not to expect the Canadian Army to do their work for them, since CD was first a civilian and local responsibility.⁶

The provincial representatives at the conference balked at relieving the federal government from responsibility for civil defence, and demanded full federal financial support. While the provinces were unable to agree on any alternative to the proposed organization and lines of communication, they managed to draw a pledge from Claxton to discuss a financial assistance plan with the Cabinet.⁷ Despite Claxton’s plea to transform federal plans into provincial action, the conference ended with no solid commitments.

The meeting concluded with agreement on two points: on the establishment of a

⁶ Dominion Provincial Conference on Civil Defence, Appendix D, LAC RG 24 Vol 5256 File 22-7-1.

⁷ Minutes of the Dominion-Provincial Conference on Civil Defence, 24 August 1950, Appendix K, LAC RG 29 Vol 722 File 112-F1. Saskatchewan repeated an earlier proposal that the federal government should appoint federally-paid civil defence commissioners in each province to run the program, but the other provinces could not reach agreement and so Worthington’s plan stood.

Dominion-Provincial Advisory Committee on Civil Defence, and on “the desirability of local communities planning to meet civil disaster... this principle was recognized as of the utmost importance in civil defence.”⁸ Agreement on this point was easily reached, since no municipal representatives had been invited, nor were their opinions about their prescribed responsibilities for civil defence solicited.

After the inconclusive conference, most provinces did take steps to bring their emergency planning closer to a war footing in the fall of 1950. Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia appointed cabinet ministers without portfolio to manage provincial CD. In October, Arthur Welsh, the Provincial Secretary of Ontario, sent to the province’s municipalities a summary of the information presented at the Dominion-Provincial Conference. Welsh published the summary, which included planning appendices given to conference participants, as an expedient temporary civil defence manual for municipalities “crying for guidance,” until the federal government released an official guide for CD organization.⁹ Of all the provincial authorities, only Quebec refused to take on any further commitments. At the conference, its representative had demanded a more equitable division of responsibility between the federal government and the provinces, without result.

The federal government also escalated its planning activities to better inform the public about CD and to establish a formal working relationship with the United States. Civil Defence Canada published *Organization for Civil Defence*, the first official Canadian civil defence manual for public distribution, in the fall and winter of 1950. Judging by its tone and content, the manual was not meant for a general audience.

⁸ Press Release Given by the Chairman at the Conclusion of the Dominion-Provincial Conference on Civil Defence, 24 August 1950, LAC RG 29 Vol 722 File 112-F1.

⁹ Worthington to A.B. DeWolfe, 4 October 1950, LAC RG 29 Vol 696 File 110-2-1 pt 1.

Instead, the advice proffered in the manual was an updated and polished version of the draft municipal guide circulated earlier in the summer, and was designed to provide technical information for the use of municipal planners.¹⁰ More notable is the fact that the first printing, distributed free of charge to the provinces and municipalities, was totally exhausted by January 1951. Civil Defence Canada was authorized to provide additional copies only to those willing to pay for them, much to the disappointment of eager planners in Alberta and British Columbia.¹¹ Federal civil defence officers, aided by the Department of External Affairs, pursued an exchange of information and ideas with their counterparts in the United States, which led to the establishment of a Canada-US civil defence planning group in November.¹²

Rearmament and Civil Defence

At a midnight, 28-29 December Cabinet meeting, ministers were informed that the Russians would be capable of launching an assault against Europe as early as May 1951. Brooke Claxton and Lester Pearson somberly warned their colleagues that “the only safe assumption is that the period of greatest danger has already begun.”¹³ In response to this perceived crisis, Canadian defence spending increased five-fold to a historic \$1.5 billion, resulting in new equipment, extensive recruiting, and new governmental machinery to coordinate defence production. In a separate submission,

¹⁰ *Civil Defence Manual No. 1: Organization for Civil Defence*, (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1950). In fact, the changing nature of the threat to Canada prompted numerous revisions, but to cut costs, these were sent as civil defence circulars or additional chapters to the provincial offices for reproduction and distribution to the municipalities.

¹¹ Gerhardt, Alberta Minister for CD to Cawdron, 24 January 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 706 File 110-8-1 pt 1.

¹² Ambassador in United States to Secretary of State for External Affairs, 21 November 1950, *Documents on Canadian External Relations* 16, p. 845.

¹³ Memorandum to Cabinet, 28 December 1950, cited in Robert Bothwell, p. 412. Bothwell believed that this assessment was a departure from previous assessments of the international situation. While the language is indubitably stronger in this memorandum, its overall tone was virtually unchanged from the warning given to the provinces in the first Dominion-Provincial Conference on civil defence.

Claxton successfully lobbied for additional monies for civil defence to spend on training aids and other materials to assist the organization and recruitment of volunteers in the provinces.¹⁴

Buried in the torrent of defence spending for the Korean War was \$700,000 dollars allocated to civil defence for the 1951-1952 fiscal year. The federal government's first financial commitment also guaranteed that Worthington could depend on greater budgetary support in the future. He immediately prepared an ambitious five-year plan to "fully" prepare Canada for atomic attack. His principal objective was to recruit a wartime civil defence organization supported by 200,000 volunteers working in every Canadian target city and every population centre with more than 10,000 inhabitants. He also requested authority from the federal government to pay 33% of costs for fire hose conversion, to supply financial incentives for the public to begin converting their basements to shelters, to build national stockpiles of medical supplies, bedding, food and other essentials for wounded and homeless, and the provision of training equipment to civil defence volunteers.¹⁵

\$700,000 was not enough to complete all these tasks. Claxton presented Worthington's plan to the Cabinet Defence Committee on 20 February 1951. He asked for one million dollars for training equipment, 16,000 uniforms for volunteers, 400 fire pump trucks; an additional \$900,000 for the stockpiling program; \$350,000 for the construction of a national civil defence college, to be completed in 1952, and \$250,000 for rescue equipment and warning sirens. An investment of five million dollars, Claxton advised, could purchase and stock 1,000 group shelters for the public.

¹⁴ Cabinet Conclusions, 28-29 December 1950, LAC RG 2 Vol 2646, Reel T-2367.

¹⁵ Minutes of the 12th Meeting of Civil Defence Planning Committee, Appendix 'C' Summary of Civil Defence Programme 1951-2, 52-3, 53-4, 54-5, LAC RG 24 Vol 5256, File 22-7-1 pt 2.

The Minister admitted, however, that these programs could not begin until he reached a cost-sharing agreement with the provinces. His most immediate priority was to obtain financial assistance for training aids, provincial civil defence schools, and educational materials. Only a fraction of Claxton's \$6,476,000 CD estimate survived.¹⁶ Civil Defence was as much a casualty as a beneficiary of rearmament. The critical workload faced by DND in coordinating recruitment and rearmament to support operations in Korea and a NATO commitment to Western Germany knocked civil defence to the bottom of Claxton's list of priorities. Because of Worthington's emphasis on welfare, public health, and rescue planning, DND representatives persuaded the War Book Committee to transfer the main role of CD organization and planning to the Department of National Health and Welfare. The Cabinet Defence Committee agreed that Health and Welfare's already "extensive relations with provincial and municipal authorities" could accelerate CD progress. Privy Council Order 985 authorized the departmental handover of CD to Health and Welfare. The change was announced to the provinces at the second Dominion-Provincial Conference on Civil Defence on 23 February 1951.¹⁷

In his opening comments to the assembled provincial delegates, Claxton claimed that civil defence was outside the Department of National Defence's mandate, which dealt "only with matters relating directly to military defence."¹⁸ The purpose of the meeting, however, was to determine financial responsibility for civil defence. Cash-strapped municipalities had examined the government's municipal guide and were

¹⁶ Claxton to Cabinet Defence Committee, 20 February 1951, LAC RG 2 Vol 153 File D-100-C Pt 1.

¹⁷ 71st Meeting of Cabinet Defence Committee, 20 February 1951, LAC RG 25 Vol 5942 File 50217-40 pt. 2.1

¹⁸ Dominion Provincial Conference on Civil Defence: Opening Statement by Honourable Brooke Claxton. LAC Claxton Fonds MG 32 B5 Vol 146 File "Dominion Provincial Conference on Civil Defence 1951."

already in rebellion. In November 1950, the previously supportive Federation of Mayors and Municipalities examined and rejected the federal government's plan, because "civil defence is much bigger in its dimensions than we have been thinking... certain aspects of the problem now being thought of as local responsibilities do not properly belong to [the cities]." ¹⁹ Provincial delegates hoping for a government announcement increasing their share of CD spending were disappointed. The federal government committed to cover the costs of providing civil defence training aids and manuals in greater numbers, radiological detection equipment and protective uniforms and civil defence badges for volunteers, and warning systems for cities with a population over 20,000. Likewise, the national stockpiling program would be established at no cost to the provinces. The federal government also agreed to pay a third of the overall costs of purchasing fire equipment and provincial standardization programs. The remainder of the bill for CD would rest with the provinces and municipalities. ²⁰

The shift to the Department of National Health and Welfare received national press coverage, much of which was favourable. Headlines praised the government's decision to transfer the agency and the leadership qualities of Paul Martin, Minister of Health and Welfare. Other headlines made sure to emphasize the fact that a secret list of seven Canadian atomic targets was circulated at the Dominion-Provincial Conference. ²¹ The Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, apparently mollified by federal commitments to a greater share of CD expenditures, issued a statement demanding action from the provinces and promoting the municipality's key role in coordinating CD. Local

¹⁹ NA. "Civil Defence." *The Listening Post* 10:9 (November 1950), pp. 1-2.

²⁰ Civil Defence Annual Progress Report 1952, LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12 Vol 26 File 17.

²¹ "L'Honorable Paul Martin Est Nommé Chef de la Défense Civile: Sept Endroits Susceptibles d'attaque atomique au Canada," *La Patrie*, February 24, 1951.; "Ottawa Will Aid Civil Defences," *Halifax Chronicle Herald*, 24 February 1951; "Civil Defence Chieftain," *Windsor Daily Star*, 24 February 1951.

civil defence planning, the executive stated, was “in conformity with the Canadian pattern and tradition [and] develops initiative and esprit de corps which are absolutely essential for effective civil defence.”²²

The *Globe and Mail* cautiously approved of the new civil defence arrangement, in the hopes that it would give new leadership and direction to a public that “must know exactly what is expected of it.” The editors argued that Martin’s appointment made good sense because of the essential nature of the services that welfare agencies could deliver in an emergency.²³ Contrary to his gracious speech to the provinces during the Conference, Martin was not altogether pleased with his new responsibility, which he believed to be a distraction from his goals to improve national health programs. Martin discussed the organization briefly in his memoirs, where he described CD as a “frustrating assignment” and a “real headache.”²⁴ Martin’s years as head of the federal civil defence organization were marked by heated public battles with the provinces, especially Ontario and Quebec, who refused to increase their commitments to civil defence following the conference. Following the conference, both provinces’ representatives attacked the federal government in the press by denouncing the costs of civil defence to the provinces. They argued that the federal government had abandoned its constitutional responsibility to pay the entire costs of Canada’s national defence.²⁵ And what was civil defence if not a contribution to national defence?

²² Statements Approved at a Meeting of the National Executive and Advisory Board and Presented to the Prime Minister and Members of the Federal Cabinet on 16 February 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 719 File 112-C18 pt 1.

²³ “Civil Defense and Welfare,” *The Globe and Mail*, 28 February 1951.

²⁴ Paul Martin, *A Very Public Life: So Many Worlds*. (Ottawa: Deneau, 1985), pp. 146-147.

²⁵ NA. “Civil Defence,” *The Listening Post* 10:9 (November 1950) p. 2.

Civil defence debates were even more heated at Queen's Park. In late February, Premier Leslie Frost and Provincial Secretary Arthur Welsh defended the \$25,000 they had set aside for CD committees and blamed the federal government for not presenting a credible plan earlier. The opposition joined in the attack against the federal CD program, "Ottawa kicks civil defense around and clearly implies it is unimportant... Yet it then tells us to tighten our belts and dig up five billions for the defense program."²⁶ Neither Welsh nor Frost mentioned the federal government's new financial commitments or made reference to any of the admittedly limited progress made in federal planning.

The Quebec government appeared more cooperative, passing the first legislation in Canada to legally create a provincial CD organization. Even the federal government had not signed its organization into the law. The Quebec law appointed a coordinator, and authorized Quebec municipalities to enter into regional civil defence arrangements and expenditures, subject to the approval of the Municipal Commission of Quebec.²⁷ Paul Sauvé, the minister responsible for civil defence, signaled that this did not mean Quebec was going to accept a major share of the cost of civil defence. It was Quebec's stated position that the federal government was shirking its constitutional responsibility "at a time when they are taking money for defence." Bill 73 would not protect Quebecers, but was tabled "to assure those who elected us that we accept the full measure of responsibility under normal conditions."²⁸ Normal conditions did not include nuclear war, and Quebec's position on this central point survived even Duplessis.

²⁶ "Dominion's C.D. Policy 'Mystifies' All Ontario: Premier, Other leaders would like to know if Ottawa really Wants Precautions Taken." *Windsor Daily Star*, 28 February 1951.

²⁷ Paul Sauvé to Paul Martin, 20 June 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 699 File 110-4-16 pt 1.

²⁸ "House Passes Bill on Civil Defence," *The Gazette*, 14 March 1951.

CD in Winnipeg

Some provinces and their municipalities chose to invest their resources and energy into creating functioning CD organizations without waiting for a national consensus. In November 1950, the Manitoba legislature formed a provincial CD control committee that consisted of the Premier, a Minister of Civil Defence, and the Minister of Health. The province envisioned a system that prepared the public for civil disaster and atomic attack, and encouraged regional planning in spite of the provincial Cabinet's qualms about the long-term costs of CD.²⁹ Recovering from the impact of the 1950 Red River floods, Winnipeg was the first city to form an operational CD organization. In December, representatives of 18 municipalities, including Winnipeg, St. Boniface, and Assiniboia, agreed to incorporate a large regional organization: the Greater Winnipeg Civil Defence Committee (GWCDC), under the control of Winnipeg Alderman J. Gurzon Harvey.³⁰ The larger organization was created because municipalities in the greater Winnipeg area had already established small-scale civil defence groups after the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. Officials in Winnipeg, encouraged by Ottawa, argued that the GWCDC would prevent the inefficiency and overlapping effort that would likely result if each municipality continued to plan in isolation.³¹ A.C. Delaney, Manitoba's first

²⁹ Worthington to Claxton, Report No. 20/50: Visit of Civil Defence Coordinator to Manitoba – 27 November 1950, DHH 112.3S4 (D29) pt. 1.

³⁰ A.C. Delaney to Worthington, 29 January 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 704 File 110-6-1 pt 1.

³¹ The Mayor of St. Boniface, George C. Maclean, called an emergency meeting of all citizens to vote on the creation of a civil defence organization in July 1950. The citizens in attendance voted unanimously in favour of creating an organization that would protect against "fire, flood, or invasion perils." Local community groups began writing to the federal office soon after for guidance. Theo F. Cox, President, Norwood Community Club, to Worthington, 20 July 1950, Ibid.

Provincial Civil Defence Coordinator, brokered the arrangement as his first task in office.³²

Winnipeg's city council appointed Major-General M.H.S. Penhale as the director of the Winnipeg Metropolitan Civil Defence Board in June 1951. Penhale had just retired from his commission as General Officer Commanding Western Command, and like Worthington was a veteran of two world wars. He was chosen for the position because of his central role in coordinating the army's disaster response during the Red River flood. A shrewd organizer, Penhale spent the first few months of his appointment meeting with different members of community associations to obtain their support. The Manitoba government had hoped that civil defence could be organized to act as a civilian force responding mainly to peacetime natural disasters, but in 1951 Penhale found the nuclear threat more pressing. Penhale provided lectures to municipal councils that composed the Greater Winnipeg civil defence area, and offered assessments of the roles they were likely to play in a nuclear emergency. For example, Penhale told representatives from Fort Garry to prepare their citizens to form a reserve mobile rescue column, because he believed Fort Garry was sufficiently distant from an atomic bomb blast in Winnipeg for its uninjured volunteers to re-enter a blast area to carry out relief operations. Penhale's presentation so impressed an official from the University of Manitoba that he offered to enlist his 475 students in residence in the organization.³³

The federal guidelines for local organization, however, asked local coordinators to refrain from premature public recruitment. Federal planners instead suggested that local

³² A.C. Delaney, Provincial Civil Defence Coordinator, Manitoba, to Worthington, 29 January 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 704, File 110-6-1 pt 1.

³³ Matthew Penhale, Diary Entry 12 July 1951, LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 B21 Vol 9 File "Civil Defence – General – Record of meetings and emergency personnel and services"

CD officials contact existing voluntary service clubs in their community, preferably local chapters of national organizations. From November 1950 to January 1951, Worthington had met and brokered agreements with the Boy Scouts Association of Canada, the Canadian Legion, the Canadian Red Cross, and the St. John Ambulance to provide volunteers and training in first aid and rescue to municipal civil defence groups. Because of their national membership and potential to assist Canadians in disaster or war, these were the only voluntary associations chosen to sign formal agreements with the Canadian government.³⁴ The CD agreement struck with the Canadian Red Cross and St. John Ambulance also had a subtle, but lasting effect on the Canadian health care system. Under the terms of the agreement, the Red Cross was given sole responsibility for the creation of a nationwide blood collection and transfusion service, ending a dispute between the Red Cross and St. John Ambulance over blood services in Canada.³⁵

³⁴ These roles were important and varied. The Boy Scouts Association of Canada agreed to prepare their members, juvenile and adult, to act as messenger runners between points in cities damaged by natural disaster or atomic attack, pass along information to the public on behalf of the local warden services, and give instruction in fire fighting. The Canadian Legion offered to provide ex-staff officers to act as controllers and deputies in disaster areas, join the engineering service to handle heavy rescue and salvage equipment, have ex-Royal Canadian Ambulance Service Corps members drive ambulances and other rescue vehicles, and most importantly, have veterans with leadership experience and "not apt to become emotionally disturbed" head the local warden services. This was an important agreement because of the size of the Canadian Legion's membership, the fact that it had many local chapters, and because the warden's service was directly responsible in federal planning for the warning, evacuation, direction, and survival of entire city blocks. The warden service depended on local members to survey their own neighbourhoods in peacetime to determine who would require additional assistance, and in effect to act as the neighbourhood representative of the local civil defence organization. In wartime, the warden would lead 'self-help' parties to put out fires and conduct light rescue in areas of his or her responsibility. Unlike the police or fire services, wardens had no authority over the public since no legislation was required to establish a civil defence organization nationally or locally, but it was considered a properly trained warden would command authority in time of an emergency. The Role of the Boy Scouts Association in Civil Defence, 10 March 1951; The Role of the Canadian Legion in Civil Defence, 7 December 1950, LAC RG 29 Vol 676 File 108-3-3. See also *Civil Defence Manual No. 15 – The Warden Service*. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1952), pp. 17-19.

³⁵ The agreement as a whole divided up responsibility for welfare and first aid during a war or civil disaster between the Canadian Red Cross and St. John Ambulance. The St. John Ambulance local chapters would receive money from the federal government to conduct first aid and home nursing training in 726 communities across Canada, and provide information for a planned civil defence manual on first aid. In wartime the organization would establish first aid posts and coordinate some medical treatment. The Red Cross, on the other hand, would assume its traditional role of welfare work and relief for mass evacuations,

Many other professional and volunteer associations offered their services to assist the country to prepare for disaster or nuclear war. Worthington, the Department of National Defence, and Paul Martin received dozens of letters from veterans' associations, and religious and secular charitable groups all anxious to play a role, including the Canadian Corps Association Quebec Command, the United Church of Canada, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the International Order of Odd Fellows.³⁶

Medical associations such as the Victorian Order of Nurses and the Canadian Osteopathic Association clamoured to participate too. These organizations did not necessarily offer their services as a result of patriotism or even fear, but to increase their group's professional legitimacy, credibility, and importance by being seen to contribute to a valuable public service in defence of the country. L.D. McPhail, president of the Dominion Council of Chiropractors, prefaced his offer of assistance by claiming that "the chiropractic profession does not hold itself out as a cure-all nor does it try to supplant medicine. We have a definite place as specialists in our field to render service to the people of Canada."³⁷ The language of the letter suggests that the offer was made in part to bolster their case that chiropractors were legitimate practitioners of medicine.

register disaster victims and train civil defence workers in first aid in cooperation with the St. John Ambulance. *The Role of the Canadian Red Cross Society in Civil Defence*, 26 January 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 676 File 108-3-3. For more information on the negotiations leading to this agreement, see Deanna Toxopeus, "1951 agreement between the Red Cross and St. John Ambulance: case study of the effect of Civil Defence on Canada's Health Care System" (Ottawa: Carleton University M.A. Thesis, 1997).

³⁶ The National Council of Jewish Women, the letter claimed, boasted over 4700 members, many of which had experience in the wartime ARP organizations in Canada. Lucille Lorrie, President, National Council of Jewish Women of Canada to Worthington, 1 February 1951; Lyall Simpson, Convenor of Citizenship and Community Service to Worthington, 12 February 1951; A.C. Stirrett, Grand Secretary, International Order of Odd Fellows to N.J.M. Lockhart, Grand Treasurer 9 April 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 676 File 108-3-3.

³⁷ L.D. McPhail to Martin, 9 April 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 676 File 108-3-3.

The manner in which service organizations were used was left entirely to the discretion of the local civil defence coordinator.³⁸ Penhale made his first request for assistance to Winnipeg's Central Volunteer Bureau (CVB). He believed the Winnipeg office was perfect for civil defence recruiting because it coordinated all voluntary activities for the city on a block-by-block grid, supervised by 300 women living in specific neighbourhoods. Their organization filled the role of his female warden service, and the CVB kept a survey book of the addresses and contact numbers of public-spirited men and women living on every block of the city. The CVB also kept listings of women with occupational experience in welfare work. These were perfect volunteers for CD, since their charter encouraged any activity "operating for the public good and provided no commercial gain is derived."³⁹ After an agreeable first meeting in July 1951, Penhale delegated responsibility for the coordination of all of Winnipeg's service clubs and voluntary agencies to the administrators of the CVB, and invited its president to represent Social Services on the Metropolitan Winnipeg Civil Defence Board.⁴⁰ Through the CVB, Winnipeg's civil defence organization soon received offers of assistance from the Canadian Legion and the Boy Scouts, as well as local employers such as the Hudson's Bay Company and Eaton's. It was not until September 1951 that the City of Winnipeg embarked on its first recruiting campaign meant for the general public.

Penhale was pessimistic about the prospects of his first public recruiting campaign, given the reluctance of certain "community leaders" to offer their support to

³⁸ The standing policy of the federal government was to redirect offers of assistance for civil defence to the provinces, who were then supposed to co-ordinate their offers to municipal civil defence groups. Paul Martin to Christine Livingston, 21 March 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 676 File 108-3-3.

³⁹ Matthew Penhale diary entry, 18 July 1951, LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 B21 Vol 9 File "Civil Defence – General – Record of meetings and emergency personnel and services"

⁴⁰ The President of the Central Volunteer Bureau was 'keen to participate' and was well informed about civil defence matters because of her connection to the Social Welfare Council in Ottawa. Matthew Penhale diary entry, 1 August 1951, Ibid.

his organization publicly. He hoped to enlist prominent members of the community to head branches of the civil defence organization, but had little success. Penhale's request to a local judge to become the Chief Warden for Winnipeg was rejected by Chief Justice Ken Williams on the basis that judges should not be involved in "extraneous activity." Williams was sympathetic to Penhale's pleas for assistance, but unmoved. In his diary, Penhale bitterly observed that "this attitude [was] very disappointing and indicative of a certain complacency which is evident in the minds of many of the more prominent people.... They really do not expect to be involved in serious trouble, and feel that having had a flood that a repetition of such a disaster, or anything like it, is unlikely."⁴¹ The retired general was further discouraged by Winnipeg mayor Garnet Coulter's unwillingness to make radio broadcasts in support of CD during the September 1950 recruiting campaign. Penhale reluctantly agreed to be the spokesman for local publicity, but only after it was made clear to him that there was no alternative.⁴²

In Ottawa, Worthington's own impatience with the federal government's lack of support for civil defence led to a brief but widely reported outburst directed at his minister. At a press conference held to introduce the visiting Swedish Civil Defence Director-General, Ake Sundelin, Worthington faced questions from reporters asking why Canada's progress had been allowed to lag so far behind the Swedish organization, which had a budget of \$30 million dollars and over 900,000 compulsory civil defence workers.⁴³ Perhaps inspired by the United States Federal Civil Defense Administration (FCDA) director Millard Caldwell's announcement that the U.S. government should either "speed up civil defense or kill it," Worthington pointed through his open window

⁴¹ Matthew Penhale diary entry, 22 August 1951, Ibid.

⁴² Matthew Penhale diary entry, 19 September 1951, Ibid.

⁴³ "Speed Up Civil Defence or Kill it – Worthington." *Toronto Star*, 29 August 1951.

to the Parliament buildings and snarled, “The trouble lies behind you!”⁴⁴ The incident was reported in most major newspapers across the country. George Davidson, the Deputy Minister of Welfare and Worthington’s immediate superior, was furious. Worthington was called into Paul Martin’s office, where he was told to retract his comments or face early retirement.⁴⁵ Several days later, Worthington offered a feeble “clarifying statement,” that the federal government was not the problem, but that “the public itself must be aroused to get behind civil defence.”⁴⁶

The FCDC was promptly sent out of Ottawa on a cross-country tour to assess the progress of local civil defence directors. He arrived in Winnipeg just as Penhale launched the city’s first public recruitment campaign.⁴⁷ Perhaps stung by Worthington’s criticism, Paul Martin joined the general in Winnipeg to voice his support to the campaign, challenging residents to meet the city’s goal to recruit 7,000 volunteers. Civil Defence Week opened in Winnipeg on 22 September 1951, and rapidly attracted volunteers. The campaign focused on Winnipeg’s vulnerability to aerial attack and natural disaster. If the public had not read about the campaign in the newspaper or heard about it on the radio, the city’s first air raid siren, purchased and installed at federal expense, wailed every day from September 26 to 29. Elaborate demonstrations of local army units’ anti-aircraft artillery drill, blasts from the air raid siren, and mock air raids complete with searchlight

⁴⁴ Larry Worthington, *‘Worthy’: A Biography of Major-General F.F. Worthington*, (Toronto: MacMillan, 1961), pp. 227-228.

⁴⁵ Paul Martin, p. 146.

⁴⁶ The press, already critical of the government’s lack of support to civil defence, was kinder to Worthington. In an opinion piece in *The Montreal Herald*, Gerald Waring observed that Worthington’s outburst “may not be such a bad thing if it causes politicians to think less about winning elections, and more about who may be around to vote in elections after an A-bomb attack.” *Montreal Herald*, 4 September 1951.

⁴⁷ “Winnipeg Civil Defence ‘Magnificent’ Says Worthington,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 15 September 1951.

exercises led some citizens to volunteer, but many others jammed police station switchboards to find out if an attack was underway.⁴⁸

1,400 women of the CVB supported the campaign. They established 142 registration booths across the city. Their organization proved to be an asset, registering 3,900 volunteers from the general public and 2,000 others from Winnipeg service clubs.⁴⁹ 7,300 volunteers were recruited in total during the Civil Defence Week.⁵⁰ The success of the Winnipeg campaign was all the more considerable given the fact that it was conducted on an incredibly sparse budget. Prior to the campaign, the Winnipeg Civil Defence Board's Advisory Committee reported that the municipal budget had not funded CD publicity. The Committee approached local firms to donate funds for advertising.⁵¹ Fortunately, local radio stations offered free broadcasting time for Civil Defence Week.

Municipalities elsewhere in Canada did not meet with the same success. C.H.F. Fletcher, the CD co-ordinator for Windsor, Ontario, vented his bitter disappointment not just about the small number that his organization attracted, but also about their low standing in the community. Fletcher had asked for 3,000 volunteers in his campaign, but only 600 came forward. He noted sourly that "most of these were industrial workers."⁵² Like Penhale, Fletcher wanted men from the community who would be able to offer leadership and guidance in an emergency. Industrial workers were neither as eminent nor experienced as the "business and professional men" Fletcher had hoped to attract. His

⁴⁸ The fact that picking up the telephone was precisely the wrong thing to do in the event of an air raid, given the priority of civil defence and armed forces communications, was not stressed in any reports covering events. *Civil Defence Bulletin* (October 1951), p. 10.

⁴⁹ Volunteers were drawn from the Lions Club, Rotary Club, Federation of French Canadian Women, B'nai B'rith Winnipeg Lodge, St. Andrew's Home and School Association, the Fort Garry and St. James Kiwanis Clubs, and various local industries. "CD Volunteers Top 1500," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 22 September 1951.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Minutes of Meeting of the Advisory Committee, 5 September 1951, LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 G21 Vol 9 File "Civil Defence -- General -- Record of meetings."

⁵² "Aid Defence, Rotary Asked," *Windsor Daily Star*, 21 September 1951.

complaint was standard fare for civil defence organizers across the country, who complained about not being able to attract the right kind of volunteer. Fletcher's disparaging comment about industrial workers neglects the fact that these men likely volunteered to join because of the federal government's early initiatives to organize industry for civil defence. The remark does, however, imply that "business and professional" men were more likely to be leaders because they were rooted in the community, better educated, and held a higher social position. CD coordinators rarely discussed the role of working-class volunteers in the defence of the city, but the distinction offers some interesting insight into how the concept of social prestige which undergirded some CD recruiting campaigns may have had a role in their failure. All citizens had a responsibility to support CD, but CD organizers did not value all volunteers equally.

Penhale's troubles really began once his organization grew in size. While the past experience of the Red River Valley flooding and the conflict in Korea fuelled interest in civil defence, he was faced with the long-term problem of obtaining sufficient funds to train and equip his largely volunteer force, and of devising exercises and activities for the volunteers to keep their interest from waning. The issue of financial responsibility for civil defence had been simmering since the federal government first ventured into the field in 1948, but rapidly gained in importance as municipalities began to assess how much nuclear preparedness would cost their communities. The resulting friction between different levels of government led to skepticism about the federal government's motives and effectiveness in planning for a realistic civil defence.

CD in Montreal

One of the more heavily publicized intergovernmental clashes over financial responsibility for CD occurred over Montreal's draft plan and budget for CD. With the highest population density in the country, a thriving financial centre, and port facilities, Montreal was considered one of the top three targets for a Soviet attack on Canada, along with the locks at Sault Ste Marie and the port of Halifax. In early 1951, Montreal's municipal council created a Municipal Committee for Civil Defence, and appointed Brigadier J. Guy Gauvreau as the local coordinator.⁵³ Worthington predicted that Gauvreau would be a capable organizer who could secure cooperation from his municipality and the province.⁵⁴

In August 1951, Gauvreau made public his first plan and draft budget for a projected organization with 60,000 volunteers, and in so doing he caused the province and the federal government great embarrassment.⁵⁵ Gauvreau envisioned a massive restructuring of the roadways in and around Montreal to permit the easy evacuation of the population and re-entry of rescue personnel. His plan included digging railway and highway tunnels under the St. Lawrence River, the construction of extra bridges, and the excavation of a massive transport tunnel and shelter in Mount Royal. Gauvreau's ambitious plan took into account the minimum infrastructural improvements residents of Montreal island needed to escape the city centre, which would have suffered total

⁵³ Local branches of the Canadian Legion was dissatisfied with the pace of municipal planning, however, and began to form civil defence committees in the suburbs of Montreal. Howard Sykes, Chairman Civil Defence Committee, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce to Worthington, 19 January 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 698 File 110-4-1 pt 1.

⁵⁴ Worthington to Martin, 9 March 1951, Ibid.

⁵⁵ By early 1952, his organization claimed to have recruited 10,000. In fact, this number included all municipal officials and employees having some role in disaster planning, including police and fire services. Only 3,000 had genuinely volunteered for civil defence, and of these, only 1,000 were trained. Worthington to Davidson, 9 January 1952, LAC RG 29 Vol 679 File 110-4-16 pt 1.

destruction from a single atomic blast. Gauvreau had concluded that determined volunteer wardens and firefighters alone would not materially improve Montreal's chances of survival.

His \$363,000,000 price tag horrified Worthington, Martin, and provincial officials, and drew instant media attention.⁵⁶ If necessary, Gauvreau conceded, the city would survive with a mere \$18,000,000 investment. Camillien Houde, Montreal's boisterous mayor and, initially, a civil defence enthusiast, promptly rejected municipal responsibility for CD, asserting that "it was not the City of Montreal which declared wars, hence the incurrence of defence costs were outside the field of municipal responsibility."⁵⁷ Because of Montreal's size and importance as a potential target, and the Quebec government's intransigence on the CD file, Martin took the unusual step of negotiating directly with the Montreal Metropolitan Civil Defence Committee. He managed to convince City Council representatives to invest the \$75,000 originally allocated from municipal coffers, in order to keep the skeleton of the organization alive "at all costs."⁵⁸ With provincial officials, Martin was more candid:

It would not be possible for the federal government to entertain expenditures... as payment for the projects outlined since, in each case, these are public improvements and not directly associated with Civil Defence. Undoubtedly many of these improvements would be extremely valuable in the event of a disaster but their main function would be for the improvement of the metropolitan area under normal conditions.⁵⁹

Worthington had no sympathy for Gauvreau. In a meeting following the release of the Montreal CD budget, the federal coordinator was critical of his wish list, and observed

⁵⁶ "City's \$15 Million Defence 'Stuns' Ottawa's Planners," *The Gazette*, 3 August 1951; "Montreal Defence Cost \$363 Million" *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 3 August 1951.

⁵⁷ "Ottawa Lag Blamed for Civil Defence Slow-Up," *The Montreal Herald*, 12 July 1951.

⁵⁸ George F. Davidson to Worthington, 10 August 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 679 File 110-4-16 pt 1.

⁵⁹ The Quebec government was no more willing to provide any expenditures for civil defence. Paul Martin to Paul Sauvé, 30 August 1951, *Ibid*.

that Gauvreau might as well have asked for the moon. Worthington reported that local activity and interest indicated that, with limited federal assistance, the organization could thrive without a multi-million dollar investment. Compared to other major cities which had not even begun to organize, Montreal's accomplishments were still impressive, and worth preserving for their value in promoting CD elsewhere.⁶⁰

Montreal's complaints about the lack of federal aid were matched by similar rumblings from municipalities across the country that demanded federal and provincial money for local civil defence. Civic authorities in Stratford sent to St. Laurent a resolution demanding that the federal government assume the full costs of civil defence because of its constitutional responsibility for national defence and the imminent possibility of war.⁶¹ The resolution alone would not usually have obtained much attention, but when it began to be endorsed by multiple towns and cities across Ontario, federal CD took notice. Newspaper editors and municipal councilors raised similar concerns about the ability of municipalities to pay for civil defence, and the propriety of asking them to do so.⁶²

Civil defence funding embarrassed Martin again several days after he declared, to a large audience in London, Ontario, on 5 November 1951, that Canadian civil defence had entered its "operational phase" because Montreal, Winnipeg, Halifax, and Windsor had all begun recruiting volunteers.⁶³ Two days later, Windsor's city council held a noisy session where a majority of councilors endorsed the Stratford resolution. Though the

⁶⁰ Worthington to Davidson, 9 January 1952, Ibid.

⁶¹ R Graham, City Clerk, Stratford Ontario to L.S. St. Laurent, 16 July 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 700 file 110-5-1 pt 2.

⁶² One editorialist in Creston, British Columbia speculated that unless sufficient funds were found, rural cities and towns would be within their rights to turn away refugees from target cities. "Let there be no misunderstanding," *Creston Review*, 1 November 1951.

⁶³ "Civilian Defence Plans Complete," *The London Free Press*, 5 November 1951.

government's list of target areas in Canada was still a closely guarded secret, Controller Lawrence Deziel believed that sufficiently few Canadian cities would be targeted that the federal government could easily bear the costs for municipal preparations. Windsor's council compromised and kept civil defence alive, conditional on the federal government's willingness to pay a quarter or more of the costs of its administration.⁶⁴

There was a rising consensus among municipalities in the fall of 1951 that at the very least some form of cost-sharing program was required to keep interest in the civil defence organization alive and provide sufficient monies for training and administration. This was reflected in renewed criticism from the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities in a statement presented to Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent. The executive endorsed municipal responsibility for some aspects of civil defence, but on the condition that the federal government assumed most of the costs of organization.⁶⁵ It made fiscal sense, they argued, that the federal government should contribute more than the provinces and municipalities, given its more extensive powers of taxation. The CFMM's executive contended that the federal government's financing structure, which demanded that the provinces and municipalities pay first before receiving an unspecified percentage of federal compensation, served only to undermine the federal government's claim that the need for CD was actually urgent.⁶⁶ Most of the members of the CFMM indicated their willingness to contribute to a systematic cost-sharing program involving all levels of government.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ "Council Says Ottawa 'Ducking Responsibilities in Civil Defence.'" *Windsor Star*, 7 November 1951.

⁶⁵ Statements approved at a meeting of the National Executive and Advisory Board and presented to the Prime Ministers and Members of the Federal Cabinet on 7 December 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 720 File 112 C18 pt 2.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ The CFMM labeled the federal structure as a "cart-before-the-horse proposition." Other proposals were made which would have given the CFMM greater voice in national and municipal circles. The Executive

The provinces had also indicated their deep dissatisfaction with the existing formula for CD financing. With a few notable exceptions, most provinces had refused to commit any significant money to provincial programs or provide support to growing municipal agencies.⁶⁸ Saskatchewan's minister responsible for civil defence, J.H. Sturdy, complained to Martin that Saskatchewan's investment was based on the assumption that "the [federal] declaration would be withdrawn and a fairer statement on the sharing of the civil defence load substituted by yourself."⁶⁹ Saskatchewan had inaugurated educational programs, including Civil Defence and fire safety courses for high school students. Delays in the provision of federally-produced training aids led J.O. Probe, Saskatchewan's Provincial Civil Defence Coordinator, to offer his resignation. Worthington's quick intervention secured necessary training aids and prevented Probe's departure. He would not have been replaced if he had resigned.

By early 1952, the financial crunch was keenly felt by Winnipeg's organization. Penhale pleaded for support from Rhodes Smith, Manitoba's Attorney General, because Winnipeg's City Council was unable to finance local CD beyond basic organization and planning. Penhale's budget for 1952 included \$142,000 to carry out existing activities as

also proposed that a National Committee on Civil Defence be established, bringing in representatives of the CFMM to the existing dominion-provincial committee. The Executive endorsed this concept with the argument that "it would make CD, nationally and locally – a truly joint project of the citizens of Canada and in which every Canadian has a great and vital stake." Ibid.

⁶⁸ This did not stop officials at other levels of government from taking credit for municipal initiative. Arthur Welsh, in an address to the Ontario Legislature in March 1952, stressed that civil defence organizations had been established in 29 cities, 101 towns, and 22 villages in Ontario. The six provincial staff visited 78 of these in 1951 to help establish a training regimen, and that the Ontario Department of Health had administered 28 courses in ABC warfare to Ontario nurses. Address by Hon. Arthur Welsh on the subject of Civil Defence to the First Session of the Twenty-Fourth Legislature of the Province of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, 24 March 1952, LAC RG 29 Vol 700 File 110-5-1 pt 2. The Federal office also noticed with some displeasure that many civic officials had never received copies of the Federal *Civil Defence Bulletin*, a monthly information digest about progress in Canadian civil defence. In June, 1951, Worthington sent a sharply worded request to Provincial Civil Defence Coordinators asking for their distribution lists to ensure that civic officials would receive federal information. Worthington to PCDCs, 22 June 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 56 File 100-5-12.

⁶⁹ J.H. Sturdy to Paul Martin, 1 August 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 704 File 110-7-1 pt 1.

well as build a control centre and improve Winnipeg's radio communications. Without these modest improvements, the warning and rescue systems would be dependent on easily severed landlines in emergency.⁷⁰ None of the paltry \$26,000 voted for Civil Defence in Manitoba reached Winnipeg, and Smith rejected Penhale's request for a \$50,000 infusion in April 1952.⁷¹ Federal planners observed municipal dissatisfaction and financial starvation with increasing concern. They recognized that continued dispute over financial responsibility would severely damage the federal government's credibility and overshadow major investments elsewhere, such as the drug stockpiling program. Worthington argued for a matching funds program to resolve the impasse over CD.

Financial Support for CD

On 27 March 1952, Martin revealed to provincial ministers in charge of civil defence that \$1,400,000 had been written into the estimates for the 1952-1953 fiscal year for per-capita grants. The grants, Martin cautioned, would be paid out to each province for specific civil defence projects proposed by municipalities, forwarded by the provinces, and approved federally. The funds made available to each province were calculated according to population living in target or non-target areas, at 14 cents and 8 cents per person, respectively.⁷²

⁷⁰ Penhale to Rhodes Smith, 8 February 1952, LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 B21 Vol 9 File "Civil Defence – General – Record of meetings and emergency personnel services."

⁷¹ Matthew Penhale diary entry, 10 April 1952, Ibid.

⁷² Paul Martin to W.A. Matheson, 27 March 1952, LAC RG 29 Vol 648 File 100-7-12 pt 1. The breakdown of funds made available to the provinces was as follows:

Ontario: \$493,672.00

Quebec \$424,875.00

Nova Scotia: \$60,755.00

New Brunswick: \$44,256.00

Manitoba: \$83,168.00

British Columbia: \$130,377.00

Prince Edward Island: \$7,847.00

Saskatchewan: \$66,538.00

Alberta: \$92,955.00

Worthington was pleased with the announcement, but he had hoped for more. Worthington wanted safeguards written into the matching plans agreement to ensure that municipalities would reap the greatest benefit. These included provisions to reach separate agreements with municipalities in Quebec or Ontario, whose progress was severely limited by the provincial legislatures' refusal to fund any civil defence project. In remarks attached to Worthington's proposal, Davidson clarified the federal policy: "the whole thing goes into a provincial pool or drawing account; from that point on the province must submit projects for our consideration and put up matching provincial dollars. We do not match municipal dollars."⁷³ Later, Davidson underlined that the primary purpose of the program was not to enhance CD in the municipalities, but to embarrass provincial governments into investing funds into their civil defence programs. If municipal funds were matched directly, Davidson suggested, "provinces will very quickly slip out from under the entire responsibility." It was a gamble based on observations that Montreal, Winnipeg, Halifax, Saskatoon, Calgary, and Vancouver had proven more than willing to invest municipal funds. Davidson reasoned that the country would achieve better results from its civil defence program if the provinces matched some of this municipal money.⁷⁴

The matching funds program raised the hopes of municipalities seeking additional financial assistance, but the policy failed to achieve its immediate or long-term objectives. There were early indications that the matching funds program would fall short of the policy aims. A group of candidates attending a federal CD course in 1952 were

Newfoundland: \$32,033.00

Territories: \$2,208.00

⁷³ Handwritten notes on Memo, Worthington to Davidson, 1 April 1952, Ibid.

⁷⁴ Davidson to Worthington, 5 April 1952, Ibid.

asked to take part in "Exercise Per Capita," a discussion group about the aims and needs of civil defence. The candidates, all of whom had attended more than one civil defence course and were therefore either from provincial or municipal organizations, settled on eight conclusions as a result of their discussion. Their report showed that the provincial representatives understood well what political aim the matching funds plan was meant to accomplish. They agreed that federal money made available for provincial or municipal projects was welcome, but concluded that "no Province should be forced by horse trading methods into monetary participation. The use of non compliance by a Province to match federal expenditures as an excuse for doing only half a job by the Federal Government is to be frowned upon."⁷⁵

From a purely technical perspective, the matching funds policy was introduced at the wrong time to have any impact on the central problem facing municipal civil defence organizations: shortage of funds. In mid-June, before the matching funds estimates were released by the Treasury Board, the provinces had already passed their budgets and few were inclined to increase their estimates to match federal funds. Since funds had to be allocated to municipal projects endorsed by the provincial government and approved by the federal government, there was little chance of funds reaching municipalities in the 1952 fiscal year. Worthington observed that municipalities that had already allocated additional funds to civil defence, such as Winnipeg, Halifax, and Montreal, could quickly bankrupt themselves, and argued that the province would use the technicality to "leave the municipalities in the cold and thus defeat the objective."⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Report of Exercise "Per Capita," 4 April 1952, Ibid.

⁷⁶ Worthington to Davidson, 16 June 1952, Ibid.

Despite extensive discussions with provincial authorities, most of the provinces were reluctant to agree with the federal program. By November 1952, only three provinces had agreed to the matching funds program. Quebec rejected the proposal out of hand, citing federal responsibility as the key issue. Ontario's representatives argued that their own \$50,000 allocation was sufficient, and that Ottawa should deal directly with the municipalities. Worthington instructed his officials to persuade provinces to ask for money for their smallest projects, even recovering the costs of postage, in order to create some proof of progress in CD and value for their expenditure. Projects that might have actually improved municipal preparedness, such as shelter systems or evacuation route signage, were considered too "fantastic" for federal funding. Worthington, toeing the line, insisted that Ontario and Quebec could still be forced to participate if most of the provinces agreed to the financial assistance program.⁷⁷

The trouble with Worthington's assumption was that provincial authorities did not draw any press attention to federally-approved projects for civil defence. Worthington's information officer, former newspaper editor Dan Wallace, speculated that this was because the provinces rarely gave credit to the federal government contributions to provincial programs, and would not do so for CD.⁷⁸ Instead, negative press reports about municipal CD organizations' financial difficulties continued into 1953. Worthington suggested that he should meet with the "responsible Press" so that editors would present both sides of the story to the public. Wallace counseled strongly against this course of

⁷⁷ Worthington to J.C. Jefferson, MP Cawdron, 19 November 1952, Ibid.

⁷⁸ J.F. Wallace to Worthington, 20 March 1953, Ibid.

action, stating “[the press] are already sufficiently misinformed or intentionally ignorant about many other Federal-Provincial programs involving far larger sums of money.”⁷⁹

The first year of the financial assistance program produced dismal results. Of the \$1.4 million dollars offered to provincial governments, \$319,918 dollars had been matched by provincial projects. British Columbia and Alberta were the only provinces to meet or exceed their portion of the matching funds.⁸⁰ The federal office sent statistics to PCDCs comparing their efforts with U.S. state governments with similar populations. In every case, the state request exceeded or equaled the funds made available.⁸¹ Eventually, the numbers began to add up to an embarrassing figure. Of the \$2,800,000 allocated from 1951-1953, over \$2,000,000 remained unspent, largely because of Quebec and Ontario municipalities’ exclusion from the program.

Informed by his frequent discussions with local CD leaders, Worthington urged reforms to the policy. He renewed his argument that a loophole had to be exploited to allow the federal government to deal directly with the municipalities. If the provinces were allowed to handle the transfer of money between the federal government and the municipalities, without having to contribute themselves, municipal CD organizations stood a chance of receiving some financial support directly from the federal government in a way that would still respect constitutional boundaries. While suspicious of the provinces, Davidson agreed that Worthington’s proposal could dull the edge of municipal

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Worthington to Provincial Civil Defence Coordinators, 16 June 1953, Ibid.

⁸¹ The states selected were Delaware, Vermont, Utah, New Mexico, North and South Dakota, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Arizona, Maine, Rhode Island, and Colorado. Only North Carolina did not meet or exceed the federal limits. Ibid.

criticism and mitigate negative press about the federal-provincial dispute over financial responsibility generally and the matching funds program in particular.⁸²

The new formula was announced in the House of Commons on 22 June 1954, along with a boost in the annual funding to \$2,000,000. Gradually, Ontario signed on to the matching grants program on a limited basis. While Quebec refrained from accepting any funds for civil defence, the province did agree to relay money and equipment to municipalities in need. The financial assistance program became one of the central pillars supporting civil defence in later years, but in the immediate aftermath of the Korean War, it appeared to come too late to repair the damage done by years of intergovernmental bickering. As Worthington mused in his diary soon after the policy was introduced, “the federal government can now back out very gracefully and throw the onness [sic] on the province, but that does not solve our problem, nor foster better progress in civil defence.”⁸³

Armistice in Korea

Even the most competent and well organized municipal organizations faced looming problems by 1953. Finances were thin, and in some cases still non-existent. Without an international crisis to keep them on edge, volunteers dropped out and moved on. The recruitment and retention of volunteers was a serious problem encountered by every CD organization, and was the subject of frequent discussions in international CD circles. A common conclusion reached was that civil defence was taken seriously by the public in times of great crisis, but only for short periods before its attraction waned.⁸⁴

⁸² Worthington to Dan Wallace, 15 October 1953, Ibid.

⁸³ Report: Federal/Provincial Conference, 28-29 April 1952, DHist 112.S9 (D29) pt 2.

⁸⁴ Wing Commander Sir John Hodsoll, the director of Civil Defence for the Home Office in Britain, devoted an entire chapter to the matter upon his retirement in the mid-1960s. He had been involved in one

Civil defence organizers across the country attempted to use the Korean War to rally financial support and recruit volunteers, but this tactic became less effective as the war dragged on. Before the armistice was finally signed in July 1953, Canadian soldiers still fought, died, and were injured in the war, but it failed to hold the public's interest. Canadians at home rapidly lost interest in the faraway conflict and sputtering armistice talks. The war had little visible impact on their daily lives. Their cities were not under attack, and Canadians did not suffer from rationing or other shortages.⁸⁵

The end of the Korean War precipitated some speculation about the continued usefulness of a civil defence program. CD authorities were particularly concerned that the public would grow complacent without an immediate war risk. British Columbia CD, for example, circulated a public warning: "Some of us may feel that because of the so-called 'peace moves' now being put forward by the new Soviet Government we can afford to sit back and slacken our efforts... Surely we have not forgotten what the former proposals by the Russians for a truce in Korea led to."⁸⁶ When faced with questions about the practicality of peacetime CD, one Vancouver volunteer proclaimed over the radio that "We should forget about wars and threats of wars, and look upon Civil Defence as a strong right arm in reserve," for use in natural disaster.⁸⁷ The change in tone of civil defence publicity succeeded in keeping the organization alive, if only barely.

Even with a reasonably successful organization, Winnipeg faced severe difficulties holding the attention of its members beginning in 1953. The Wardens' Council meetings were sparsely attended by senior planners and volunteers, much to

aspect or another of civil defence for nearly 40 years. Hodsoll, *Reflections on Civil Defence and Survival*, 1966, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 4 File 14.

⁸⁵ Granatstein, pp. 330-332.

⁸⁶ *British Columbia Civil Defence Circular No. 23*, 1 June 1953.

⁸⁷ *British Columbia Civil Defence Circular No. 25*, 1 December 1953.

Penhale's frustration.⁸⁸ The organization had convinced volunteers to make a short-term commitment of their time for basic civil defence and first aid training, but finding committed volunteers that would remain as wardens was an enduring problem.⁸⁹ St. Vital, one of the areas hardest hit by flooding in 1950, managed to attract 181 volunteers for first-aid courses, but none of these volunteered to stay on as Wardens. The challenge of retention was common everywhere in Canada, and by 1953 most civil defence planners diverted their organizations' meager resources to purchase better publicity. By the end of the Korean War, the Winnipeg Advisory Committee used \$6,000 of its annual allotment to hire an advertising expert to coordinate CD publicity events and maintain interest in the organization.⁹⁰

Conclusion

Civil Defence advanced unevenly across Canada during the Korean War. In those areas that self-identified as target areas, or that had experienced recent natural disasters, federal pressure to develop a civil defence organization was welcomed. Even in those areas where the effects of disaster or worry about the atomic threat was keenly felt, municipalities and the provinces balked at the high price tag attached to adequate CD preparations. Much of the organization across Canada depended to an extent on the individual initiative of organizers in the local communities, the existence and interest of large voluntary agencies willing to cooperate with the new organization, and the likely proximity to either nuclear or natural disaster. Successful organizers like those in Winnipeg managed to skillfully work around municipal politics and cooperate with

⁸⁸ Meeting of Warden Committee, 23 January 1953, LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 B21 Vol 9 File "Civil Defence – General – Record of meetings and emergency personnel and services," pt 2.

⁸⁹ Ibid. In Fort Garry, progress had been made in 1951 towards the creation of Sector Wardens, but lack of interest and training opportunities led to that unit's dismissal.

⁹⁰ Advisory Committee Meeting, 24 July 1953, Ibid.

existing city departments and voluntary agencies in the community. Toronto and Montreal, by contrast, had large, promising organizations that stopped dead for want of funds, and their occasionally ham-fisted local coordinators feuded publicly with municipal and provincial politicians for more money. Inevitably, the press picked up on these disputes and the more important and still unresolved issues of financial and ethical responsibility for civil defence. Unwelcome press attention, continuing municipal and provincial rebellion, and, as the Korean War gradually settled to an armistice, slackening public support for CD, forced the federal government to intervene visibly with a Financial Assistance Program designed to inject federal and provincial funds into local CD projects. The move helped to sustain CD; the FAP also represented a tacit admission by the federal government that the provinces and municipalities could not prepare for nuclear war on their own. They required federal leadership and assistance to finance their CD agencies, and to attract the public support necessary to attract volunteers for local CD services.

Chapter 3

Armageddon on Tour: Civil Defence Publicity and Responsible Citizenship

During the fall and winter of 1953, the “On Guard, Canada!” Civil Defence Convoy traveled to major cities across Canada. The exhibit, originally designed and displayed in the United States, was the first nation-wide publicity campaign launched by the federal government to convince Canadians of the need to adopt civil defence measures. The federal civil defence agency, in cooperation with its provincial and municipal counterparts, employed the exhibit to make the case that the long, watery and frozen distances separating them from Cold War conflicts in Europe and Asia no longer protected them. The enemy, at a moment, could reduce their cities to rubble with atomic bombs, salt the earth with volatile biological agents, and poison their air with suffocating chemicals. To meet the horrors of modern warfare, young and old visitors were shown how to support civil defence in their homes and in their community. The large number of visitors to the exhibit did not lead to any significant increase in the number of volunteers for civil defence services.

Civil defence authorities advertised more than just protective measures. Both the Canadian and American versions of the convoy attempted to depict civil defence as part of the core obligations of citizenship. Preparing a basement shelter and saluting the flag were equated visually with the defence of cherished values such as the freedom of speech. The exhibition displays, and the way in which attendance was promoted and organized, depicted a hierarchical order of citizenship that valorized patriotic voluntarism and prescribed strict gender divisions that suggested where men and women could best fulfill their obligations to their community.

Citizenship and CD publicity

The study of citizenship is a varied field, and in Canada some scholars have investigated the process by which the individual immigrant or immigrant communities seek, find, or are granted membership in the host community.¹ For the purposes of this study, citizenship may be defined as a set of obligations (military service, taxation, and obedience to the law) and individual rights (freedom of speech, religion, and assembly) as defined by law. Citizenship may also be interpreted as a mark of pride and membership in a wider social network, traditionally linked to the confines of the nation-state.² Yet the concept of a citizenship in Canada was difficult to apply to a society divided by so many competing ethnic, cultural, and linguistic tensions.³ During the Second World War, the federal government had worried that these divisions would undermine support for the war effort. Officials in the Department of National War Services took steps to promote a single Canadian identity through adult education.⁴

After victory was declared, Paul Martin, then the Secretary of State, drafted the Canadian Citizenship Act with the aid of senior civil servants. He argued vigorously in

¹ Several authors examine this process, which has been termed "citizenship acquisition," and apply theoretical models developed by scholars in the United States to determine whether the process of attaining membership is a personal, psychological distinction, or a more complex determination of this process that is influenced by kinship and social networks. See Francisco Colom-Gonzalez, "Dimensions of Citizenship: Canada in Comparative Perspective" *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 14 (Fall/Autumn 1996), pp. 95-109; James S. Frideres et al, "Becoming Canadian: Citizenship Acquisition & National Identity" *Canadian Review in Studies of Nationalism* XVIII (1987), pp. 105-121.

² Desmond Morton, "Divided Loyalties? Divided Country?," in William Kaplan, ed., *Belonging: the Meaning and Future of Canadian Citizenship*. (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), pp. 50-51.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-55.

⁴ This was accomplished through agencies created specifically to promote awareness of Canadian identity and loyalty, such as the Bureau of Public Information's Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship and the Nationalities Branch of the Department of National War Services. Leslie A. Pal, "Identity, Citizenship and Mobilization: the Canadian Nationalities Branch and World War Two," *Canadian Public Administration* 32, (December 1989), p. 421; Paul Martin, "Citizenship and the People's World," in Kaplan, pp. 68-69.

the House of Commons that the act would serve as a marker of what a united Canada could accomplish.⁵ Passed into law during a “Citizenship Week” in January 1947, the act was meant to encourage the concept of Canadian citizenship as a means of fostering national pride and consciousness.⁶

In Canada and the United States, civil defence agencies tied their publicity programs into the citizenship project by stressing that participation in Civil Defence (CD) was a responsibility that everyone had to bear in order to defend their hard-won rights. Gender constituted an important component of the civil defence publicity program. Male and female citizens, as portrayed in CD publicity, would be required to fulfill their duties in very different ways. Publicity was the CD organization’s first point of contact with the public, and was used frequently to persuade Canadians to live up to their obligations by volunteering for their local CD corps. Since Canada’s CD depended on convincing the public to support the “self-help” strategy, the use of publicity in peacetime recruiting was an important component of CD preparations.

In the earliest stages, Federal Civil Defence Coordinator Major-General F. F. Worthington played the leading role in an unsophisticated campaign that publicized the aims and needs of the nascent civil defence organization. For the first few years of his appointment, he traveled extensively across Canada and personally addressed gatherings of veterans’ groups, industrial preparedness associations, city councillors, teachers, students, and church groups. He eventually came to rely on a scripted “Basic Speech” for these events, which stressed key points essential to familiarizing the public with his organization and its goals.

⁵ Martin, p. 67.

⁶ Mildred A. Schwartz, “Citizenship in Canada and the United States,” *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* IV:XIV (1986), p. 83.

Worthington suggested in his addresses that support for civil defence would demonstrate the civilian population's willingness to resist a Soviet attack, and contribute to the West's deterrent.⁷ As the Korean War deteriorated into a stalemate, Worthington's exhortations about the responsibility of citizens to participate became more pronounced. In a speech to the Canadian Hospital Council on 29 May 1951, he informed his audience that civil defence was "straightforward patriotism which requires voluntary time and the only wage which the patriotic man and woman will receive from this effort is the continuance of the Freedom and Liberty we now enjoy."⁸ By September 1951, Worthington equated civil defence's importance with the armed forces themselves, and claimed that, without it, the defence of Canada would be completely "nullified."⁹

Worthington's personal endorsement of civil defence was meaningless without a budget or staff to produce publicity and training material on a national scale. Many local civil defence agencies had lost patience with the lack of direction from the federal planning body, and began their own publicity programs in the winter of 1950. F.L. Houghton, the Director of Civil Defence for the City of Halifax, commenced a weekly radio broadcasting campaign immediately after his appointment to inform residents of his progress in organizing their community for civil defence.¹⁰ Houghton based his speaking engagements and 15-minute radio broadcasts on points lifted from transcripts of the Federal Co-ordinator's speeches, and more frequently from American and British civil defence technical manuals.¹¹ By late 1951, Houghton and other local directors were

⁷ A Basic Speech – Civil Defence, 14 February 1950 in Kingston, LAC RG 29 Vol 646 File 100-5-24 pt 1.

⁸ Speech to the Canadian Hospital Council on 29 May 1951, Ibid.

⁹ Civil Defence Recruiting Week, Speech in Winnipeg, 27 September 1951, Ibid.

¹⁰ F.L. Houghton, CDC Halifax to J.F. Wallace, Information Services Division, 16 January 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 696 File 110-2-1 pt 1. The broadcasting campaign, Houghton argued, would alleviate "the impatience of the populace to 'do something.'"

¹¹ Ibid.

impatient with their own limited programs, and demanded publicity material to aid recruitment and public education.¹²

The federal agency responded by establishing a branch of the Department of National Health and Welfare's Information Services Division in the Federal Co-ordinator's office, directed by Colonel H.S. Robinson. The responsibility of this branch was to disseminate the necessary information about civil defence across Canada as a part of the Federal Civil Defence Training and Planning program. For assistance with the complex job of selling civil defence, the federal agency accepted paid assistance from Sidney Denman, a representative of a Montreal advertising firm.¹³ By late October 1951, Denman and the staff of the Information Services Division, in consultation with the Deputy Minister of Welfare, G. F. Davidson, had constructed a national publicity program.

The program demanded that each province appoint public relations officers in consultation with the national office, which would provide timely press releases of national and local import through existing channels of communication, and co-ordinate loans of exhibitions and films. Another purpose of the national public relations plan was to counteract negative publicity, such as press coverage of federal-provincial conflict over the financial responsibility for civil defence. Instead, emphasis was placed on positive coverage featuring progress, describing the number of volunteers enrolled to date, training courses completed, and new federal initiatives.¹⁴ The success of the

¹² He hoped to have 1500 local volunteers by the Spring of 1952. Houghton to W.J. McCallum, 18 October 1951, Ibid. Similarly, Worthington was informed by Saskatchewan's Provincial Civil Defence Co-ordinator, J.O. Probe, that the lack of a "fairly continuous supply of literature and films dealing with civil defence topics." J.O. Probe to Worthington, 31 March 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 704 File 110-7-1 pt 1.

¹³ Paul Martin to Treasury Board, 9 August, 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 56 File 100-5-1.

¹⁴ Summary of Planning Discussion of Civil Defence Publicity – Sydney Denman and H.S. Robinson, 17 October 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 56 File 100-5-1.

publicity program was left to municipal public relations workers, who could promote civil defence locally to keep the organization in the public eye.¹⁵

The staff of Information Services Division advanced civil defence publicity by erecting exhibits at events in early 1952 where they would obtain the most exposure to the public, and without committing the government to major expenditures. One example of this was the Civil Defence display that was designed and erected for the Canadian National Sportsmen's Show, held in the Toronto Coliseum Exhibition Grounds in March, 1952.¹⁶ The design itself was spectacular and eye-catching: the central panel was dedicated to a graphic treatment of an illuminated atomic bomb cloud flashing on and off over a city skyline. Alongside this panel was another describing the nature of civil defence. The answer to the question "Who is needed?" was consistent with the basic civil defence message: "Everybody. Self-help and mutual aid are the responsibilities of all good citizens."¹⁷

The civil defence agency's ability to conduct a national publicity campaign was limited by the federal government's unwillingness to commit major expenditures to peacetime civil defence. Only \$4,196,202 of federal funds was allocated to civil defence purposes in the 1951 fiscal year. If compared to the billions earmarked for defence mobilization to fight the Korean War, civil defence was a budgetary afterthought for the Canadian Government.¹⁸ It must have seemed fortuitous to civil defence planners when

¹⁵ Circular Letter X. Public Relations, 30 October 1951, Ibid.

¹⁶ H.S. Robinson to A.D. Simmons, Canadian Exhibition Commission, 10 December 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-8-51. H.S. Robinson to K.B.F. Smith, 18 January 1952, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-8-51.

¹⁷ T.C. Good, Canadian Government Exhibition Commission, to Robinson, 14 February 1952, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-5-51.

¹⁸ Paul Martin, *Debates*, 11 May 1951, p. 2941. In February 1951, the government committed to spending almost five billion dollars over three years to rearm with modern equipment. Desmond Morton, *A Military History of Canada*, (Toronto: University Press, 1997), p. 237.

the American Federal Civil Defense Administration offered the “Alert America” convoy to Canadian authorities in June, 1952. Canadian officials seized an opportunity to launch a nation-wide publicity campaign at a fraction of the cost. As Davidson explained to his reluctant minister on 16 October 1952, the cost of sending the “Alert America” convoy across Canada compared favorably with the cost of producing an educational film. He predicted that “the returns from this present project in terms of the impact it will make upon the public will be well worthwhile.”¹⁹

The “Alert America” convoy was conceived as the result of the resounding success of the “Freedom Train” exhibit of artifacts promoting American history and the triumph of democracy over tyranny.²⁰ Between September 1947 and January 1949, the Freedom Train traveled 37,000 miles across the continental United States, visiting 322 cities. Over 3.5 million people visited the train, prompted by an immense advertising campaign in the press, radio, and television.²¹ The tour’s promoters boasted that its popularity had cemented the spiritual resolve of the nation against foreign ideologies.

In 1951, the American FCDA approached the Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge, a coalition of advertisers and prominent citizens, to help promote awareness of the American civil defence program.²² Three traveling exhibits were created, each composed of ten-truck convoys, which eventually visited 82 principal target cities, where they were

¹⁹ George F. Davidson to Paul Martin, 16 October 1952, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-8-55 pt 1.

²⁰ Richard M. Fried, *The Russians Are Coming! The Russians Are Coming! Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold War America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 35. 127 historic documents showcased American civil liberties, such as the Declaration of Independence, a copy of the Constitution, the Emancipation Proclamation. Also on display were artifacts of American military victories, such as the German and Japanese surrender articles. The Freedom Train may be interpreted as being a major component in the American citizenship ‘project’ in the immediate post-war period.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 432.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 46. Coalitions of business and government officials were commonplace since the Second World War. U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower chaired the Freedoms Foundation from 1949 until his death. See Robert Griffith, “The Selling of America: The Advertising Council and American Politics, 1942-60,” *Business History Review* LVII (Autumn 1983), p. 398.

viewed by over a million spectators. At many of the stops on the route, the convoy was welcomed by civil defence manoeuvres and civic parades. Like the Freedom Train, the logo and promotional material for the Alert America convoy drew heavily from American heritage. Visitors were greeted by a large silhouette of Paul Revere bent over his horse during the Midnight Ride. Generations of Americans had learned about Revere's exploits during the War of Independence through formal and informal education. The use of his silhouette in the Alert America convoy exhibit and publicity was employed to suggest that the time had arrived when all civilians were expected to do their duty and join the civil defence corps.²³

Canadian civil defence officials followed the success of the tour with interest throughout the summer of 1952 with an eye to their own education and training program.²⁴ At the conclusion of the "Alert America" tour, the FCDA offered to provide one entire exhibition of the three produced to the Canadian Civil Defence Agency free of charge for a period of one year. The offer was made to consolidate Canadian-American co-operation in civil defence matters. The new aspect of the Canadian-American relationship was formalized in a Memorandum of Agreement when the convoy was handed over to Canadian authorities on Parliament Hill on July 24, 1952.²⁵ A small crowd was in attendance when the full convoy arrived on Parliament Hill the following day, where it was welcomed by Worthington, Davidson, and members of the US

²³ This was not the first time Revere's memory had been invoked to alert the general population to their responsibilities. In 1910, antiquarian preservationists and civic leaders in Massachusetts inaugurated a drive to preserve Revere's home to serve as a daily reminder to recent immigrants and the working class of the service to the state that may have been required of them. James M. Lindgren, "A Constant Incentive to Patriotic Citizenship: Historic Preservation in Progressive-Era Massachusetts," *The New England Quarterly* 64 (December 1991), p. 597.

²⁴ Paul Martin to Millard Caldwell, 3 July 1952, LAC RG 29 Vol 56 File 100-5-13 pt 1.

²⁵ The agreement stated that in the event of a major disaster, mutual aid agencies would be permitted to operate as though there were no border. Department of National Health and Welfare Press Release, 15 May 1952, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-8-55.

Embassy. Worthington publicly expressed his confidence that he would have the civil defence exhibit moving within a month, but the contents of the convoy trucks were unceremoniously dumped into storage, where they remained for almost a year.²⁶ Since the Canadian version of the Alert America convoy relied on the participation and expenditure of government departments, rather than a wealthy, privately-funded organization, Worthington's optimism had been altogether unrealistic. Any plans for the Canadian tour had to be approved by the Cabinet, and designers of the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission had to repair worn displays and "Canadianize" specific aspects of the exhibit.²⁷ As a result of this cumbersome approvals process, the Canadian convoy did not set out until September 1953.

The Exhibition

As visitors entered the first enclosure of the exhibit, they were greeted with a large hourglass and the words *The Time is Now*, superimposed over a map of Canada. The economic and cultural advancement of humanity was sketched to a pivotal point: the development of atomic energy.²⁸ The promise and threat of atomic energy were summarized in two panels describing the ongoing debate in the West over state control over atomic science. The *Peacetime Use of Atomic Energy* postulated the potential,

²⁶ "U.S. Mobile Civil Defence Unit to Help Alert Canadians of War," *The Montreal Gazette*, 25 July 1952.

²⁷ Content advice was provided by the office of the Federal Civil Defence Co-ordinator, the Defence Research Board, and the director of Atomic Energy of Canada, Limited.

²⁸ Utopian visions of the future were common to major exhibitions conducted in the United States, Britain, and Canada for decades at this point, whether they suggested a more open society afforded by automobile travel, new opportunities opened by trade routes, or a "fusion of the races." Most historians examining the issue stress that such utopian visions were featured prominently in exhibitions and fairs in order to root out class or race consciousness and advance an inevitably coercive imperialist/capitalist agenda in the name of progress. See Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair* (Chicago: University Press, 1984), pp. 184-189; Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914*. (Stanford: University Press, 1990), pp. 1-16; Keith Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto*, (Toronto: University Press, 1997), pp. i-xvii; H.V. Nelles, *The art of nation-building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University Press, 1999), p. 12. A major difference between this exhibit and others is that the utopia was juxtaposed with a dystopian atomic holocaust, thus employing both a carrot and a stick to convince visitors.

fantastic applications of atomic energy to better everyday life in the near future, including atomic planes and cars. The Canadian version of this panel stressed Canada's pioneering research into Cobalt-60 cancer therapy. In contrast, a large arrow bearing the words *Or Will It Be This?* pointed to a crumbling doorframe surrounded by a panel with images of destruction wrought by the atomic bomb at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

With this ominous warning, the visitor progressed to the next enclosure, entitled *The Five Warfares*, where, in graphic three dimensional montages, they were shown the ways that external and internal enemies might attack their way of life.²⁹ The *Biological Warfare* display was an example of one of the internal threats, and portrayed two sides of a farm field. On the left side of the divide, a faceless saboteur in a dark hat and trench coat knelt in the midst of a barren field, holding a vial filled with a bubbling substance. It is unclear whether he was meant to be a Russian spy or a Communist sympathizer. Such distinctions hardly mattered. In the background lay the bare bones of livestock and a dilapidated farmhouse. On the right side of the display was a thriving farm, indicating the value of preparedness. In the *Incendiary Attack* display, a more familiar picture of London during the Blitz was presented, with airplanes dropping loads of high explosives.³⁰ The resilience of the civilian population during the Battle of Britain had been used to great wartime effect as inspirational propaganda in Canada and the United States, and the Blitz provided CD organizers with the best-known example of the effectiveness of a prepared civil defence corps in saving lives and property. Many

²⁹ These were Biological Warfare, Chemical Warfare, Incendiary Attack, Sabotage, and Psychological Warfare.

³⁰ Images of these and other exhibits are found in the pamphlet: *For Your Information: Canada's Civil Defence Convoy*, LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12 Vol 25 File 21.

demobilized soldiers would have had vivid memories of these attacks based on their first-hand experience while awaiting the invasion or on leave in Britain during the war.

The centrepiece of the civil defence convoy, in both the United States and Canada, was the *Destruction of City* display. As the visitor entered, piped music swelled in dramatic tones as the lights were dimmed so that only a model skyline was visible. The music rose to a crescendo, the sound of aircraft engines rumbled, followed by the scream of a falling bomb. At that point, a giant, multicoloured cloud illuminated a second skyline of jagged wreckage with a purple glow, accompanied by the sound of an atomic explosion, flames, secondary explosions and collapsing wreckage. After the “attack,” the lights brightened, and the nightmarish sounds faded into the background and a reassuring recorded narration began: “You have just seen a small picture of the death and destruction that modern warfare can bring to the cities and farms, the churches and schools, the homes and families of our country. We want peace. We hope and pray and work to preserve our traditional freedoms and to share them with others in peace. But lasting peace can never be bought by weakness. Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom.”³¹

From there the shaken visitor learned how to exercise individual self-defence, at home and at work, and basic survival tips such as building a basement shelter. The displays clearly depicted the role of the family household in self-protection. A staple of the civil defence organization was the involvement of women, based on the assumption that the mother or wife would have to manage the home under attack, especially if it

³¹ Transcript of narrative for “Destruction of City”, nd, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-8-55 pt 1.

occurred while a man was working during the day.³² She would have to prepare to extinguish house fires and evacuate children to a shelter. In the *Transition Room*, the role of the mother was emphasized. Standing in the rubble of their home, an awestruck mother held her unharmed baby and her son's hand.³³ In yet another exhibit stressing the value of fire protection, a woman was depicted with garden hose in hand, effortlessly extinguishing a fire in her home before it spread to other houses. Major fires would have involved the intervention of skilled fire-fighters. This was domestic perfection carried to an extreme: a neat, ordered home with a concerned housewife could reduce property damage in a disaster.³⁴ Perhaps more importantly, her preparedness in the home ensured that, in an attack, skilled male civil defence volunteers in the target area would be freed to do more "important" work in fire-fighting and rescue teams. Though the exhibit was of American design, such manicured representations of women in the home were common in the contemporary Canadian media.³⁵ The summative effect of the imagery and public appeals representing the patriotic female civil defence worker was to reinforce traditional gender roles while posing no threat to the feminine image of the individual volunteer.

³² Women in show cities were urged to see the exhibit by local civil defence directors and newspaper editorialists. "Amongst the non-specialists required for help is the "corner stone" of every city—the housewife. She, with her expert knowledge of home and child care, is an invaluable asset to any community and she can help in hundreds of ways." Such editorials also offer interesting glimpses of the type of people who worked for the organization. Ray Smith, the author, lived in London during the Battle of Britain and the Blitz, and drew upon his experience to stress how Calgary would fare in attack. Ray Smith, "We're All In It," *The Calgary Herald*, 9 October 1953.

³³ *For Your Information: Canada's Civil Defence Convoy*, LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12, Vol. 25 File 21

³⁴ Brigadier J.C. Jefferson, the Assistant Federal Deputy Civil Defence Co-ordinator, cited atomic bomb tests in Nevada where the cleanliness of a home had a direct relation to its chances for survival. "Jefferson sees Improvement in Civil Defence Attitude." *The Edmonton Journal*, 30 October 1953. Concern in this case encompassed personal appearance, the family, and proper household maintenance.

³⁵ For instance, the pose struck by the female fire-fighter, grasping the hose daintily, was reminiscent of magazine advertisements for vacuum cleaners, in which aproned housewives seemed to float behind their appliances. Valerie Joyce Korinek, *Roughing it in the Suburbs: Reading Chatelaine Magazine in the Fifties and Sixties*. (Toronto: University Press, 2000), p. 133.

These representations did not reflect reality, since many female civil defence volunteers wanted training for work outside the home.³⁶

If the mother was the first line of defence, the father was the overall co-ordinator of the household. In the *Civil Defence Where You Live* exhibit, a husband and wife were shown sitting in a spacious and comfortable basement shelter. To the left of this panel was an instruction to study CD booklets, over an image of a father reading them to his family. Below was an instruction to "Organize Family into a Fire-fighting team." The father and his son rushed to douse a fire, while the mother and daughter filled buckets. The men were in charge of the home when not at work, and the best qualified to organize the family to resist disaster.³⁷

The visitor exited the exhibition by passing through a final enclosure, *Civil Defence Protects Our Way Of Life*, changed from the American *Know Your Freedoms*. This space confronted the viewer with several large graphic panels depicting the rights of Canadian citizenship. In one panel, a child had her head bowed in prayer, symbolizing freedom of religion. In the second, the Speaker of the House of Commons stood in Parliament, stressing the institutional foundations of Canadian society, a guarantor of the rights of citizenship. In the final panel, the visitor was shown the individual obligations of citizenship, through images of Boy Scouts taking direction from a Civil Defence worker or a policeman. This last room visually connected civil defence, loyalty, and good

³⁶ Even the more conservative IODE volunteers aspired to more than civil defence in the home. In an annual report, the IODE's National Civil Defence Convener informed the executive about a course in which 60 women took part and excelled in every field including those typically reserved for men, such as rescue. "The course certainly proved that women have a major part to play in Civil Defence and also that they *can* play a part in every phase of CD." 55th Meeting of the IODE and Children of the Empire National Chapter Report 1955 LAC IODE Fonds MG 28 II7 Vol 13 pt 1, pp. 80-83.

³⁷ LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12 Vol 25 File 21.

citizenship by linking the rights and obligations of membership in the community.³⁸

Unlike the American version of the exhibit, the Canadian convoy did not exploit visual symbols of the nation's heritage. Paul Revere's silhouette had been removed, and not replaced by any distinctly Canadian substitute. The convoy's most visible connection to Canada was devised in the planning stage, when it was renamed "On Guard Canada!" in August 1953 to distinguish it from its American origins.³⁹

The Tour

On 18 September 1953, after 14 months of planning and co-ordination, the "On Guard, Canada!" convoy rolled out from Parliament Hill on a three-month tour of ten cities considered prime targets for atomic attack: Montreal, Regina, Calgary, Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Windsor, Halifax, and Saint John.⁴⁰ Toronto was conspicuous by its absence, but only because the municipal authorities publicly rejected the convoy on the basis that it was not prepared to spend the money on the program.⁴¹ Toronto Mayor Allan Lamport, always ready to supply the press with a witty quote, dismissed criticism from his colleagues by calling the civil defence program "a pig in a poke," which had lost its utility with hostilities winding down in Korea.⁴² Arthur Welsh, Provincial Secretary and Minister in charge of Civil Defence for Ontario, supported

³⁸ *For Your Information: Canada's Civil Defence Convoy*. There are surprisingly few pictures of the civil defence convoy exhibits. As such, this 'tour' was compiled by comparing a list of the exhibitions included in the convoy that was given to the Canadian Government Exhibition Commission in January 1953, with a later account by a journalist of the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, "Defence Display Outstanding Show," 9 November 1953.

³⁹ Fred Rowse: Field Officer's Interim Report on Initial Promotional Tour, 28 July 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 56 File 100-5-13 pt 2.

⁴⁰ Before the convoy pulled out of Ottawa, it was opened briefly to members of the civil service. In the United States, President Harry Truman instructed the heads of government departments and agencies to encourage "employees to attend the exhibit wherever possible as a positive part of the Nation's civil defense program." Donald S. Dawson to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, 5 January 1952. National Archives and Records Administration. Harry S. Truman Memorial Library, White House Central Files: Official Files, Box 1671 File 1591-C.

⁴¹ "Toronto won't pay \$1,000 Convoy not showing here" *The Toronto Star*, 19 September 1953.

⁴² Donn Downey, "Obituary: Allan A. Lamport," *The Globe and Mail*, 24 November 1999.

Lamport's position that defence was a federal responsibility.⁴³ The editors of *The Globe and Mail* offered to pay for the convoy's showing in Toronto, but this initiative was politely rejected by federal planners.⁴⁴

Other municipalities eyed the convoy's tour schedule with envy. In written protests to the federal authorities, local directors of municipal civil defence organizations and their City Councils decried the decision not to include their cities and townships on the convoy route. Often these letters attempted to convince the federal authorities that, if the convoy did not stop in their area, their local organizations would suffer or be overcome by public apathy. Co-ordinators argued that the mere presence or passage of the convoy through their jurisdiction would bolster Canadian loyalty and defeat communist sympathizers.⁴⁵ To accommodate smaller centres, the convoy route was changed to allow for short stops in municipalities with active civil defence corps, where they were often welcomed by municipal councils and local Legion Halls.

In show cities, welcoming the convoy was a more sophisticated affair, with both attention-grabbing spectacles and effective advertising. Organizers in Montreal welcomed the convoy as an embellishment to their wider celebration, the International Municipal Congress, and arranged for a massive military parade. Local civil defence

⁴³ "Convoy is a 'Pig in a Poke', Mayor Tells Controllers," *The Toronto Daily Star*, 1 October 1953. The rejection, and the provincial support for it, was the result of the ongoing conflict over who was to pay for civil defence in Canada. Municipalities were called upon to bear the greatest financial burden, followed by the provinces. In practice, this often amounted to a political game where the federal government pointed to the province, the province pointed to the municipality, and the municipalities justifiably plead poverty.

⁴⁴ "A Serious Matter," *The Globe and Mail*, 25 September 1953.

⁴⁵ T.E.M. Smyth to F.F. Worthington, 21 August, 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 57 File 100-5-13 pt 4; Smyth's letter was followed by letters from the President of the Sudbury and District Municipal Association, and the Canadian Legion branch serving the area, each arguing that the convoy was planning to stop in six cities less active and less strategically important than their own. G.J. Monaghan to F.F. Worthington, 24 August 1953; C.A. Nesbitt to F.F. Worthington, 26 August 1953, *Ibid.*

workers, vehicles from both the convoy and the municipality formed the tail end of the parade, which drew over 150,000 spectators.⁴⁶

Military parades were a common feature at major exhibitions, and were often used as a show of strength.⁴⁷ The mechanized parade in Montreal brought together thousands of servicemen from the Army, Navy, and Air Force to demonstrate Canada's commitment to defence to the domestic population and the international delegates attending the Municipal Congress. The inclusion of 45 civil defence vehicles in this procession was a symbolic measure of prestige. It was hoped that the CD volunteers would be viewed by the audience as the fourth arm of defence in Canada, working in tandem with the professional armed forces. In the next war the armed forces would fight abroad, as they did in Korea, while the civil defenders would brace civilians for the inevitable atomic attack.⁴⁸ Other show cities held similar pageants of defence forces, with the blue and gold convoy trucks as the main attraction, followed by local civil defence workers in improvised ambulances and municipal fire vehicles.⁴⁹ Organizers in Winnipeg proclaimed a "Civil Defence Week" to coincide with the arrival of the Convoy.⁵⁰ Other opening ceremonies included air raid drills, in Calgary, where RCAF Mustang fighter

⁴⁶ "Exposition au manège militaire" *Le Devoir*, 19 September 1953; "Canadian Civil Defence Convoy Due Here Saturday for Premiere," *The Gazette*, 17 September 1953; Dan Wallace to CD Directors Halifax, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Windsor, Saint John, 22 September 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 57 File 100-5-13 pt 5.

⁴⁷ H.V. Nelles provides an excellent description of the varied uses of military parades in public spectacle: "One way or another, a parade expresses power." Nelles, p. 198-199.

⁴⁸ Newspaper editors picked up on the difference in future conflicts: "Il faut bien-etre realiste. Un conflit, sous la signe de l'atome, n'aura rien de commun avec les guerres les plus meurtrières du passé. Derangé sur les villes, sur les population civiles, il apparatiendra a celles-ci de se defender et de lutter avec des connaissances, des techniques, des moyens nouveau contre les engins nouveau de destruction."

"Exposition qui eclaire l'avenir." *Le Devoir*, 22 September 1953.

⁴⁹ "Canada's Mobile Civil Defence Show Opens Tomorrow Afternoon," *The Evening Times-Globe*, 9 December 1953; "Street Parade to Open Civil Defence Show," *The Halifax Chronicle Herald*, 3 December 1953.

⁵⁰ M.H.S. Penhale to Harvey Adams, 24 September 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 57 File 100-5-13 pt 5.

planes flew low over the city on a mock strafing run, and Saskatoon, when recently installed sirens sounded as the exhibition doors opened.⁵¹

Outside the armories, civil defence volunteers put on live demonstrations of their trades for large audiences. The street theatre replicated the horrific conditions of war found in the exhibits inside, as Red Cross workers rushed about tending to casualties with simulated head trauma and broken limbs, while other volunteers rescued people from a smoke-filled building with the assistance of their fire department. Local Boy Scout troops demonstrated crowd control and radio services.⁵²

The exhibit was the central component of a multi-pronged attack on the senses of urban Canadians to awake them to the need for civil defence, and their own individual responsibilities as citizens. The federal and local directors championed the exhibition as the centre of a rejuvenated effort in promoting civil defence. The activities of the organizers and volunteers bolstered the civil defence message, complete with its gender distinctions and prescriptions for voluntary involvement. The tasks allocated to the sizable number of volunteers who participated in the exercises outside and crowd control inside were distinctly different for male volunteers than for women. In the various rescue and fire-fighting demonstrations, men played a central role, rushing into smoke-filled buildings to save "casualties," moving debris to uncover survivors, while the Boy Scouts acted as messengers, running from one point in the evacuation chain to another. Male participation in civil defence, as advocated by the exhibits inside, was an active participation. Female volunteers were also outside, on the scene of destruction, but they

⁵¹ Harvey Adams to F.F. Worthington, 15 October 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 57 File 100-5-13 pt 6; D.J. Fusedale to J.O. Probe, 12 November 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 57 File 100-5-13 pt 7.

⁵² "10-car Civil Defence Convoy to Visit City in October," *The Edmonton Journal*, 14 September 1953; "St. John Brigade to Give Displays," *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, 2 December 1953; "Thousands View Elaborate Display On Civil Defence," *The Evening Times-Globe*, 11 December 1953.

were limited to bandaging “casualties,” and providing blankets and hot food. Women in the disaster area were characterized as maternal yet unemotional when compared with the chaos surrounding them.

A survey of newspaper and photographic coverage demonstrates that, within the exhibit grounds, gender roles were similarly divided. Male volunteers handled all aspects of crowd control, including shepherding groups of visitors from one display to the next. Boy Scouts and local cadets patrolled the exhibit to ensure that the displays were unmolested by curious visitors, projecting an image of control and respectability. With few exceptions, male “experts” explained technical aspects of the communications displays run by the Bell Telephone Company, and a male voice provided soothing narration to the *Destruction of City* display.⁵³ On the other hand, female volunteers and Girl Guides acted as welcoming hosts to the throngs of visitors by handing out pamphlets, answering questions, and most importantly, by serving up coffee, tea, and biscuits.⁵⁴ Hostesses were seen as instrumental in providing a relaxed atmosphere in which visitors could enjoy their food and converse about what they had just seen, and organizers clearly preferred that these hostesses be as attractive as possible.⁵⁵ To

⁵³ “Jobs for All – Theme of Civil Defence Show,” *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, 2 December 1953.

⁵⁴ F.F. Worthington to General C.S. Stein, Provincial Co-ordinator for Civil Defence, British Columbia, August 31, 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 56 File 100-5-13 pt 5. A free cup of coffee, Worthington explained to Vancouver organizers, “creates a pleasant atmosphere that is invaluable in its effect. ... it encourages every individual to pause and to discuss civil defence either with their friends or with civil defence officials who are there. They see ... [our] slogan ... on the cup, which in itself is a good message to drive home.”

⁵⁵ This last qualification had little to do with the merits of civil defence, and is a trend common to this day in trade exhibitions. In Montreal, local organizers built an information booth near the entrance of the convoy exhibit with “a colourful ensemble of young girls of various nationalities dressed in their native costume....” W.A. Croteau to Worthington, 14 August 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 56 File 100-5-13 pt 3.

capitalize on the coffee and biscuit stands, the Civil Defence co-ordinator for Calgary considered placing local recruitment forms close to the garbage pails.⁵⁶

Both the male and female volunteers, operating under a strict division of labour, were necessary to make the exhibit work smoothly. The gender roles of the volunteers would have been instantly familiar to visitors, since similar partitions were reflected in North American newspaper and magazine advertisements that sold the ideal household along with their products.⁵⁷ The important distinction made by the exhibit's promoters was that fulfillment of these roles extended beyond familial obligations; rather, it was a gender-specific civic responsibility. For female volunteers, however, the home would have to come first.

The exhibit's message of civil defence as an obligation of responsible citizens was achieved by an ordering of the audience.⁵⁸ Despite vigorous advertising to create wide public appeal, the exhibit was open to the general public for a very limited time in the largest show cities. Montreal hosted the convoy over four days, but the public was only admitted for 18 hours. The rest of the time was set aside for special groups. The first night in Montreal was reserved for civic leaders and delegates to the International Municipal Congress. The second night was for civil defence personnel. The third was

⁵⁶ G.O. Bell, Director Calgary Civil Defence to F.F. Worthington, 13 August 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 56 File 100-5-13 pt 3.

⁵⁷ Korinek argues convincingly that such advertisements did not reflect reality but rather acted as a distorting mirror, depicting a comfortable world of middle class consumers. Korinek, p. 122.

⁵⁸ The concept of the "ordering" of the audience is explored more fully in the first chapter of Keith Walden's work, appropriately entitled "Order." The "ritual of approval," as described in this chapter, was a yearly staple of the Industrial exhibition, where individual celebrities and members of prestigious fraternal or industrial orders toured the exhibit, and bestowed approval on one or more exhibitors. Such fairs were stages upon which social and business elites could perform their public roles. Walden, p. 37-39. Much of the exhibition historiography is concerned with 'order,' but few examine the passage and organization of the audience itself. Generally, the exhibition is portrayed as an essentially coercive social force. For instance, Tony Bennett's influential *The Birth of the Museum* employs both Gramscii and Foucault to portray the museum's exhibition space as a tool used "to inveigle the general populace into complicity with power by placing them on this side of a power which it represented as its own." Bennett, p. 95.

reserved for local women's groups, the fourth for industrial workers' groups, and the last for veterans. Only then was it opened to the general public.⁵⁹ This exclusive schedule was made for an inherently pragmatic reason, to boost attendance figures, but had a political significance that was complementary to the exhibit's message.⁶⁰

By providing local chapters of national organizations such as the Canadian Legion or the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire with special viewings, an incentive was given to the leaders of such organizations to endorse the convoy publicly, providing free "word of mouth" publicity to the exhibit and improved attendance by the members of their organizations. As historian Keith Walden has demonstrated, organizers had employed exclusive schedules at fairs as a strategy in North America since the turn of the century.⁶¹

The composition of the audience, and the organizations that were selected to participate in a "ritual of approval" of the convoy exhibit, illustrates the premium that organizers placed on civic activity and involvement. The audience was structured hierarchically in terms of its contribution to civil defence, and by the visitor's perceived status as a responsible citizen. Each of the groups that were invited to special showings by the municipal CD co-ordinator were active supporters of the local civil defence organization, who had already demonstrated their commitment to their obligations of citizenship in their communities. Advanced showings allowed exhibit promoters to bestow privileges upon these organizations as prestige for their commitment to

⁵⁹ "Canadian Civil Defence Convoy Due Here Saturday for Premiere," *The Montreal Gazette*, 17 September 1953, p.10

⁶⁰ Federal Civil Defense Administration. Public Affairs Office. *Practical, Tested Suggestions for your Local Promotion of the "Alert America" Convoy*. (March, 1952), p. 3-4, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-8-55 pt 1.

⁶¹ "Societies' Days" were often held at the Industrial Exhibition, often at the bequest of local organizations seeking to cement a profitable role for their members in the annual exhibition. Walden, pp. 192-3.

responsible citizenship, and at the same time benefit from the endorsement of community groups.⁶²

By inviting thousands of school children to the exhibition, convoy organizers hoped to underline the message that the exhibit had an educational benefit. Children were intended to leave with a sense of their responsibility to defend themselves. For Canadian organizers, as for American, the *Destruction of City* display and other films in the exhibit could be used to “introduce tomorrow’s citizens to the atomic world in which we appear destined to live,” while the spectacular show would hopefully set children talking to their parents about the exhibit and civil defence.⁶³ One of the problems with this strategy was that the organizers assumed that children would view the convoy as an educational opportunity, when many may have just viewed it as entertainment or a break from monotony. In Calgary, Harvey Adams complained that “convoy personnel had to be in attendance all the time to prevent show being wrecked by uncontrolled children,” which suggests that teachers may have viewed the convoy as entertainment rather than education as well.⁶⁴

As with the support of community groups, the support of industry was a trade in prestige and publicity. Co-operation with industry formed a key part of the Civil Defence

⁶² Here we see the paradoxical nature of the museum space as described by Bennett. The museum’s original design, he argues, was ostensibly democratic, in that it sought to engage all factions of society in a learning environment. However, in order to regulate the behaviour of the uncouth masses, regulatory practices were brought in to differentiate the publics and introduce order. One of these measures that is considered directly applicable to the convoy’s organization was the tendency to “breaking that public up from a disaggregated mass into an orderly flow.” In this case, that flow trickled downward from organized civil defence supporters to the ‘apathetic masses.’ Bennett, pp. 99, 101-102.

⁶³ Federal Civil Defense Administration. Public Affairs Office. *Practical, Tested Suggestions for your Local Promotion of the “Alert America” Convoy*. (March 1952), p. 4, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-8-55 pt 1.

⁶⁴ Telegram: Harvey Adams to Worthington, 15 October 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 57 File 100-5-13 pt 6.

agency's disaster planning.⁶⁵ The relationship between industry and civil defence was grounded in public relations as well as national security. The federal agency planned for the protection of industry, but could also declare publicly that business executives supported civil defence. In return, industries advised the government on aspects of civil defence, and received publicity that portrayed Canadian industries as responsible citizens contributing to the defence of the country.⁶⁶ Many companies provided significant resources for the "On Guard, Canada!" convoy, including free trucks, drivers, tires, and fuel used to move the convoy across the country.⁶⁷ Product placement and other means of advertising was the price paid by the civil defence agency to secure the support of industry.

Local businesses provided most of the advertising for the convoy. Coordinated by the show city's civil defence committees, this advertising embedded the convoy's arrival, and its importance, into the everyday routine of residents. Such advertising reinforced the message that participation in civil defence was a vital act of community involvement. In most cases, industries supported advertising by paying for the publication of templates prepared by the federal agency in local newspapers. Companies received a credit for publishing the advertisement as a "public service." In Halifax, "public-spirited business firms" and community organizations such as the St. John Ambulance collaborated to

⁶⁵ Executives advised the Government on Industrial Plant protection and often sat in on policy committees dealing with transportation and communication. Major-General F. F. Worthington, "Civil Defence and Industry," *Industrial Canada* 53:6 (July 1951), pp. 165-168.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* Some companies took this more seriously than others. John Labatt Limited Breweries, for example, in cooperation with the National Brewery Workers Union No. 1, organized a Mobile Disaster Unit. By September 1951, over 200 employees were qualified for rescue work. The Disaster Service was offered to nearby communities, and occasional rescue exercises were carried out publicly. NA, "Mobile Disaster Service Organized by John Labatt Limited," *Industrial Canada* 53:6 (September 1951), pp. 92-94.

⁶⁷ F.W. Davies, Trailmobile Canada to John Magee, Canadian Automobile Transportation Association, 3 October 1952, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-8-55 pt 1.

finance the promotions.⁶⁸ Other local firms paid to design and publish their own advertisements in support of the convoy. Nova Scotia Light and Power promised that “All of our resources of men and equipment stand ready for any emergency!” while their mascot offered a jaunty salute to the words “Civil Defence.”⁶⁹ In addition to newspaper advertising, store window displays, and short radio broadcasts, municipal organizers convinced local businesses to send out civil defence publicity to all their customers.⁷⁰ In the press, on the radio, and in their daily routine, residents were reminded of the upcoming CD show and their responsibility to play a role in the organization.

Strong endorsements of civil defence by public officials during the tour underpinned the convoy’s message. Municipal, provincial, and federal organizers temporarily set aside their differences to insist, repeatedly, that the indiscriminate damage done by an atomic bomb demanded new responsibilities of those living in the community. Lieutenant Colonel Arnold J. Lavoie, the provincial assistant co-ordinator for CD in Alberta, declared that civil defence would be a permanent part of Canadian life, stating explicitly that participating in civil defence was a duty of citizenship.⁷¹ Health minister Paul Martin provided the most eloquent expression of the convoy’s message in an address to the Windsor Lions Club, where he, like Lavoie, proclaimed that international instability had created another permanent obligation of citizenship. Apart from the traditional duties of citizenship, respect for law in peace, and defence of the nation in war, Martin asserted that “we may be required for the first time to share in

⁶⁸ *The Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, 3 December 1953, p. 13.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷⁰ In Vancouver, 10,000 stickers were pasted on laundry deliveries throughout the city, and the Coca-Cola plant included 500 counter cards in deliveries to its customers for display. Ethel Stead, Public Relations Officer Vancouver to Dan Wallace, 29 October 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-8-55 pt 2.

⁷¹ “Civil Defence Seen Permanent,” *The Edmonton Journal*, 30 October 1953.

defending our own communities, our own families and our own homes against direct enemy attack. Thus, civil defence has added a third dimension to citizenship.”⁷²

The Results

It is not possible to know how visitors reacted to the exhibit, except what may be derived from reports written by local civil defence directors. 925 visitors joined local civil defence organizations in Edmonton and Vancouver, in the aftermath of the “On Guard, Canada!” convoy, while in other areas directors reported increased “interest.”⁷³ Harvey Adams, who was consistently impressed by both the audience turn-out and interest, proposed during the Vancouver showing that a “Civil Defence Train” would be a logical next step in the Canadian publicity program. Adams argued that a “Civil Defence Train” would be able to visit those communities with civil defence organizations that had been excluded from the “On Guard, Canada!” schedule, including Toronto.⁷⁴

Worthington abruptly rejected the idea of repeating the convoy exercise on 20 January 1954, after conferring with Davidson. In their view, the “On Guard, Canada” exhibit did not achieve its aims. While there was considerable local publicity and some limited recruiting, the federal, provincial, and municipal expenditures on the project were too high to justify its showing to less than 200,000 visitors. The federal expenditure alone was over \$30,000, and the more successful showings had cost the municipalities well

⁷² “Civil Defence has added 3D to citizenship—Martin” *The Ottawa Evening Journal*, 26 November 1953.

⁷³ 525 were reported as enrolled in Edmonton, and 400 in Vancouver. Hugh Davidson, Civil Defence Director, Edmonton to F.F. Worthington, 4 November 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 57 File 100-5-13 pt. 7; AVM F.V. Heakes, “The On Guard Canada Exhibit in Vancouver, B.C.,” *British Columbia Civil Defence Circular* 25, December 1953.

⁷⁴ Harvey Adams to Dan Wallace, 17 October 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-8-55 pt 2; Draft Letter to N.R. Crump, Vice President, Canadian Pacific Railways, S.F. Dingle, Vice President Canadian National Railways, January 20, 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 105 File 180-8-19.

over the \$400 dollars federal authorities had predicted necessary.⁷⁵ Worthington also contended that the exhibit had harmed the progress of civil defence in the country, since a sizable portion of his staff had to be dedicated to the convoy effort, the production and publication of much-needed educational media, posters, pamphlets, and manuals had been delayed, and the work of the Transport Branch had been similarly curtailed.⁷⁶

Federal civil defence publicity was issued henceforth by more subtle means. The staff of Information Services advised that a long-term publicity program was required, not a short burst of activity designed to grab headlines.⁷⁷ After the convoy had returned to the United States, information officers took immediate steps to build formal long-term relationships with the press, and radio and television media groups.⁷⁸ While not immediately successful, this initiative did eventually lead to a national newspaper series and radio broadcasts in 1955, and gave local and provincial civil defence officials more direct access to newspaper editors and radio stations. The federal civil defence publicity campaign slowed to a crawl for almost four years, until planning began for a National Civil Defence Day to confront public apathy and promote responsible citizenship in Canadian communities.

⁷⁵ Most cities put the time and money into producing local exhibits of quality to append to the federal convoy. It is unknown exactly how much each municipality invested in the convoy and their local exhibits, but in Montreal's case the total bill was approximately ten times the predicted cost. Montreal and Regina in particular petitioned the federal government for funds to offset the additional, unstated costs of the convoy. W.A. Croteau to F.F. Worthington, 14 August 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 57 File 100-5-13 pt 4; J.O. Probe to F.F. Worthington, 15 January 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 57 File 100-5-13 pt 8.

⁷⁶ Worthington to Harvey Adams, 26 January 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 105 File 180-8-19.

⁷⁷ Obtaining volunteers before the public was generally educated in civil defence, was, in the opinion of senior information officers, putting the cart before the horse. Guy Dorval to Monty Berger, Editor, C-I-L Oval, 19 March 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 104 File 180-8-10 pt 1.

⁷⁸ B.M. Erb to Harvey Adams, 12 April 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 102 File 180-8-1. In October 1954, the Information Services Division established the Advisory Committee on Civil Defence Information. The membership included the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, The Canadian Weekly Newspaper Association, the Canadian Advertising Association, the Canadian Advertising and Sales Clubs, Periodical Press Association, the Canadian Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters, and the Canadian Press.

Conclusion

In response to the threats posed to Canada during the early Cold War, the federal government and municipalities established civil defence organizations. Favourable publicity was essential to convince Canadians of the need for the organization and to recruit volunteers for training. Canadian officials used the “On Guard, Canada!” convoy as part of a publicity campaign that sold civil defence as one of the core obligations of good Canadian citizenship. Through the innovative exhibit displays, exclusive showings to community groups, and the use of volunteers both within the exhibition and in demonstrations outside, officials promoted a hierarchical order of citizenship that accorded prestige to community elites, and prescribed strict gender divisions that inextricably linked the role women could play in disaster to traditional domestic household tasks. This message was taken beyond the boundaries of the exhibit through newspaper and radio advertisements supported by industry, street demonstrations, and special tours to school children. That Canadian organizations used an American exhibit to convey their message is evidence of the close cooperation and liaison between the two agencies at all levels of government to meet a shared threat, but also that Canadian officials lacked the resources to launch a national campaign until the offer of the American exhibit. Their failure to capitalize on the exhibition with additional publicity indicated a lack of will on the part of the government to continue their public relations campaign. The federal government and Civil Defence were always willing to discuss the organization in terms of the obligations owed to it by the public, but never pledged an equivalent level of sustained financial or political support. The convoy’s publicity blitz

may have raised awareness about civil defence temporarily, but after it left, so too did the federal support for local activities that might have kept CD going as the Korean War ground to a halt and the organization lost its wartime urgency.

Chapter 4

Evacuation, Celebration, and Thermonuclear Defence

From 1954 to 1956, Canada enjoyed a period of political stability and remarkable economic growth. Canadians in ever greater numbers could afford to purchase homes and start families in the suburbs, and thousands did so, further fuelling the economy and changing the face of life in Canadian cities. Yet the arms race also accelerated, as the Soviet Union and the United States tested successively more destructive hydrogen bombs, weapons that were exponentially more powerful than those dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The hydrogen bomb was a scientific breakthrough that unsettled the public and politicians alike. In late 1954, foreign minister L.B. Pearson voiced his growing unease about the arms race. He warned an audience in Princeton that “A war which begins on an island ... may soon spread to a world.”¹ But what kind of war would it be? By February 1955, experts reporting to U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower confirmed what the public already feared: war meant “death and destruction on a scale almost beyond knowing, and certainly beyond any sensibility to shock and horror that men have so far experienced.”²

The changing nature of the international and nuclear balance forced civil defence planners around the world to revise their basic assumptions about policy and their strategies for survival. Like most North Atlantic Treaty Organization members, the Canadian government gradually abandoned its early Cold War civil defence strategy.

¹ Pearson, as quoted by James Eayrs, *In Defence of Canada: Growing Up Allied*. (Toronto: University Press, 1980), pp. 265-266.

² This was the first report of the Technological Capability Panel of Eisenhower’s Science Advisory Panel, *Meeting the Threat of Surprise Attack*, issued on 14 February 1955. The panel concluded that U.S. space presence and military satellites would help to meet the threat posed by missiles and bombers alike, advancing the space race. Report quoted in John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*. (Oxford: University Press, 1997), pp. 231-232.

Planners had always maintained that the atomic bomb was, in principle, different from conventional explosives only in its scale.³ They had therefore recommended the combination of shelter, firefighting, and rescue that had been used extensively in German and British cities during the Second World War. Now, however, the city-killing hydrogen bomb forced a fundamental reconsideration of civil defence measures. First the United States and later Canada adopted a policy of planned evacuation, where successful civil defence hinged on the swift and orderly exodus of residents from major urban centres prior to an attack. The evacuation strategy changed the nature of civil defence inside cities but also in the surrounding rural towns and counties that would be expected to house, feed, and care for waves of nuclear refugees. Planners slowly recognized that this new strategy called for national, not local, solutions. The industrial metropolis, to which so many Canadians had moved after the Second World War, was no longer the last line of Canada's defence. The agrarian countryside had taken its place. The breadbasket of the country would serve as a refuge for displaced urban populations. This change of CD strategy took place even as municipal governments disbanded their organizations, rebelling at the cost of maintaining CD in peacetime, and with the fierce federal-provincial disputes over financial policy still unresolved.

³ A Canadian Army training manual about the influence of nuclear weapons on battlefield tactics asserted, for instance, "Nuclear weapons may now be considered as part of the normal armaments of the major powers." Canadian Army Manual of Training 1-43, *Notes on the Influence of Nuclear Weapons on Tactics (Provisional)* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1956), p. 1. As Andrew Richter concluded in his study of the formulation of Canadian military strategy during the Cold War, the Department of External Affairs never accepted this military argument. Pearson and others had held since early on in the Korean conflict that the atomic bomb was simply too terrible a weapon ever to be used casually by the superpowers. This view informed the DEA's early acceptance of deterrence as a credible nuclear strategy. Civil Defence Canada, tasked with planning for contingencies if deterrence failed, largely followed the American Federal Civil Defence Administration's "atomic weapon as conventional weapon" approach until the hydrogen bomb forced reconsideration of the matter. Andrew Richter, *Avoiding Armageddon: Canadian Military Strategy and Nuclear Weapons, 1950-1963*. (Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), p. 61.

Maintaining interest among the volunteers needed to coordinate evacuation and reception was still a vital challenge to CD because the lack of an immediate war emergency made nuclear drills an unattractive occupation of Canadians' free time. Evacuation exercises and headlines about hydrogen weapons did, however, prompt a brief resurgence of interest in civil defence. For the first time, CD exercises involved not just a handful of volunteers but tens of thousands of citizens who were asked to "flee" their city. "Operation Lifesaver," an enormous public exercise that dispersed a quarter of Calgary's population to the safety of the countryside, was Canada's largest test case for evacuation. The exercise was meant to determine how to conduct an efficient, lawful, and safe evacuation of a city. Its organizers also sought to expand the reach of civil defence from target cities to the rural countryside.

Calgary's civil defence authorities hoped that the exercise would instil in residents a sense of their duty as citizens to support civil defence. CD officials could not, however, prevent the "Lifesaver" exercise and others like it from taking on the atmosphere of a civic festival. The public, unable or unwilling to grasp the predicted devastation that nuclear war would bring to their cities, transformed the event into an adventure for the whole family. The resurgence of CD interest in Calgary and elsewhere receded once the festival of evacuation and return ended. As a case study for evacuations, "Lifesaver" made clear that evacuation created as many problems as it was meant to solve. Not least among these were the silences in the exercise's script, especially about the willingness of rural populations to share homes and food with refugees. The predicted effects of radioactive fallout, a more lethal threat, went entirely ignored. As the Canadian government belatedly came to grips with fallout by 1956, it became increasingly evident

that the newly minted evacuation strategy was impractical, and not nearly enough to ensure the survival of the country.

The H-Bomb and CD

The first hydrogen fusion bomb was detonated on the Eniwetok Atoll in the Pacific Proving Grounds in 1952. The results of “Operation Ivy” were not made public until March 1954, when the United States Atomic Energy Commission revealed their selection of films and photographs taken during the test. Photographs showed that the Eniwetok explosion completely destroyed the atoll, and smashed a crater 175 feet deep into the ocean floor. News of Operation Ivy emerged shortly after the United States publicized its second, much larger “Bravo” hydrogen bomb test on Bikini Atoll, where its 15 megaton (the equivalent of 15 million tons of TNT) blast surprised and alarmed even those atomic scientists observing the blast. A 100-mile diameter mushroom cloud spread over ground zero, scattering pulverized and irradiated coral and sand over the ocean. Eighty-two miles downwind of the explosion, the entire crew of the Japanese fishing boat *The Lucky Dragon* fell ill from radiation sickness as the dust settled on their exposed skin. Their illnesses and deaths revealed the lethality of “fallout,” a hitherto underestimated radioactive by-product of nuclear blasts. In the first week of April 1954, alarming footage and photographs from the test were carried in newspapers around the world.⁴

News of the bomb’s effects, coming so soon after Western intelligence agencies determined that the Soviet Union had successfully detonated a hydrogen bomb of its own in August 1953, shocked the Canadian public. Everywhere in the press, Canadians were presented with aerial photographs of the undersea crater created by the “Ivy” explosion in

⁴ “Moscow Wants H-Bomb Ban; Pearson Warns of Red Trap,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 2 April 1954.

1952.⁵ Pearson's warning against the unrestricted pursuit of bigger and better bombs appeared beside images of total destruction, and gave voice to concerns that the lure of technological advancement had overwhelmed good sense and international stability. An editorial cartoon published in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, captured the anxious atmosphere. The cartoon placed technology in the driver's seat; a robust, arrogant, anthropomorphized hydrogen bomb towered above the clouds, with a riding crop in one hand and the reins of "civilization" in the other.⁶ A similar cartoon in *La Presse* depicted a boy holding a clutch of balloons labelled "Bombe H"; he cried out, "Misère j'ai oublié de prendre un billet de retour!" as humanity's sinister discovery pulled him higher from the safety of the ground.⁷

Canadians expressed anxiety about the hydrogen bomb, but this did not translate into popular protest against the bomb or demands for new civil defence measures. There was less political fallout from the news in Canada than in the United Kingdom, where Prime Minister Winston Churchill faced demands for his resignation from opposition benches. The British Labour Party threatened to pass a motion demanding an immediate meeting between the U.S., the U.K., and the Soviet Union to put an end to hydrogen bomb tests.⁸

In the United Kingdom, paradoxically, civil defence was an early casualty of the national debate over fallout from nuclear weapons and the British domestic disarmament movement. Coventry, a city damaged by aerial bombardment during the Second World War, was also the first to discard civil defence in April 1954. City councillors,

⁵ "Pearson Voices Anxiety," *Ottawa Citizen*, 1 April 1954.

⁶ "In the Driver's Seat!" *Halifax-Chronicle Herald*, 5 April 1954.

⁷ "Misère j'ai oublié de prendre un billet de retour!" *La Presse*, 4 April 1954

⁸ "Papers Hit Churchill for H-Bomb Debate"; "New Labour, Churchill Row Looms," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 6 April 1954.

interchangeably identified in the British and Canadian press as Labour or Socialist supporters, disbanded the CD organization to “strengthen the hands of international statesmen in their efforts to ban the hydrogen bomb.”⁹ British and most Canadian newspapers roundly condemned Coventry’s decision as naïve or defeatist.¹⁰ *The Windsor Star*’s columnist Betty Burton defended Coventry’s decision, remarking on the cynicism and apathy that marked Canadian youth’s attitude about the bomb. She believed that the hydrogen bomb had already undermined young Canadians’ willingness to carry on the Cold War, observing: “The H-Bomb doesn’t need to be dropped to destroy us. Our attitude toward it can do that just as well. Rather more slowly it is true, but with far more pain and ignominy.”¹¹ Distress about the hydrogen bomb translated into public pessimism about the likelihood of surviving the next war.

News of the hydrogen bomb’s terrible power hit civil defence particularly hard because it was coupled with the precipitous decline of public interest in the CD organization since the end of the Korean War emergency. Civil defence planners were left struggling to find a role relevant to Canadians in peacetime, especially once they were aware of the scale of destruction and fatalities that would occur if hydrogen bombs were used. In British Columbia’s *Civil Defence Circular* in early 1954, volunteers in Victoria lamented CD’s apparent decline in the province.¹² The *Victoria Daily Times* editorial board, which supported the local civil defence organization, also noted this trend: “Many a citizen who would willingly man a gun in war time has no intention of spending in peacetime even one night a week or a month under a tin helmet, equipping

⁹“Cities and the Bomb,” *The Economist*, 5 June 1954.

¹⁰ “City CD Official Hits Coventry ‘Defeatism,’” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 5 April 1954.

¹¹ Betty Burton, “Coventry Civil Defence Stand Disturbs People of England,” *The Windsor Star*, 30 April 1954.

¹² *Civil Defence Circular*, found in file, LAC RG 29 Vol 708 File 110-9-1 pt 3.

himself for possible emergency.”¹³ Retention proved as great a problem as recruitment.

As a sense of futility prevented CD organizations from obtaining new recruits, disinterest claimed valuable trained CD volunteers, who slowly bled away across the country.

Federal training officers attempted to address the problem by changing the format of civil defence training courses to include entertainment to sustain trainees’ interest.¹⁴

Loss of interest and municipal politics led to the abandonment of civil defence in Victoria and Montreal, two key Canadian target cities. Victoria’s civil defence organization did not long outlive the end of hostilities in Korea. In October 1954, Victoria’s newly elected city council abolished the city’s CD program. Councillors blamed the federal government for lack of financial support to maintain the organization in peacetime. Despite a plea from British Columbia’s provincial CD authorities to preserve the voluntary organization, most of the city’s nearly 4,000 remaining CD volunteers quit, leaving only a few dedicated hangers-on.¹⁵ The situation repeated itself in Montreal. In late 1954, newly-elected mayor Jean Drapeau and 28 of his colleagues from the Civic Action League, a municipal political party, promised voters to stop wasting municipal money. Metropolitan Montreal’s civil defence organization was an easy target. The city council abolished it as a waste of the city’s time and money, and promptly converted the municipality’s fleet of civil defence transport vehicles into

¹³ “Sacrifice Part to Save All,” *Victoria Daily Times*, 18 March 1954.

¹⁴ Training and Operational Circular 1/54, 6 January 1954, LAC RG 20 Vol 964 File 7-1200-2. One of the volunteers in Victoria’s CD organization vented his or her frustration (male and female membership in CD being roughly equal) in the circular through a poem entitled *Epitaph....195?*: “Here lies the body of Tardy Tom/Who got in the way of an Atom Bomb/He might have survived through Common Sense/And taken a course in Civil Defence.” Over a year later, a similar poem appeared in British Columbia’s circular: “Here in peace lies Gloria Trent/Twenty-four hours on pleasure bent/Running around helter-skelter/Might have survived in an air raid shelter.”

¹⁵ Worthington to Davidson, 8 October 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 708 File 110-9-1 pt 3.

garbage trucks. To the federal civil defence organization, Victoria's defection was unfortunate, but Montreal's was intolerable.

Meeting with the Montreal City Council in early 1955, Worthington castigated its members for putting lives at risk. He argued that the federal government could not help the city on its own. CD's principles of self-defence demanded a necessary sacrifice and investment by the city and its residents. To provide a historical example, Worthington claimed that "the early settlers of Montreal itself would have been massacred by the Indians had the citizens themselves not been prepared to defend themselves."¹⁶ The coordinator threatened that the Soviets were at the gate, armed with thermonuclear weapons, and hinted to councillors that many of the congratulatory letters they had received for disbanding the wasteful CD corps were written by domestic Communists.¹⁷ The councillors were unmoved. Civil defence trucks continued to haul garbage in Montreal.

The federal government pursued its feud with Montreal by working directly with Verdun, Lachine, St. Lambert, and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG) to keep alive their local civil defence organizations and to create pressure on Drapeau. Notre-Dame-de-Grâce had the most active municipal civil defence organization of the four. In October 1955, five former CD volunteers upset with the city council's decision banded together and agitated for its reinstatement. The group was spearheaded by Henry Calleja, a former CD volunteer who had lived through the siege of Malta during the Second World War and was the former Chief Rescue Officer in Montreal's defunct CD organization. Three of the other founder members were among the first CD volunteers in Montreal in 1951, and

¹⁶ Worthington to Davidson, 7 February 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 698 File 110-4-1 pt 2.

¹⁷ In his note to Davidson, Worthington argued that this assertion gave the City Council some pause. Ibid.

were later trained as instructors. The last, Irene MacLatchie, was active in Air Raid Precautions during the Second World War, and had eagerly joined CD in Montreal in 1951. These former volunteers obtained recognition from NDG's Community Council and later the federal government, securing a meeting with health minister Paul Martin and, through Worthington, a substantial store of supplies and information aids. In 1956 they launched "Operation Survival" in cooperation with St. Lambert and Verdun, a petition circulated to assist with the reinstatement of civil defence in Montreal:

We are doing this not only because it is in our own and our fellow-citizens' absolute right to have Civil Defence in peacetime to meet all disaster, but also because it is our bounden duty to insist on that right. Furthermore, we are firmly convinced that the responsibility for ensuring that there be such protection in Montreal rests with Montrealers alone. ... This is not a political issue. It never has been. Survival is the God-given right of every citizen. ... Politics is the worst enemy that Civil Defence has ever had.¹⁸

Worthington was very keen to do business with this association and others because they espoused the very principles on which most civil defence publicity to that point was based: that self-defence was the responsibility of citizens in peacetime and in time of war.

The most prominent Canadian defections from civil defence were the result of the persistent fiscal and jurisdictional complaints that had dogged civil defence since its post-war revival. In Victoria and Montreal, municipal councillors justified their decision in public by deriding CD as a waste of money, and an outmoded method of defence in the thermonuclear age. Civil Defence Canada's efforts to persuade Canadians of their organization's relevance were premature, since they could not yet convincingly articulate a realistic defence against the hydrogen bomb. From 1954 to 1956, CDC turned to evacuation strategy as the answer, which placed previously unconsidered but highly

¹⁸ E.A. Livingstone, Chairman NDG Civil Defence Committee, to Worthington, 25 May 1956, LAC RG 29 Vol 698 File 110-4-1 pt 2.

pressing demands on the provinces and municipalities, especially in regions surrounding target cities.

Towards an Evacuation Policy

The Department of National Defence was the first government agency to reach the conclusion that Canada's civil defence policies required reorientation. The need became apparent in 1953, during revisions to the Defence of Canada Regulations (DOCR), which set the terms of the War Measures Act. These revisions expanded government involvement and control over the economy, civil liberties, and the armed forces during emergencies.¹⁹ Revisions were overdue, made necessary by the transfer of responsibility for civil defence to the Department of National Health and Welfare in 1951. Chief of General Staff Lieutenant-General Charles Foulkes wanted to ensure that his soldiers would be available for war in Europe and not preoccupied with digging out corpses on the home front. At the very least, he wished to avoid giving CD authorities (and more importantly, the public) any false impression that the Army would be prepared to step into the breach after a nuclear blast.²⁰

During discussions at the Chiefs of Staff Committee, Foulkes maintained that the usefulness of the "self-help" concept of civil defence, the model that had served London so well during the Blitz, had expired.²¹ Canadian intelligence estimates about Soviet capabilities suggested that the Canadian Army might be forced in any case to step in to help the country survive. The Joint Planning Committee supported these predictions. The

¹⁹ Most of the necessary revisions pertained to Part 3 of the DOCR, regulating Public Safety and Order. Judge Advocate General to Chiefs of Staff Committee, 29 December 1952, LAC RG 25 Vol 5943 File 50217-40 pt 3.1.

²⁰ 537th Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 26 March 1953, Ibid.

²¹ 548th Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 9 November 1953, LAC RG 25 Vol 5943 File 50217-40 pt 3.2.

Soviets' newfound thermonuclear capability and long-range bomber fleet, once clear of North America's air defences, would in all likelihood annihilate the civil defence organizations that planners had worked so hard to establish along with the target cities they were meant to defend. The Canadian armed forces would be the only standing force capable of salvaging life and property.²²

On 15 January 1954, the Chiefs of Staff directed the Joint Intelligence Committee to inform the civil defence authorities about the scale of the Soviet threat, and urge them to make changes accordingly.²³ The armed forces' leadership spent much of the next year devising a policy that would meet Canada's two general war aims. These were to prevent the destruction or serious disruption of North America's industrial potential and to assist in preventing Soviet forces from overrunning Western Europe. Neither aim could be met if the other was neglected. The updated policy, finalized nearly a year later, made modest concessions towards increasing the Canadian Army's presence in CD. More officers would attend civil defence training courses, and municipalities near Canadian bases could expect advice from military liaison officers, offered mainly to ensure that local civil defence plans did not hinder mobilization.²⁴ Air Marshal A.C. Slemon later admitted during a meeting with Worthington, and with G.D.W. Cameron and George Davidson, Deputy Ministers of National Health and Welfare respectively, that, if the entire strength of the Canadian armed services were given over to CD, "even these resources would seem insignificant in the light of the magnitude of the problem."²⁵ The verdict from the

²² Assistance of the Armed Forces in Civil Defence, CSC 5-11-11, Ibid.

²³ Chiefs of Staff Committee Meeting, 15 January 1954, Ibid.

²⁴ Assistance of the Armed Forces in Civil Defence, 11 March 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 654 File C-102-3-2B.

²⁵ 559th Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 12 March 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 654 File S-102-3-2A.

armed services was clear: Canadian cities and towns could not expect much useful assistance from their armed forces in a thermonuclear war.

The federal government announced its findings in March 1954 at the fourth Federal-Provincial Conference on civil defence. That the conference was held at all indicated the gravity of the situation. Paul Martin, tagged by a journalist as the “part-time minister for civil defence,” did not share Worthington’s enthusiasm for civil defence, and had even less enthusiasm for dealing with provincial grievances. Martin had managed to delay the federal-provincial meeting for two years, but Davidson insisted that the matter could no longer be delayed because the country urgently required better preparations to survive an attack with thermonuclear weapons.²⁶ The conference took place at the new Canadian Civil Defence College (CCDC) in Arnprior, Ontario, on the site of a wartime British Commonwealth Air Training Plan station.²⁷

Though much of what was discussed at the conference dealt with financial responsibility for civil defence, half the items on the agenda examined new developments in nuclear weapons technology and their implications for civil defence. The military appreciation of the international situation was a classified lecture based on the latest intelligence about Soviet capabilities, presented to a smaller group of delegates, most of whom were federal public servants. The film *Operation Ivy* was also screened at the conference, to display the destructive power of the megaton blast in November 1952.²⁸

At the conference, the federal government laid out its initial proposals to alter civil defence strategy and basic assumptions. The federal civil defence office amended

²⁶ Davidson to Martin, 8 February 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 722 File 112-F1 pt 2.

²⁷ The college consisted of 30 buildings converted for training purposes and rescue simulations at a cost of \$250,000. 2,000 trainees visited the college in the first year from provincial and municipal civil defence agencies, the armed forces, and police and fire services. Worthington to Davidson, 8 February 1954, Ibid.

²⁸ Worthington to Cawdron, 16 March 1954, Ibid.

the Financial Assistance Program (FAP) to enable direct federal-municipal cooperation on projects where the province refused to cooperate. The changes to FAP represented the first step in a line of retreats by the federal government on its basic “self-help” civil defence policy that asked municipalities and individuals to defend themselves in a nuclear war. By 1954, Ontario, Newfoundland, and Quebec still refused to provide matching funds to municipalities with civil defence programs, begging local agencies. The federal government’s concession was meant to bypass provincial obstruction to help these organizations fend off failure. In light of the changing threat, the federal government had little alternative but to commit more resources to help the cities survive war.

Paul Martin addressed the conference with a detailed and frank speech about the threat to Canadians and the need for more concerted efforts to develop a civilian defence program that would defeat or mitigate the destructive power of the atom bomb. The minister listed off some of Canada’s accomplishments in the CD field: over 160,000 registered volunteers, over 3,000 trained in federal civil defence courses, 24 target areas established and identified, over two million dollars worth of materiel and supplies delivered to the provinces, 400 or more air raid sirens installed in Canadian cities, fire hose coupling standardization under way in three provinces, and over nine million dollars invested in stockpiling medical supplies. Canadians, he warned, had much left to accomplish:

Despite what we have done... I doubt if we could honestly say that many of our Canadian target cities are even yet fully capable of coping in organized fashion with the dropping of an A-bomb of the 20 KT [kiloton] variety. But the 20 KT atom bomb that opened up in 1945 this awful new atomic world to us ... this bomb of 1945 is just a pop-gun in the 1954 arsenal of lethal man-destroying weapons. ... No government at any level can stand aside and say that it takes no

responsibility of its own people – and that, and nothing less than that, is what is now at stake.... All the provinces ... and all our major cities must take their fair share of this responsibility... if we are not to fail in our elementary duty to the people whom we jointly represent.²⁹

Journalists observing the CCDC opening commented favourably about Martin's apparently decisive approach to changing civil defence, and predicted sweeping changes to his organization in the weeks ahead.³⁰ Change would be much slower than anticipated, however, and Martin's speech did not translate into immediate action.³¹

The Minister was less concerned about the hydrogen bomb threat than by impending questions from the opposition benches about what civil defence was going to do about it.³² After the conference had ended, Martin acted to improve his own organization's response to questions about the hydrogen bomb. At the departmental CD meeting of 28 April 1954, he asserted that the information that had reached his desk about how civil defence was to respond to an H-bomb attack was inadequate. The newest addition to the staff, Major-General Matthew Penhale, who had left his Winnipeg civil defence organization to accept an appointment as Commandant of the CCDC, suggested an ad hoc committee to provide more definitive commentary on the necessary changes. Martin agreed and immediately appointed him to direct the committee with Davidson's

²⁹ Notes for Monday, 29 March 1954, Ibid. Contained in his speech was a fairly obvious broadside at the provinces of Quebec, Ontario, and Newfoundland, which had all refused to pay into the Financial Assistance Program.

³⁰ Arthur Blakely, "Obsolete," *Montreal Gazette*, 31 March 1954.

³¹ The editorial cartoon in *The Globe and Mail* following the conference depicted a jittery Canadian shaking in his armchair by the radio, surrounded by headlines (*H-Bomb Fired, Island Vanishes*). The radio announcement: "Flash! The last explosion is reported to have moved the Hon. Paul Martin to remark on civil defense..." is greeted with a desperate "Oh! No!" poking fun at both atomic anxiety in general and Martin's reclusive profile on the subject of civil defence in particular. *The Globe and Mail*, 5 April 1954.

³² CD Meeting, 28 April 1954; First meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Effects of the Hydrogen Bomb in CD Planning, 12 May 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 711 File 112-1-5. Martin's cavalier approach to the matter can be discerned from his reaction to recommendations from the CD planner working on the medical stockpiling program, which had been designed to accommodate atomic bomb casualties. Martin immediately dismissed the request for larger stockpiles and an accelerated program because he did not think that it would not be needed.

assistance. The Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Effects of the Hydrogen Bomb in Civil Defence Planning also included Dr. E.E. Massey, the DRB's scientific advisor to CD, and Worthington's most capable staff. Their role was to provide tentative answers about the effects on the average Canadian community if an H-Bomb were dropped, and whether any changes could be effected in the next six months that could mitigate the damage. Specifically, Martin wanted to know, "should we adopt an all-out policy of telling the people everything, or should we soft-pedal the effects to avoid panic?"³³ The committee ultimately decided to disclose all the available information about H-bomb effects to the public, even if it provoked alarm.

The committee considered whether an evacuation policy could work for Canadian cities. In civil defence parlance, evacuation encompassed a number of different stages. When Canadian civil defence planners used the term evacuation, this referred to the first stage in a two-phase withdrawal from cities. The first phase, "pre-attack evacuation," entailed the planned movement of vulnerable members of the population from target areas, which was meant to occur after the government announced a state of emergency. In ideal conditions, this referred to an extended period of international crisis that the government believed might lead to nuclear war, meriting the withdrawal of the elderly, disabled, and some groups of women and children from target cities to surrounding reception and mutual aid areas.

"Tactical Withdrawal," the second phase, meant the movement of mass populations from target areas after the receipt of warning of an impending attack. According to mental health specialists asked to advise the government about the psychogenic effects of an atomic or thermonuclear attack on mass populations,

³³ Davidson to Penhale, 3 May 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 711 File 112-1-5.

information and familiarity were vital to the evacuation process. Familiarity, experts agreed, bred acceptance and defeated panic. By this logic, cities and citizens were considered in the same terms as soldiers learning a routine drill: in an emergency, training would suppress the human instincts for flight or panic. Persuading the population to accept either phase of the evacuation process meant a great deal more than learning rally points and proper traffic procedure. Experts did not believe that everyone would or could be evacuated. For volunteers and able-bodied men and women, it meant the strain of sending children and loved ones away for possibly long periods of separation. The CD's Advisory Committee of Social Scientists believed that those left behind after pre-attack evacuation would be at the greatest risk:

The stress of the tactical withdrawal situation will probably be so great that no amount of planning will be adequate to the task of control unless extensive efforts go into the education of the populace in developing the secondary motive of self-sacrifice. Death is the inevitable lot of man in any case and it can be – and often has been – faced without panic by those who were willing to die for a purpose greater than themselves. In the past, this has been for the glory of the courageous few; in the future it must become the accepted value of the majority. Such a populace will still desire self-preservation, but will in addition, still desire the preservation of their dependents and of their values still more.³⁴

This is what the principle of responsible citizenship meant in the age of thermonuclear weapons. American, Canadian, and British civil defence planners during the early Cold War reasoned that one of their agencies' main contributions to the preparation of the public for a future war was through education, with the aim of controlling panic and fear. In 1949, Worthington had met psychiatrists from the Allan Memorial Institute at McGill University on the advice of the DRB to discuss means of increasing the "resistance" of the civilian population to panic. Dr. James Tyhurst

³⁴ Appendix B, First Meeting of the Civil Defence Advisory Committee of Social Scientists, 8-9 November 1954, DHist 112.3S4 (D29) v. 7.

launched a study to examine the response of different racial and social groups reacted to danger, and how to select leaders from a community preparing for disaster.³⁵ The project lapsed for several years before it resumed in 1954, but the question of panic control and conditioning the public remained a subject of study for the civil defence organization.³⁶

In preparation for a change to an evacuation policy, Martin brought his department's recommendations forward to the Cabinet for approval in November 1954. The recommendations meant more responsibility for the federal government in civil defence matters, 200 additional staff for civil defence and the armed forces, and a \$10 million annual increase in civil defence expenditures over two years. This was a departure from previous CD policy, which depended on heavy provincial and municipal investment and a light federal presence. The federal government assumed complete responsibility for linking together communication systems between municipal CD organizations and the RCAF's Air Defence Control Centres that provided attack warning to the civilian authority. Before 1954, the provinces and the federal government shared costs and jointly manned these systems with the provinces. The Cabinet approved additional resources for the RCAF to take over all the key staffing positions to ensure uniformity and reliability of the transmission of warnings to provide as much advance notice as possible to cities.

Advance warning was necessary because the Ad Hoc Committee agreed to implement an evacuation policy for major target areas. Cities would require as much time as possible to move people and vital equipment out of blast range. By early 1954 few cities had developed training courses or significant plans for evacuation. Martin endorsed

³⁵ Meeting with Dr. Line and Dr. Morton, 18 March 1949, LAC RG 29 Vol 87 File 108-1-8.

³⁶ Unsigned letter to Dr. Aldwyn Stokes, April 1954, Ibid.

the committee's recommendation of a two-year tour of Canadian target cities by federal officials in order to stimulate local planning and rehearsal for evacuation. Martin also requested authority to begin stockpiling equipment needed to billet and house millions of displaced people, and funds to accelerate the medical stockpiling program.³⁷ Though the thrust of civil defence policy required change, Martin argued against abandoning modest gains in federal training of warden, police, and fire staff at the CCDC, because trained volunteers could still save the lives of Canadians caught in areas not completely incinerated by the bomb. The committee also believed that disbanding the courses would reduce the appeal of civil defence organizations that focused on disaster training, a peace-time application for civil defence that many municipalities adopted to survive local austerity measures.³⁸

The Cabinet Defence Committee, meeting in December 1954, did not adopt a policy of evacuation to replace the existing civil defence order, but instead authorized an extensive study of the issue by further ad-hoc committees and sub-committees, some administered by Civil Defence, others by the Canadian Army. The government had neither the resources nor the political will to implement all of the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendations. Fire-fighting and rescue operations in a destroyed city would be difficult, but creating a nation-wide capability to accommodate entire cities of refugees was a problem of enormous magnitude and cost. Evacuation of Canada's major urban centres, even for a short time or a false alarm, would create conditions ripe for mass panic

³⁷ Many of these medical equipment stockpiles, including 165 crated 200 bed hospitals in strategic locations, remain in place today. Renamed the National Emergency Stockpile System, most of the equipment is still of Korean War vintage. Report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *Emergency Preparedness in Canada* Volume 1, Second Session, 39th Parliament. 32. Accessed 22 November 2008, <http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/defe-e/rep-e/rep13aug08vol1-e.pdf>.

³⁸ Memorandum to Cabinet -- Civil Defence in Canada, 1 November 1954, LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12 Vol 24 File 5.

and significant economic disruption and dislocation. The unilateral adoption of an evacuation policy at federal level would, in turn, have an effect on municipal costs and claims for compensation for road and transport improvements, costs previously dismissed as unrelated to CD preparations under the terms of the financial assistance program.³⁹ The Cabinet Defence Committee delayed a decision on the matter as a result of these considerations.

The federal government did, however, act on a draft plan, "Evacuation of Selected Cities," which identified several major target areas that should be evacuated based on principles for the dispersion of Canadian cities agreed upon by the Chiefs of Staff Committee in late 1954. The federal document articulated the reasons why evacuation could work as a policy, but did not develop a formula for a successful evacuation. Civil Defence Canada did not yet know the best methods or planning processes that would help cities prepare for evacuation because the large-scale movement of the population was a new and untested CD strategy.⁴⁰ Worthington created a "Federal Planning Team" that worked mainly in Ottawa to collect information about basic planning and procedures. The federal office contributed advice, information bulletins about evacuation, and offered, in cooperation with their provincial CD counterparts, limited financial assistance for municipal evacuation studies and exercises.⁴¹

³⁹ In 1951, Montreal's organization nearly foundered on the suggestion that \$15 million would be required to build new roads out of the city for dispersal in the event of attack.

⁴⁰ Worthington to Stein, 12 August 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 708 File 110-9-1 pt 4.

⁴¹ The federal policy was not, however, particularly well-advertised. Major-General C.R.S. Stein, provincial co-ordinator for British Columbia, for instance, had never seen the "Evacuation of Selected Cities" plan, though two cities in his province (Vancouver and Victoria) were implicated. Stein also objected to the principle that municipalities would have to complete the "donkey-work" of planning an evacuation by themselves, when the latest Army paper "Assistance of the Armed Forces in Civil Defence" tasked the armed forces with providing support to civil planning. Worthington later replied that the armed forces' obligations to the civil authority in this case extended only to the federal civil defence office. Stein to Worthington, 16 August 1955. Ibid.

Other countries were also engaged in the study of evacuation strategies for their urban centres. Canadian planners benefitted from ongoing bilateral and multilateral discussions with the United States and NATO. Most of Canada's information about the effects of the hydrogen bomb originated from the United States' Federal Civil Defense Administration, the Atomic Energy Commission, and through bi-annual meetings of the Canada-United States Civil Defence Committee, which was comprised of bilateral working groups which examined food distribution, standardization of firefighting equipment, joint billeting and assistance of refugees across the border, and other issues. Evacuation was also under great scrutiny by the North Atlantic Council's Civil Defence Committee in Paris, where individual NATO nations were struggling to standardize policy.⁴² Lord Ismay, the Secretary-General of NATO, sought to coordinate and promote a common civil defence policy throughout NATO. He believed that failure to do so could undermine the will of Western Europe to stand fast against a Communist invasion: "the people of Western Europe have the bitter experience of the last war in their minds and ... are inclined to think that nothing – not even life under a communist dictatorship – could be worse than another experience of an aerial bombardment."⁴³

⁴² The NATO Civil Defence Committee was an outgrowth of the "Working Group on Civil Organization in Time of War," which was convened in the summer of 1952 to examine the effect of war on Western society overall, from the problem of refugees and billeting to questions of sabotage and security. This group's focus was too broad, and so the North Atlantic Council created the Committee with a smaller mandate, to act as a forum for the exchange of ideas about the technical and administrative aspects of CD with a goal of determining "common lines of action." For his part, Paul Martin was not particularly interested in spending taxpayer dollars to send a Canadian CD representative to join in the discussions, believing that ADP Heeney and his staff in Paris could handle the important discussions. LAC RG 25 Vol. 4876 File 50108-B-40 pt 1.

⁴³ Memorandum for the Under-Secretary from M.H. Wershof, 13 March 1953, *Ibid.*

Sovereignty and financing made agreement on a standard response throughout NATO difficult, and the attempt was ultimately abandoned.⁴⁴ Most delegates to the North Atlantic Council recognized that the bomb represented a shift in destructive power, but American secrecy delayed work to determine a common solution.⁴⁵ Further, most European NATO allies did not feel as threatened by the hydrogen bomb as North American representatives on the committee. Europeans, to judge from their representatives at the NATO meetings, believed that their cities would not have to evacuate because they expected the Soviets would use tactical nuclear weapons in Western Europe to avoid irreparable damage to industrial potential. Most NATO countries gave at best tepid support to an evacuation strategy that was largely untested. At the end of 1954, in accordance with the Cabinet Defence Committee's tentative support for evacuation, the Canadian delegate informed the NATO Committee that Canada would hold a series of test evacuations of Canadian primary and secondary target areas, the largest in Calgary in 1955.⁴⁶

Operation Lifesaver

The first Canadian evacuations took place in the fall and winter of 1954 from St. John's, Newfoundland, and Brockville, Ontario. The primary aim of the exercises in Ontario and Newfoundland was to test whether the large-scale movement of the populace was possible on short notice. In Brockville, over 15,000 residents evacuated the city by car, bus, and truck without any road accidents or traffic jams. The exercise tested the

⁴⁴ Denmark, Greece and France, for instance, adopted the position that the financial burdens imposed by civil preparations in addition to military expenditures should be resolved by "common financing", in other words, substantial US subsidies. This position found little sympathy with the United States, United Kingdom and Canadian delegates. J.M. Cook to Benjamin Rogers, 30 October 1953, Ibid.

⁴⁵ Report on CDC Meeting, 4-5 May 1954, Ibid. As the Canadian delegate on the NATO committee commented, "very little appeared to be known of this weapon by any country but the United States and it is quite obvious that they alone have the secrets".

⁴⁶ Preliminary Report on Operation Lifesaver, LAC RG 29 Vol 106 File 180-8-25.

ability of auxiliary civil defence police and existing emergency services to direct the flow of traffic, preventing congestions that would endanger the city's survival.⁴⁷ A secondary, but no less important goal of these evacuations was to inform average Canadians about what they could expect in an emergency, to tell them where to go, what to bring, and most importantly, how to behave.⁴⁸ An orderly evacuation would save lives. A panicked evacuation could create traffic jams, dooming evacuees.

The evacuation exercises were different than most CD tests. Most exercises were conducted in plotting rooms by civil defence officials, who tested plans on maps and paper to refine existing procedures and new concepts. Often, these exercises were meant to coordinate responses between federal and provincial governments, between Canada and the United States, or, more rarely, between NATO countries. Exercises involving the public's participation, such as mass evacuations, were the least common but not surprisingly attracted far more attention. This type of civil defence activity should be understood as part demonstration and part spectacle. Municipalities developed mock air raid drills, evacuations, and mass care or feeding exercises to show the public the right way to do something in peacetime so that they would know how to behave properly in a war.⁴⁹ The exercises were also part public spectacle and, as theatre historian Tracy Davis has argued, a "rehearsal" or "performance" designed to draw the unimaginable closer to

⁴⁷ Worthington to Martin, 24 October 1954, LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12 Vol 24 File 13.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Civil Defence Canada kept a close eye on the public's reaction to false alarms, for instance, to measure the effect of fear on Canada's preparedness. On the night of 21 May 1954, a fire in Winnipeg helped illustrate the point of public exercises. The fire set off an accidental sounding of Winnipeg's air raid sirens. Thousands of residents immediately rushed to the phones, clogging telephone switchboards and police and fire dispatchers. The authors of Winnipeg's Metropolitan Civil Defence Board Bulletin classified the public response as "very close to panic," and bemoaned the short memory of residents who had been told repeatedly not to use the telephone in the event of an air raid: "Yes, a lot of people lost some sleep... a lot of people got a scare – that was unfortunate. Now most of them had forgotten it – THAT IS TRAGIC." See *Winnipeg Metropolitan Civil Defence Board Bulletin 15* (May-June 1954) Found in LAC Martin Fonds, MG 32 B12 Vol 26 File 1. See also Exercises – General, 26 July 1956, LAC RG 29 Vol 659 File 106-2-1 pt 1.

reality.⁵⁰ CD planners counted on realism to attract crowds of onlookers with the wider aim of creating greater public support for the organization.

On 11 February 1955, representatives from the federal government and the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia issued statements that Calgary and Greater Vancouver had been chosen to host the first large scale "Planned Withdrawal" studies. These included plans for an exercise to evacuate 48,000 to 50,000 citizens from Calgary to determine solutions to various problems associated with the tactical withdrawal of a large area. Calgary's civil defence planners divided the city into four sectors. Sector B, north of the Bow River and east of 4th Street N.W., was chosen to host the evacuation study because of its blend of commercial, residential, and industrial neighbourhoods, and the less publicly acknowledged fact that evacuation from the less congested north of the city would be easier to carry off.⁵¹ The second exercise was planned for Vancouver to simulate the total evacuation of an area on short notice.⁵² The Canadian exercises followed on the heels of announced plans of similar mass evacuation exercises in the United States in the winter of 1955, the largest planned for schoolchildren in the city of Mobile, Alabama.⁵³

The tactical withdrawal studies announced in February 1955 were meant to carry out an evacuation under near ideal conditions, in the provinces that the federal government considered the most prepared for atomic attack. They were not the first evacuation exercises held on Canadian soil, but they were certainly the most ambitious,

⁵⁰ Tracy Davis, *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), p. 5.

⁵¹ Harvey Adams to Paul Martin, 30 June 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 106 File 180-8-25.

⁵² Press Release No 1955-5 "Alberta and B.C. Cities Plan CD Withdrawal Studies," 11 February 1955, LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12 Vol 26 File 3.

⁵³ Worthington to Gerhart, 28 December 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 706 File 110-8-1 pt 3.

requiring integrated, extensive planning and coordination between all three levels of government, thousands of volunteers in different cities, and above all else, the cooperation and assistance of nearly a quarter of the population of a major Canadian city.

Calgary was selected for the first major evacuation exercise because of the size of its organization and its high proportion of trained civil defence workers. Several Albertan municipalities had carried out exercises in previous years, most of which were positively received by the press, but this evacuation exercise was much more complicated than mock air raids held in small towns like Ponoka, Alberta.⁵⁴ The exercise plan was for the largest evacuation in North America to date, with different aims than those held in Brockville and St. John's. Calgary's evacuation would succeed or fail based on the preparedness of its block warden system to register and inform the public, and the willingness of individuals to participate. The exercise organizers also had the wider aim of testing the ability of adjoining municipalities to receive and support "refugees". Evacuees would not be asked to leave the city's limits and return immediately, as had been the case in Brockville, but would travel in multiple convoys to mutual aid and reception areas in the surrounding countryside. Drumheller, nearly 140 kilometers away, was the planned destination for a significant number of the evacuees. As such, Calgary's exercise was also Drumheller's, where civil defence workers would have to register and care for thousands of citizens. Similar tests would accompany Calgarians as they arrived

⁵⁴ In August 1954, for instance, the town and county of Ponoka celebrated its 50th anniversary with a county-wide civil defence exercise. In Ponoka itself, over 4,000 people gathered to watch rescue, fire-fighting, welfare and first-aid demonstrations. The "attack", aided by over 20 planes from RCAF Penhold, was not atomic. The planes buzzed the town as CD workers on the ground set off flash-bangs and smoke bombs. CD workers fed "casualties" and other attendees a meal of sandwiches, doughnuts and coffee. CD Progress Report 40, 22 August 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 706 File 110-8-1 pt 3.

in sixteen other cities and towns.⁵⁵ In May 1955, Calgary CD's planning committee officially named the evacuation "Operation Lifesaver" to emphasize the exercise's ultimate goal.⁵⁶

Calgary's CD organization prepared for the exercise almost completely without assistance from the federal government, relying on its own voluntary staff who travelled to the civil defence control centre (at a local golf club) in the evenings to plot how best to evacuate the city. The enormity of the job took G.O. Bell, the city's coordinator, by surprise. Even with a large number of enthusiastic and determined volunteers, the exercise occupied all of his time. In April, Calgary's post office delivered 10,941 preliminary notices, as CD wardens began a block-to-block canvass of homes. The notice was addressed to the male head of household. It explained the reason for the exercise, and asked that he follow all the directions of Civil Defence workers during the evacuation, warning that without it: "you and your children (and it could just as easily be you and yours as anyone else!) might be trampled to death in a frenzied mob, or killed by the bomb because your progress out of the city was impeded by impassable bottle necks."⁵⁷

The warden survey, which followed the mail-out, provides a sense of the scale of work involved in preparing the city to evacuate. Bell and others believed that a canvass of each household would take a short five-minute interview, but this estimate was dashed by experience. Each warden eventually canvassed over one hundred houses, explaining their jobs and the purpose of the exercise, and gathering information about how many lived in

⁵⁵ These were: Acme, Airdrie, Beiseker, Bowden, Carbon, Carstairs, Crossfield, Didsbury, Drumheller, Innisfail, Irricana, Olds, Penhold, Rockyford, Strathmore, Three Hills and Trouhu. Harvey Adams to G.R. Howsam, 28 September 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 106 File 180-8-25.

⁵⁶ G.O. Bell to Harvey Adams, 24 May 1955, *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ By participating in the exercise, and by internalizing the lessons of civil preparedness which informed its basic assumptions, a responsible father could save his family. City of Calgary. Preliminary Notice, April 1955, *Ibid.*

the household, where they worked, and whether they had their own transport for the evacuation or relied on a neighbour or public transit. On average, each interview took over half an hour to complete, but the face-to-face personal interaction between the public and the wardens might have helped to account for the high percentage of respondents who cooperated.⁵⁸ In the neighbourhoods canvassed by wardens, 92 per cent of households agreed to participate in the exercise. According to Bell, the remaining eight per cent said that they could not participate for reasons of illness or had other obligations, and not because they rejected the need for the exercise.

Calgary's City Council played a significant role in developing public awareness and support for the exercise. Only two city councillors had voted against the planned exercise, calling it a waste of money and time. According to a federal observer, they were "somewhat appalled" at the high percentage of Calgarians who agreed to participate. Calgary's Mayor Don MacKay, by contrast, publicly declared his full support for the exercises, stating "that he would prefer to hear that the evacuation was a success than to hear that Calgary had won the Grey Cup in 1955."⁵⁹ Municipal councillors gave Calgary's civil defence organization surprising discretion over the city's business for the exercise. It was planned for a half-day holiday on 21 September 1955, creating favourable conditions for businesses and industries to close down and send their employees to participate.⁶⁰ School boards in the area were also notified that they and their students were expected to participate in the exercise, and the children were taught to time how long it took to walk home from schools so that they had an understanding of how

⁵⁸ G.O. Bell to Mayor D.H. MacKay, 4 July 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 707 File 110-8-1.

⁵⁹ Harvey Adams to Paul Martin, 30 June 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 106 File 180-8-25.

⁶⁰ Employers agreed not to penalize union members who left the job to participate, and the union agreed not to apply for overtime or travel pay in return. Adams to Howsam, 28 September 1955, Ibid.

much time they had to evacuate.⁶¹ Calgary CD was given the right to refuse exemptions for offices and businesses that did not want to participate.⁶²

Calgary CD aggressively targeted volunteer community and charitable organizations likely to support CD's overall message of defence through community service. Planners visited voluntary groups throughout the city, offering lectures about CD and evacuation, and asking for the cooperation of their volunteers. In early May 1955, Calgary's exercise Planning Committee asked Calgary ministers to promote the evacuation exercise during their sermons. As Bell later explained to Harvey Adams: "We feel the churches can do an immense public relations job for us."⁶³ The appeal had some success. Reverend John Pottruff of the North Hill United Church attended a lecture about civil defence presented to the Calgary Optimist Club (a service organization established in Calgary before the war), and was so moved that he wrote and delivered a sermon to his congregation: "The September Evacuation – is it Vital?" that provided a "full-blooded support of Civil Defence generally and the Evacuation in particular."⁶⁴ The Dean of Calgary's Anglican Church promised the CD Planning Committee that he would promote the exercise in each of his monthly parochial letters leading up to September 1955.⁶⁵

Community organizations responded to Calgary CD's outreach with pledges to promote the exercise. The Canadian National Institute for the Blind's Calgary chapter was offered an exemption for the exercise, which was indignantly turned down by the group which was eager to participate.⁶⁶ The Planning Committee also astutely sought out

⁶¹ Progress Report No. 48, LAC RG 29 Vol 707 File 110-8-1 pt 4.

⁶² An office housing employees of the federal civil service requested a special pass and was flatly turned down. They later agreed to evacuate. Adams to Martin, Ibid.

⁶³ Bell to Adams, 5 May 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 106 File 180-8-25.

⁶⁴ Bell to Adams, 11 May 1955, Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Adams to Martin, 30 June 1955, Ibid.

support from the largest community event in Calgary, the Stampede. The Stampede's Parade committee offered a place to a CD contingent, while Provincial CD officials included civil defence films in Alberta CD's annual Stampede show. Calgary's Planning Committee chose to display the *Operation Ivy* film, edited so that a Canadian spokesman delivered the final commentary.⁶⁷

While planners in the Calgary civil defence office were working overtime, federal and provincial civil defence agencies agreed to split the estimated \$31,000 cost of the exercise evenly under the terms of the FAP. The provincial government was thoroughly engaged with exercise planning outside Calgary's city limits, working with rural municipalities to prepare them for their share of the "evacuees" and establishing a network of breakdown and recovery vehicles along the highways. The province contracted with the RCMP to ensure that all incoming traffic was stopped within 15 miles of the evacuation area. The province also requested the assistance of the Canadian armed forces to establish a communications centre at RCAF Station North Calgary to link with fixed radio stations in reception areas and with police radio bands.⁶⁸

Federal government involvement was limited. However, the Department of Health and Welfare's Information Services Division (ISD) did become heavily involved in underwriting publicity to help Calgary CD gain additional media coverage and support for the exercise. Harvey Adams, director of the ISD, offered his services to Bell in April 1955. Adams suggested that the exercise would benefit from a press office, which would provide journalists with greater access to CD headquarters during the exercise. Adams believed that allowing journalists to report from the site would result in accurate and

⁶⁷ G.O. Bell to Adams, 5 May 1955, Ibid.

⁶⁸ Adams to Howsam, 28 September 1955, Ibid.

favourable stories about the exercise.⁶⁹ In the early 1950s, the press office had rapidly become an indispensable media relations tool at Canadian CD exercises. The goal of including a press office adjacent to the operations room at the exercise was to permit information services to prepare an open forum for press investigation and enquiries, while simultaneously exercising control over the type and amount of information packaged for journalists at such events.⁷⁰ In short, it aimed to create uniformity of reporting in daily newspapers and radio broadcasts and to avoid the potential for embarrassment. The press office was used across government departments to coordinate major events, and reflected the federal government's increasingly sophisticated public relations for all of its programs, including CD.

As early as 1949, the Directorate of Public Information at the Department of National Defence advised Worthington to adopt the use of a press officer at civil defence events, in large part because of DND's own experience with natural disasters: "reporters who cover the disaster can never find anyone of authority to discuss and get information from and, in the final analysis, generally obtain their information from 'the village idiot.'"⁷¹ The policy was born of mistrust of the media, and assisted civil defence planners, many of whom were retired military officers incapable of crafting effective messages for consumption by the media and/or the public.

Adams, a former journalist, understood the imperatives of the newsroom and worked tirelessly to promote Operation Lifesaver. Calgary's civil defence office was happy to have the help. Bell was displeased with the coverage provided by the local

⁶⁹ Harvey Adams to Bell, 6 April 1955. Ibid.

⁷⁰ Information Services Division, *Public Information in Civil Defence*. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1957), pp. 26-28.

⁷¹ Worthington, Notes on Meeting with Dr. Tyhurst, 5 August 1949, LAC RG 29 Vol 87 File 108-1-8.

press. The press frustrated Calgary's civil defence controller because "they don't always publish just what I tell them – because they think they know best just how much the public wants to know."⁷² He also noted that the press, intentionally or not, had a tendency to misreport his intentions. Bell was the only person in the city who was aware of the precise time at which the exercise would begin. The *Calgary Herald* interpreted Bell's authority (and his rank of Lieutenant-Colonel) to mean that he intended to impose martial law for the duration of the exercise. The story eventually found its way to The Canadian Press and the British United Press before Bell demanded a retraction.⁷³

Federal assistance with print journalists was limited to advertising "Operation Lifesaver" to representatives of The Canadian Press, *Macleans*, *Saturday Night*, and other news outlets, noting the exercise's scale and the international attention it was expected to capture from U.S. and European observers.⁷⁴ Most federal assistance, however, was aimed at preparing material for Calgary Civil Defence to deliver over the radio. Calgary CD secured twelve ten-minute Sunday broadcasts on CXCL, one of the city's major radio broadcasters, from July to September 1955. Calgary's mayor agreed to introduce each civil defence broadcast to promote the exercise.⁷⁵ Recognizing the opportunity for extensive coverage that this arrangement presented, Adams offered to sponsor a series of six professionally-written radio plays for the city's use in public education. Bell

⁷² This was actually a common complaint among civil defence officials. Major-General F.F. Worthington, the Federal Civil Defence Coordinator, occasionally mused about inviting publishers to Ottawa to "set them straight" about CD's goals. Complaining to Jack Wallace, one of his most trusted staff members in Ottawa, about the press's attitude towards the federal-provincial disputes over CD, Worthington wrote, "I feel that the press could do a great deal if they would give this a fair break and keep the public informed of *the true situation* [emphasis mine]" See Worthington to Wallace, 20 March 1953, LAC RG 29 Vol 102 File 180-8-1. Bell to Adams, 15 April 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 106 File 180-8-25.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Adams to Gillis Purcell, 14 July 1955. Ibid.

⁷⁵ CXCL also absorbed costs from displaced advertisers to provide a running commentary on the exercise, with privileged access to the operations center and officials. Bell to Adams, 27 April 1955, Ibid.

enthusiastically accepted the offer, and arranged for CXCL radio hosts to perform the plays in the six weeks preceding the exercise.⁷⁶

The radio series, "Evacuation with the Davidsons," was first broadcast on 31 July 1955. Written on commission by a script-writer in Willowdale, Ontario, the radio series followed a fictional family from their first contact with Calgary civil defence wardens to their final preparations for taking part in the evacuation. The series covered both general topics such as the effects of the hydrogen bomb, the history of Canada's civil defence organization, the rationale for evacuation policy, and specific Lifesaver subjects, such as where to go, and what routes citizens in each sector was expected to follow. The final broadcast confronted the Davidsons with a comic figure: Calgary cowhand "Wishbone Wilson," who did not think much of CD and wanted no part of Operation Lifesaver. CXCL listeners were warned not to "miss the antics of this rugged individualist."⁷⁷ Before the episode was over, the Davidsons informed the "individualist" of the errors of his ways.

The radio broadcasts corresponded to the city's own publicity and public service warnings issued through mail and newspapers in the weeks before the exercise was carried out. In late July, Bell published and delivered evacuation instructions to households and press offices throughout the city. In the instructions, he reminded readers that individuals had a duty to support the evacuation, and that doing so would help prepare the country's defences. "Individualism," he warned, was a direct threat to the survival of the community: "These instructions (may not fit in exactly with your personal wishes).... [but] any attempt to disobey these instructions, and to substitute for them rules

⁷⁶ Adams to Bell, 12 July 1955, Ibid.

⁷⁷ Sydney Brown to G.O. Bell, 23 August 1955, Ibid.

of your own making, can only result in the introduction of mob law and all its attendant evils. The majority cannot be sacrificed to the whim of any individualist.”⁷⁸ Bell hoped to enlist additional assistance from federal authorities, including the Governor-General, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent, Paul Martin, and Frank Worthington, to instill the values of collective defence in the neighbourhoods north of the Bow River. In the end, Martin and Worthington recorded messages for Calgary’s civil defence in August 1955.⁷⁹ The final federal contribution to the exercise were publicity aids similar to those produced for the civil defence convoy two years earlier: information pamphlets, and advertisement stickers posted on loaves of bread at local grocery stores and delivered attached to milk bottles to Calgary homes. Federal officials also secured amenities for the press corps attending the exercise such as cold Coca Cola.⁸⁰

However limited, federal assistance to the exercise sparked disputes between Calgary and Alberta authorities that threatened to derail the exercise. CXCL was the only broadcaster to receive exclusive federal Operation Lifesaver publicity. Predictably, the radio station was heavily invested in the exercise’s success. As a result, CXCL announcers preceded many August broadcasts with the claim that the station was “The Official Voice of Civil Defence.” This boast annoyed two larger Calgary stations, who complained to provincial representatives. Provincial Co-ordinator Air-Vice Marshal G.R. Howsam threatened to put a stop to the publicity drive, a move halted at the last minute through urgent correspondence between the federal CD office and the province. Bell later told his federal colleagues that he expected rivalries to develop between radio outlets, but

⁷⁸ Instructions for Evacuation, July 1955, Ibid.

⁷⁹ Martin, in the meantime, was engrossed by his duty as Acting Secretary of State of External Affairs, and his role in ongoing quadripartite disarmament talks at the United Nations in the summer of 1955. George McCarty to Bell, 25 August 1955, Ibid.

⁸⁰ J. McLennan, Coca Cola, to Harvey Adams, 7 September 1955, Ibid.

he complained that he “never expected the smouldering fire to be fanned by one [Howsam] who should have as much interest as anyone in seeing the Operation succeed!”⁸¹

The city and province finalized preparations for Lifesaver in September 1955. Dozens of newly-trained RCMP officers joined Calgary city police to prevent looting in the abandoned city, as others prepared to seal the evacuation area for nearly 12 hours during the exercise.⁸² Federal and provincial civil defence welfare planners worked with towns in Calgary’s outlying areas to prepare first aid stations, as businesses in reception areas like Innisfail eagerly prepared for an influx of potential customers.⁸³ Detailed maps of the evacuation zone and egress routes and destinations appeared in the local press. Alberta Civil Defence printed large advertisements in the *Calgary Herald* that informed readers about insurance available to cover possible vehicle damage and personal injury during the evacuation. Several days before Lifesaver was to begin, MacKay directed all of the city’s employees to participate in the exercise, and made a special plea to local businesses to follow his example.⁸⁴ A letter writer to the *Calgary Herald*, identified only as “Count Me Out,” reacted by denouncing several Calgary employers who pressured reluctant employees to take part in the exercise. The writer questioned whether the evacuation exercise was as voluntary as advertised.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Adams to Howsam, 8 September 1955; Bell to Adams, 23 August 1955, Ibid.

⁸² Bill Gold, “Extra Police to Guard Area,” *The Calgary Herald*, 13 September 1955.

⁸³ Some of the reception area towns established refreshment posts, where evacuees could purchase food and drink for a nominal fee. Most of these were administered by local church groups. “Civil Employees Taking Part in Test,” *The Calgary Herald*, 14 September 1955.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ The author also noted Vancouver’s reluctance to mount an evacuation of similar scale, citing that “everyone knows the real reason is that Vancouver declined to have anything to do with this absurd experiment!” *The Calgary Herald*, 10 September 1955.

This letter to the editor was not the only warning that the exercise would not go as planned. On 17 September, Bell announced that Operation Lifesaver was finally ready, but several warnings indicated that the exercise may not secure the 92% participation civil defence officials had predicted in April.⁸⁶ The first was a shortage of vehicles and drivers to transport Calgarians without vehicles out of the area. Both MacKay and the CD organization issued pleas to find 500 cars and drivers, but by 20 September only 130 drivers had offered the use of their vehicles. Without transport, civil defence workers would have to turn back prospective evacuees with no conveyance of their own. Bell assured the press that “in the event of real attack, trucks, taxis and other vehicles would be commandeered.”⁸⁷

Another hint of trouble was the embarrassing failure of an evacuation exercise scheduled in Halifax on 18 September 1955, where more cars entered the evacuation zone, an area destroyed by the 1917 explosion, than left.⁸⁸ Staff editors of the *Calgary Herald* lamented Haligonians’ apparent failure to co-operate with the civil defence effort. Not wishing to see the Calgary exercises fail, the newspaper issued a statement of urgent support for Operation Lifesaver, and emphasized the duties of Calgarians as Canadian citizens to take part: “It can be regarded lightly by those who are asked to participate, but this is not a very far-thinking or responsible attitude. ... The citizens of north-east Calgary will have the opportunity to show that they have a deep sense of *the responsibilities of Canadian citizens*.”⁸⁹

⁸⁶ “All is Ready for Lifesaver,” *The Calgary Herald*, 17 September 1955.

⁸⁷ “Large Civil Defence Test Ready to Run Wednesday,” *The Calgary Herald*, 20 September 1955.

⁸⁸ “Exercise Fails in Halifax,” *The Calgary Herald*, 18 September 1955.

⁸⁹ “Calgary’s Sense of Responsibility,” *The Calgary Herald*, 19 September 1955. [emphasis mine]

An early winter blast on 19 September did the most damage to the exercise, and to CD in Calgary generally. Over the two following days, nearly 18 centimeters of snow carpeted highways and rural roads, creating a number of highway traffic accidents. The roads outside Calgary were a blend of both asphalt and gravel roads, many in poor condition even in good weather.⁹⁰ In the storm, they became sufficiently dangerous that Calgary Civil defence conferred with the city and province. Mid-morning on 21 September, when sirens were supposed to sound and begin the largest evacuation in North American history, Bell, MacKay, and Howsam announced that Operation Lifesaver would have to be delayed for an entire week until the winter storm passed. Howsam publicly apologized over the radio for the delay, but insisted that evacuation would be carried out according to Calgary's plan if a real attack was imminent, regardless of weather conditions.⁹¹ Most of Calgary's news outlets were sympathetic to the CD agency, not surprising given their part in promoting the exercise, but were less forgiving about MacKay's preposterous claims that the weather would also have forced the Soviets to call off an attack: "Wednesday's weather would never, never be protection against such attack... The enemy will assuredly arrange things that way if he possibly can."⁹²

International and provincial civil defence observers present for Operation Lifesaver returned home disappointed. Most CD planners quietly observed that the whole effort might have been wasted. Harvey Adams returned to Ottawa with most of his staff, leaving behind a junior representative. Adams was keen to promote other civil defence

⁹⁰ Ironically, road conditions worsened significantly less than a week after Bell, Howsam and MacKay had all praised the Canadian Good Roads Association for their road work in the area. Ray Guay, "Road Accidents 'Greatest Disaster'," *The Calgary Herald*, 15 September 1955. See also Adams to Howsam, 28 September 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 106 File 108-2-25.

⁹¹ "Operations Lifesaver Off: Exercise Delayed a Week," "Snow Beat Us, Say CD Heads," *The Calgary Herald*, 21 September 1955.

⁹² "War Postponed because of Weather?" *The Calgary Herald*, 22 September 1955.

events in his calendar. Privately, he expressed the belief that the postponement endangered the exercise's success and Calgary's credibility.⁹³ Bell attempted to salvage public and civic support in the following week. He appealed again for voluntary drivers to assist on the new date, and pressed CD volunteers to put in extra hours to call and register additional evacuees.⁹⁴

Meanwhile, a political battle began between the city of Calgary and the provincial government. Shortly after the postponement, Bell lashed out at Edmonton for failing to respond to his requests to improve exit roads that "look like battlefields."⁹⁵ Bell's criticism mobilized provincial road crews to clear exit routes still blanketed with snow and repairs to the worst stretches of road.⁹⁶ In the midst of a contested municipal election, Calgary's local politicians entered the fray shortly before the rescheduled exercise. Alderman P.N.R. Morrison publicly criticized the city's civil defence in general for embarrassing the city by postponing the original Operation Lifesaver. He also cast doubt on the strategy of evacuation in principle, since the effort had been defeated by the weather.⁹⁷

Evacuation as Celebration

Despite the local disturbances and public criticism, at 10:50 am on 28 September 1955, air raid sirens wailed throughout north-east Calgary, announcing the beginning of

⁹³ Adams to Robertson, September 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 106 File 180-2-25.

⁹⁴ "Weather is key to CD Scheme," *The Calgary Herald*, 22 September 1955.

⁹⁵ Bell was referring to the east-west connecting road between Calgary and Strathmore, which was rutted and pot-holed sufficiently to damage tires. "Road Conditions Under Fire By Civil Defence Officials," *The Calgary Herald*, 24 September 1955.

⁹⁶ "Outlook Good for Lifesaver," *The Calgary Herald*, 27 September 1955.

⁹⁷ Morrison earned biting criticism from *The Calgary Herald's* lead editorial for his trouble: "He is certainly going out of his way to try to destroy a project which has had enough trouble already ... People who know infinitely more than Mr. Morrison ever will know about modern warfare are desperately searching for the answer. The best they have so far is mass dispersal of humanity into the countryside. It is clumsily, terribly inconvenient, perhaps only partly workable. But it is something. And it is not small-time politics." "Local Politics and Civil Defence," *The Calgary Herald*, 27 September 1955.

Operation Lifesaver. Citizens left school and workplaces, departing for adjoining towns and cities. Launching the exercise over the radio, MacKay congratulated Calgarians for their civic duty, “those who are showing such a grand attitude of learning to help themselves and who, in so doing, are establishing a pattern that will help others.”⁹⁸ This was CD in action, Canadians helping themselves and their neighbours to survive, fulfilling an obligation asked of them by the government. Evacuees marshalled at assembly points or exited the city in their own cars, following the prescribed routes to reception towns, the first arriving 45 minutes after the sirens sounded. CD observers scrutinized reception work in the town of Innisfail, charged with carrying out emergency feeding and welfare registration to simulate actual conditions in wartime. CD workers in the town dug slit trenches in the reception area, lighting fires to heat improvised stoves and boilers to feed over 300 evacuees.⁹⁹

Press coverage of the evacuation reveals how staged the evacuation was in practice. The *Calgary Herald* followed George Nenzel, his wife, and their five children as they prepared for the evacuation. Nenzel went to work as usual on the day of the evacuation, returning to his house by public transit after the sirens sounded to gather his family and depart. His wife (identified as Mrs. George Nenzel) had prepared meals for the entire family the evening before, including a pot of baked beans. She spent the morning packing supplies for departure. Only two of the five children of school age were sent to school, the others, who knew that an “attack” was coming, remained at home. The newspaper described the older children as “aware of the urgent need” behind Lifesaver,

⁹⁸ “It’s No Picnic, Neither is War,” *The Calgary Herald*, 28 September 1955.

⁹⁹ “Most Vital to CD Test,” *The Calgary Herald*, 28 September 1955.

and anticipated the younger children, who were excited for a holiday from school, would appreciate the exercise's value in later years.¹⁰⁰

The newspaper account makes clear that the gendered division of civil defence tasks each family was meant to internalize during their preparations survived the change of emphasis in CD planning from rescue and firefighting to evacuation. The husband and father, forewarned before the exercise, led the family in making preparations to leave, determining the evacuation route, and managing transport roles. In this he filled the role of a civil defence warden for his family, a position held by men in the city's CD organization. His wife, by preparing food and packaging supplies to care for the family en route, was concerned for the welfare and nutrition of the family. Civil Defence mass feeding and welfare positions were, as a rule, staffed entirely by female volunteers.

When the sirens sounded, the Nenzels calmly turned off all their gas appliances and left their home in the family car, "already parked beside the curb in readiness for the evacuation."¹⁰¹ The family drove in a convoy to Airdrie, 28 kilometers north of Calgary (a region that would have still been hit by some of the blast and heat waves from a five megaton bomb detonating in downtown Calgary), along with a convoy of other evacuees, and were registered by a local welfare welcoming committee. The Nenzels ate their home-made baked beans brought from home on plates purchased, surreally, from an Airdrie department store (they did not want to eat from the pot), and watched a movie in the community hall before returning to Calgary after the "all-clear" was sounded at 3:05 pm.¹⁰² Similar reception events took place elsewhere, but at several of the largest evacuees were fed pre-prepared meals before returning to Calgary. The entire evacuation

¹⁰⁰ "Five Children Add Problems, But Family Believes in Test," *The Calgary Herald*, 28 September 1955.

¹⁰¹ "A Calgary Family is Evacuated and Returns Home Safely," *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

and return to Calgary took most of the day, with only one person injured.¹⁰³ All three levels of Canadian federal civil defence organization were thrilled with the results of the exercise, considered “a great success.”¹⁰⁴

Public participation in the evacuation was far lower than civil defence planners had hoped. The exercise was originally devised to accommodate all of the approximate 40,000 residents living in the north-eastern civil defence subdivision of Calgary. In their post-exercise assessment, the city’s organizers blamed the week-long postponement of the exercise and persistent adverse weather for a low evacuation rate of less than 15 per cent. Only 5,891 of the residents evacuated, that is, left Calgary by public or private transit..¹⁰⁵ Press accounts claimed that 10,000 had evacuated the sub-division, so it is likely that most of those who left their homes or businesses in Calgary’s north-east chose to shop at businesses or visit friends or family in other parts of the city rather than take a long road trip out of town. In many cases, the siren was simply ignored by businesses that had ordered staff not to participate in the exercise.¹⁰⁶ Many more without vehicles did not care to spend the day with strangers. For example, one resident had been asked to share a single vehicle with four other adults and four children. He and others faced with similar travel conditions decided to abstain from the exercise. Families who did have cars but were burdened with small children similarly refused to make the trip. As one respondent told the *Calgary Herald*, “she could not see herself changing diapers in a cold car.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ The person in question was a member of the Queen’s Own Rifles, who was burned by one of several smoke bombs detonated in Northeast Calgary after the evacuation convoys had left.

¹⁰⁴ “Defence Chiefs Satisfied Lifesaver Was a Success,” *The Calgary Herald*, 29 September 1955.

¹⁰⁵ Preliminary Report on Exercise “Lifesaver,” LAC RG 29 1983-84/292 Box 22 File 580-10-1.

¹⁰⁶ “Workers Stay on Job Despite Sirens’ Blast,” *The Calgary Herald*, 28 September 1955.

¹⁰⁷ “Saver in Brief,” *The Calgary Herald*, 28 September 1955. Many similar accounts are found in “Success of CD Exercise Hinges on Weather,” *The Calgary Herald*, 27 September 1955.

Some families simply could not leave behind pets as instructed. Others were confused by unfamiliar siren signals.

Most who heard the initial blast assumed it was the “All-Clear,” as heard in countless Second World War newsreels, radio broadcasts, and films. The federal civil defence agency had, in the interests of cross-border co-ordination, adopted the American siren system, which used different signals, and was roundly criticized by the Calgary CD organization and local press for the confusion.¹⁰⁸ An informal assessment of public reaction by the city’s civil defence authority revealed that many of those who refused to participate (and cared enough to offer a justification) responded to the exercise with “disbelief, or distrust in the exercise and cynicism, or they offered the excuse that the exercise did not concern them.”¹⁰⁹ MacKay and others claimed that the city had never actually promised that the full 40,000 would evacuate, quoting the more “realistic” figure of 25,000.¹¹⁰ At the press conference announcing the results of the exercise, MacKay blamed local politics for undermining civic support for CD. However, MacKay contended that the turnout of a quarter of the intended evacuees was a formidable accomplishment “considering business, illness and other handicaps.”¹¹¹ Similarly, in their own assessment of the exercise, the city’s civil defence authority looked for a silver lining, supposing that the 15% who actually evacuated the city despite confusion over the

¹⁰⁸ *The Herald’s* editorial board was especially fierce: “What gibbering idiot, or group of gibbering idiots, upset the meaning of the various siren signals so that they no longer mean what millions of people have always, and rightly, believed they meant? If the Canadian federal authorities meekly accepted this alien asininity, let them immediately don dunce-caps, and wear them forever.” “What’s All this about Signals,” *The Calgary Herald*, 29 September 1955.

¹⁰⁹ Preliminary Report on Exercise “Lifesaver,” LAC RG 29 1983-84/292 Box 22 File 580-10-1

¹¹⁰ “Defence Chiefs Satisfied Lifesaver Was a Success,” *The Calgary Herald*, 29 September 1955.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

exercise's postponement and the less-than-ideal conditions "represented the percentage of keen supporters of Civil Defence in the sector."¹¹²

Howsam had a much more serious message to convey. In his view, Lifesaver had proved that evacuation could work, but that considerable labour remained to ensure that a similar event could take place despite weather conditions. He demanded a much more extensive effort throughout the province to stockpile sufficient supplies in reception areas. Howsam pointed out that in Alberta, Canadians could survive out in the open for only five months of the year, and that most individuals would not think to pack for a longer or permanent exile to rural areas. Complicating the matter further, he warned, was federal uncertainty over what locations in the provinces would be attacked. "We believe that under certain unfavourable circumstances the best thing to do will be to take cover and stay put – at least for the time being. It means that these top level decisions to evacuate or to stay put will have to be made on the spot, based on the best information that is available.... It will be necessary that the public retain a high degree of confidence in the civil defence arrangements [to ensure survival]."¹¹³

A federally-sponsored analysis of Lifesaver revealed several conclusions about the organisation and administration of civil defence in target and reception areas. The most important were the necessity of improving communications between the target city and outlying areas, of less dependence on private transport and fewer assembly areas to accommodate those without cars, and of more and better highways to connect cities and ensure a safe flow of traffic. A post-mortem of the exercise also revealed several fatal flaws in its planning, not least among them the complete lack of accounting for protection

¹¹² Preliminary Report on Exercise "Lifesaver," LAC RG 29 1983-84/292 Box 22 File 580-10-1.

¹¹³ Ibid.

of evacuees and reception area from the intense radioactive fallout that would inevitably follow the detonation of the 5-megaton nuclear warhead included in the exercise script.

The purpose of the exercise had been to test the movement, registration, feeding, and return of a large body of people, not to simulate a realistic pre-attack evacuation scenario. This test was aimed at refining the skills of the professional and volunteer civil defence planners as much as it was meant to condition the public's response to air raid sirens. However, the exercise involved such a large number of the public as passive observers and active participants that it evolved into a civic event. Far from being a grim reminder of the massive destructive power of the hydrogen weapon, Operation Lifesaver was transformed into a celebration of civil defence and community values. In the publicity and public appeals that preceded Lifesaver, the success of the civil defence organization's exercise was linked directly to the protection of local culture and civic pride. In practice, the evacuation to flee nuclear attack was an adventure for most families; at many of the reception towns-turned-refugee camps, local businesses and civic leaders changed a nuclear nightmare into a site of civic festival.

Mar Walker, a staff reporter at the *Calgary Herald*, observed civil defence staff at their headquarters at Calgary's airport, emerging with newfound respect for workers she had previously characterized as "ex-army brass muddling along" and "a lot of civilians who want to wear uniforms and give orders".¹¹⁴ She refuted in her column "the general attitude that Operation Lifesaver was a cross between a civic holiday and a Stampede Parade."¹¹⁵ A festival atmosphere was not what Calgary Civil Defence had hoped to achieve during the exercise. Yet Calgary Civil Defence's promotion of the exercise over

¹¹⁴ "'Doubting Thomasine' Does Turnabout on CD Opinion," *The Calgary Herald*, 29 September 1955.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

the radio, in film reels, and public lectures, and during the Stampede Parade, relied on elements of civil defence pageantry that had surfaced during the tour of the federal CD convoy. It thoroughly engaged community leaders, and was championed repeatedly by Calgary's charismatic mayor. In many of his speeches, MacKay interpreted the evacuation as a challenge for Calgarians. Overcoming it would testify to the success of Calgary's civil defence organization and the city's sense of civic pride. Calgary businesses, sensing an upcoming public holiday, attempted to profit from the exercise. Before the exercise was postponed, Nagler's Department Store paid for a full-page advertisement in the *Calgary Herald* to advertise "Operation Moneysaver," their three-day furniture and appliance sale. The ad promised "explosive value" and tastelessly pictured a Soviet bomber aircraft dropping prices.¹¹⁶ Similarly, by integrating civil defence into the schedule of the Calgary Stampede, organizers linked the principles of civil defence to the principles of independence and mutual community assistance that had shaped many Albertan rural farming and ranching communities.

Lifesaver took place shortly after the Golden Jubilee of Alberta's entry into Confederation. Officials consciously linked appeals to participate in the exercise to Albertans' distinct rural culture and history.¹¹⁷ Though Calgary was no longer a ranching and farming town, the very nature of the evacuation and reception exercise highlighted interdependency between town and country. An editorial cartoon appearing shortly after the evacuation depicted not a line of cars and modern families departing the city, but a blend of farmers, ranchers, settlers in covered wagons, and, for a more modern touch,

¹¹⁶ *The Calgary Herald*, 21 September 1955.

¹¹⁷ James Opp, "Prairie Commemoration and the Nation: The Golden Jubilees of Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1955," in *Canadas of the Mind: The Making and Unmaking of Canadian Nationalisms in the Twentieth Century*, edited by Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnik, (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), pp. 218-228.

businessmen and football players running along a dusty trail.¹¹⁸ Many who chose to evacuate approached the exercise exactly like a civic holiday, packing picnic baskets and loading up the car with family to go on an excursion to the countryside.

Citizens without a car, registered to evacuate by public transit, had lined up at bus stations well before the siren had sounded, with food and diversions in hand for the trip. Families questioned before the exercise said that they would take part in the evacuation if the weather improved, but grey and slushy conditions kept many celebrants of the community event inside or at friends' houses within Calgary. Evacuees typically travelled as family or neighbourhood units, with many declining to participate if they could not travel with people they knew. The Nenzels' run out to Airdrie and back was characterized by the papers as "an adventure to remember," with one of their younger daughters quoted as saying "Gee, we had a swell time and saw a free movie!"¹¹⁹ Churches in Crossfield treated nearly 500 evacuees to bingo games, and spontaneous tailgate parties erupted in parking lots when entire Calgary neighbourhoods arrived for registration amid sound trucks playing programs of recorded music. The visit of evacuees coincided with that of a travelling exhibition to Crossfield related to Alberta's Golden Jubilee, which both local and "refugee" school children were invited to attend.¹²⁰ The first of the evacuees arriving back into Calgary, speaking to journalists, characterized the event as "just like a family picnic... we took our own basket lunch, but there was plenty of food for everyone."¹²¹ CD and community representatives in Strathmore expressed disappointment to the press

¹¹⁸ Editorial cartoon, "They Went Thataway!" *The Calgary Herald*, 29 September 1955.

¹¹⁹ "Family (All Seven) Enjoyed Big Day," *The Calgary Herald*, 29 September 1955.

¹²⁰ "Trip to Crossfield Pleasant Excursion," *The Calgary Herald*, 29 September 1955.

¹²¹ "'Big Picnic' in Opinion of Returnee," *The Calgary Herald*, 30 September 1955.

that only 299 of the 2500 expected refugees arrived in their town, and at the lunch attempted to unload their substantial stockpile of sandwiches and refreshments.

Two days after the Lifesaver exercise, editorialists and community leaders commemorated the evacuation as a testament to the cooperation between the city and its countryside. Commenting once again about the importance of the exercise, the *Calgary Herald* stated that rural Albertans had passed an important test, and in so doing, “Many Calgarians, and there were many European-born people among them [were able to] sample real Western hospitality, returned home with high praise for the arrangements that had been made for their comfort.”¹²² Participants in the evacuation appeared to have ignored admonishments from Calgary Civil Defence about how to behave, and how to avoid panic, because for most Operation Lifesaver was an opportunity to enjoy a day of paid leave from work which permitted them to connect with neighbours and with residents of other communities. Many evacuees who opted to leave Northeast Calgary decided to visit friends and relatives in parts of the city not affected by the exercise rather than take part in the festivities in other cities. Mrs. Stanley Fisher, a former Calgary resident and civil defence worker in the reception town of Acme, Alberta, was only able to express her disappointment that more people did not avail themselves of the chance to get away.

There were sandwiches and all sorts of good things to eat... I don't know what they'll do with the leftovers, maybe they'll have to put them in the deep-freeze until a real Hydrogen bomb attack comes and the people of Calgary have learned to appreciate them. All the people that I spoke to that went out enjoyed themselves thoroughly and almost everyone was a little disappointed that there weren't more there to enjoy the fun.¹²³

¹²² “Rural Albertans Pass Unique Test,” 30 September 1955

¹²³ “Hats Are Lifted to Rural Areas,” *The Calgary Herald*, 28 September 1955.

Underlying the celebratory atmosphere accompanying Operation Lifesaver were assumptions about the role of rural municipalities in a nuclear war. In Canada and elsewhere, civil defence planners widely assumed that rural municipalities would be pleased to take on refugees from cities. In the United States, state civil defence programs in Iowa and Nebraska identified rural areas as the “moral base of the nation.” The nation as a whole would survive because of the selfless hospitality of the countryside.¹²⁴ Jenny Barker-Devine, in her study of perceptions of rural America in evacuation and reception planning, reveals a tendency to view rural regions as homogenous groupings prepared to render assistance to the cities. U.S. federal planners insisted that such assistance was the result of a “higher responsibility to your fellow man than that which is written in the law.”¹²⁵ Yet the image of rural reception areas as both a breadbasket to the nation and the cradle of national survival during nuclear war that emerged in planners’ rhetoric was never backed with sufficient resources to rural municipalities in peacetime to prepare adequately for extended periods of mass-feeding and billeting of refugees.¹²⁶ The same was true in Canada.

Though Operation Lifesaver was the first exercise to attempt both evacuation and reception in North America, survival planning stopped at the evacuation plan for most cities. The aim of Canadian CD planning was to assure the survival of as many citizens as possible. Since rural areas were not targets for attack, they were assigned a lower priority than the persuasion of target cities to plan for and invest in plans for evacuation. Traffic systems, coordination of transportation and bigger and better highways were the subjects

¹²⁴ Jenny Barker-Devine, “‘Mightier than Missiles’, The Rhetoric of Civil Defense for Rural American Families 1950-1970.” *Agricultural History* 80 (Fall 2006), p. 416.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 422; “An Interview with Val Peterson,” *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 10 (September 1954), p. 375-377.

¹²⁶ Jenny Barker-Devine, p. 422.

most often discussed. The survival of the evacuees once clear of the cities was of secondary importance. What would happen to the inhabitants of rural areas was considered next, only then if at all, but the laudatory press coverage accompanying Operation Lifesaver reinforced the image of Calgary's rural areas as centres of hospitality grateful to receive refugees. When receptions were transformed into civic events by local CD planners and municipal authorities, these obscured the tensions that would inevitably arise in overcrowded rural towns during a nuclear war. Those who participated in or read about the exercise were left with the rosy impression of rural Alberta's hospitality summarized by the press: "Calgarians now know that they can count on the surrounding countryside for real help if the need ever arises".¹²⁷ In aiding the city during the exercise, rural areas had passed a "unique test." But what of these towns' survival?

Evacuation Becomes Official Policy

Lifesaver was the last public physical evacuation and reception exercise of its type carried out in Canada, though dozens of smaller reception exercises and evacuation drills took place separately in major target areas thereafter.¹²⁸ In June 1956, the Cabinet Defence Committee officially adopted as a civil defence policy planning for the mass evacuation of Montreal, Hamilton, Toronto, Winnipeg, Ottawa-Hull, Edmonton, Windsor, Quebec City, Saint John, Halifax, Victoria, and Vancouver.¹²⁹ Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare, announced the policy change in the House of Commons, stating that "Our Civil Defence Policy should now be based on the

¹²⁷ "Rural Albertans Pass Unique Test," *The Calgary Herald*, 30 September 1955.

¹²⁸ Many more exercises took place on paper, such as E.J. Vickery's follow-on to earlier public evacuation exercises, "Exercise East Coast", which tested the operation of civil defence and evacuation in the Halifax target area to meet kiloton and megaton range nuclear weapons. Plans for Exercise East Coast, 29 April 1956, LAC RG 29 Vol 659 File 106-2-1 pt 1.

¹²⁹ Cabinet Defence Committee Decision, 13 June 1956, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 5 File 5-7.

development and testing of plans for the orderly evacuation on short notice of the main urban areas in Canada should the possibility of attack on such areas by nuclear weapons appear to be imminent.”¹³⁰

Martin’s announcement came nearly four years after the detonation of the first hydrogen weapon in the Pacific Ocean, and nearly two years after the scale of the devastation resulting from that detonation was made public knowledge. The long delay between the identification of the threat and the official adoption of the policy is explained by an initial and persistent uncertainty about the effectiveness of evacuation that lingered even after successful exercises in Brockville, St. John’s, Calgary, and elsewhere, and by worries about damage done to the economy by work stoppages in the event of a false alarm. However, the official announcement by Martin merely formalized a planning process initiated by federal and provincial governments over two years before. In the same month that Martin announced evacuation as the “new look in civil defence,” the Ontario Department of Planning and Development’s Civil Defence Branch published the “Ontario Provincial Survival Plan,” which made arrangements to evacuate the five major target areas identified by the Cabinet Defence Committee, and their surrounding counties.¹³¹ The plan was skeletal and did not include detailed and coordinated planning with the municipalities, but it was the result of statistical surveys of target cities and their rural neighbours that permitted the province to designate certain areas for evacuation and others as “stand-fast zones”.

¹³⁰ T.C. Rogers to Herbert Manning, 9 December 1957, LAC RG 29 Vol 104 File 180-8-10 pt 2.

¹³¹ Less progress had been made for the evacuation of Ottawa-Hull because of the inability of the Ontario and Quebec governments to come to an agreement about reception of nuclear refugees in the area. LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 G21 Vol 11 File “Ontario Provincial Survival Plan.”

Martin's announcement was preceded by a flurry of exchanges between the Civil Defence Canada and the provinces about the new Federal Guide to Survival Planning based on recently released American information about hydrogen weapons and the results of evacuation exercises. Worthington's survival guide was first circulated to provincial authorities in January 1956, and was eventually used as the basis for federal-provincial joint planning for civil defence. The guide called for the development of plans based exclusively on evacuation, which the federal government advocated not "because it was the best of survival alternatives, but because there is no alternative."¹³² Worthington's plan accommodated existing plans for the air defence of North America, recognizing that the soon to be constructed Distant Early Warning line would give some cities sufficient time to evacuate. His plan also acknowledged but could not respond to the fact that the air battle over Canadian soil would complicate survival plans greatly. Evacuation studies conducted at great cost, county-wide reception plans, and other CD predictions could prove worthless if, as was likely, Soviet bombers dropped payloads on the wrong targets, or those shot down detonated their payload as they crashed randomly. These variances were more permissible if the air battle was fought in the far north; in the populated south of Canada it called into question the rationale for paying for a large CD organization.¹³³ Worthington's four-phase plan called for the pre-evacuation of invalids and dependents from Canadian target cities during a presumed period of strategic warning, the immediate planned withdrawal of the remainder of the population to reception areas, "action after blast," and immediate aid and rehabilitation of survivors leading to reconstruction. The third phase is of most interest because it was the first federal plan to incorporate fallout.

¹³² LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 G21 Vol 11 File "Survival Planning – Manual Prepared by FCDC"

¹³³ Ibid.

In early 1955, the United States AEC released its findings about the effects of radioactive fallout, revealing that it was considered a much larger threat than the U.S. military and civil defence agencies had previously believed. Their report indicated that radioactive particles dispersed by the wind would be carried hundreds of kilometres downwind of the actual detonation, blanketing cities and towns that would normally not be considered targets with persistent lethal radiation that threatened exposed citizens and livestock and endangered the food supply. Reporting on the AEC's findings, the *Montreal Star* noted that "a great many people threw up their hands in despair."¹³⁴

For Civil Defence, the findings meant that planning assumptions had to be revisited to identify which areas of the country would face the greatest danger. The Defence Research Board began to study the implications of fallout on Canadian civil defence planning, charting weather patterns over Canada and likely attack patterns. They hoped to devise a flexible, scientific guide to help civilian agencies adjust their planning for survival as a war unfolded. The Department of National Defence directed DRB scientists to supply the Federal Civil Defence Planning Committee with information about what, if any, evasive action civilian populations could take against fallout, and to determine how to monitor and provide "live" reporting on fallout patterns to the federal government and civil defence agencies during wartime.¹³⁵ The government's increasing dependency on knowledge of the weather and winds for survival planning eventually led to the conscription of the Federal Meteorological Service and the Department of Transport into civil defence planning.

¹³⁴ "What do we do when the Bombs Fall?" *The Montreal Star*, 28 February 1955.

¹³⁵ Report of the Scientific Advisor to Federal Civil Defence Coordinator, LAC RG24 Acc 83-84/215 Box 13 File 5-1200-C9.

Worthington's 1956 Survival Guide integrated the DRB's limited findings about fallout protection and evasion into "phase C" of the plan. Fallout forced changes to the established evacuation planning measures. Survival would depend on the ability of the government to immediately locate and evaluate of the size and height of explosions to determine how much fallout could be expected and its probable dispersal pattern, which could shift with the weather. In Worthington's plan, the evacuation of target cities to reception areas would continue "unless diverted by controlling authority to avoid 'fallout areas'."¹³⁶ Most evacuation exercises conducted in Canada had, however, been based on the principle that, to avoid panic and confusion during an actual evacuation, citizens had to know their destination and the route on which to travel before an attack arrived, since the local civil defence authority would in all likelihood be unable to co-ordinate the evacuation after the bomb fell. In Lifesaver, this problem was obviated by the fact that the Civil Defence headquarters operated from the safety of a Calgary golf club. For national evacuation operations to work, centralized control and distribution of information and instruction to evacuees would be necessary. The same was true for plans for reception areas. Worthington noted that some reception areas in anticipated fallout areas would be directed to take shelter, though fallout shelter planning was in its infancy in 1956, and advised that "remedial evacuation" might be necessary. When fallout was taken into serious consideration, Civil Defence Canada learned that the whole country, not just target areas and their immediate neighbours, would need a contingency plan in nuclear war.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 G21 Vol 11 File Survival Planning – Manual Prepared by FCDC

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Worthington subjected his plan to critique and revision through "Project Q," a study of evacuation in Ottawa, Saint John, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Toronto, taking into account all elements of fallout planning. Completed in September 1956, the Project Q report reinforced Worthington's findings about the possible disruptions that fallout would force on any survival effort, but also demanded immediate development of shelter plans for Canada. The study advised that survivors and rescuers in fallout areas would be forced to "take the best cover available."¹³⁸ An extensive and protected communications system that could operate under government control during attack conditions was needed. Communications would direct evacuees to reception areas, provide warnings about of the direction and intensity of fallout on the wind, advise whether shelter or evasion through remedial evacuation were the safest routes, and co-ordinate post-attack rescue efforts with civilian and military mobile columns. To survive, Canada would require a more centrally controlled and co-ordinated concept of survival operations than had previously been considered under the "self-help" and evacuation strategies. Project Q also recommended that the federal and provincial governments would need to have dispersed, protected headquarters to manage the type of survival operations envisioned.¹³⁹ The planners concluded their report with the admonition that "Civil Defence alone could not win a war but the lack of it could lose it."¹⁴⁰ The difficulties associated with evacuation under fallout conditions were vast and forbidding, but the projected casualties Canada would suffer without any preparations were equally grim. Of the total population of 4,885,900 in the 13 target cities directed to evacuate, it was estimated that 3,645,800

¹³⁸ Report of Project Q, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 5 File 54.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

would be killed without any planning, and a further 920,950 would receive “non-fatal injuries.” Only 322,150 Canadians living near the target areas would be uninjured.

Conclusion

For Canadians working in civil defence, the period 1954-1956 was a period of uneasy transition. New weapons demanded new strategies to meet them, and called into question the assumptions on which Canadian civil defence was based. The decision reached informally by the federal government in 1954 to test out evacuation as a possible response to the devastating power of the hydrogen bomb, officially ratified two years later, was not easy to make. Investments in evacuation strategies meant coming to grips with the many obstacles to survival, both physical and psychological. Evacuations such as those held in Brockville, St. John’s, Brandon, Calgary, Vancouver, and Halifax were designed primarily to test the ability of large groups of civilians to exit and re-enter a city with speed and without undue loss of life. Most of these evacuations proved that, with proper direction and training, evacuation of a target city was possible. However, most of those cities tested were not major metropolises. Toronto alderman Donald Summerville, sent to observe Operation Lifesaver in September 1955, commented that the plan could work for Calgary only if their city stopped growing. It could not have worked, he surmised, in Toronto’s urban sprawl.

The evacuations were also held in near-ideal conditions. The psychological conditions with which civil defence planners had to deal were cynicism, lack of interest, and apathy, but never the full blown panic that would have crippled a city given three hours’ notice of its imminent doom. Operation Lifesaver unfolded in an air of unreality. Calls for widespread public participation were in large part successful, but citizens

transformed the evacuation into a civic event. If planners sought to condition the public with an exercise simulating wartime conditions so they would respond calmly in an actual emergency, these exercises can only be counted as failures. With weapons that could demolish entire cities in a flash, Canadian civil defence agencies were not given much choice in strategies. The best defence from the hydrogen bomb, it was said, was not to be there when it went off. When the Cabinet weighed all their options, evacuation was the only strategy offered a defence. In practice, this meant a much larger CD effort, targeted not just at Canadian cities, as earlier CD strategies had done, but also at rural areas.

By 1959, most of the Canadian cities marked for destruction had developed plans on paper, even if they were not widely circulated to the public, about how best to remove the citizenry, and the provinces developed plans for surrounding areas to receive them. Exercises proved cities could be evacuated, imperfectly, but questions about how to protect vulnerable Canadians from the effects of radioactive fallout that would blanket most of the country went largely unresolved. The vastly increased lethality of thermonuclear weapons had a comfortable lead over CD planners trying desperately to catch up. By the time CD planners drafted preliminary plans to cope with fallout, a new technology, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and a newly elected government had intervened. Both would have a role in radically recasting for a final time the structure and strategy of Canadian civil defence, reversing years of work to encourage municipalities to go it alone by centralizing the “national survival” effort in the federal government, involving the Canadian armed forces to an ever-greater extent, and diminishing the role of citizens in defending their homes.

Chapter 5

The Emergency Measures Organization and Civil Defence

On 26 September 1957, Major-General Frank Worthington drove to the Canadian Civil Defence College in Arnprior, Ontario, for the last time in his official capacity as the federal government's Civil Defence Co-ordinator. After nearly a decade at the helm of Canada's CD organization, several Cabinet shuffles, and a number of minor controversies, Worthington had decided it was finally time to retire. At 67, he could have gone earlier; the federal government twice asked him to extend his service. Worthington had proven an efficient administrator and leader of his organization, despite his over-eagerness and occasional public relations errors. He had taken what remained of a skeletal wartime organization and transformed it into a national organization with over 150,000 registered emergency workers and voluntary staff. J.W. Monteith, Paul Martin's replacement as Minister for National Health and Welfare in the new Conservative government, lavished praise on Worthington at the ceremony: "despite many difficulties and setbacks, he has largely succeeded. As he takes leave of his heavy duties, he has the satisfaction of knowing that he carries with him the respect and indeed the affection of a growing army of civil defence officials and volunteers.... General Worthington will continue to be regarded as the father of civil defence in Canada."¹

During his tenure, Worthington had urged municipalities and community groups to organize themselves for the worst in peacetime, since they could not depend on the armed forces or other government services to help them in the first stages of a nuclear

¹ Department of National Health and Welfare Press Release 1957-19, "General Worthington Retires from Civil Defence Post," 13 September 1957.

war. Such, he had repeatedly argued, was the cost of citizenship in the nuclear age. This principle of self-help in civil defence did not long survive his retirement. Expert studies and common sense alike had already dictated that no single municipality would be able to coordinate its own defence. After Worthington's departure, the Canadian government created a separate planning agency called the Emergency Measures Organization (EMO). Originally conceived to carry out continuity of government planning in secret, the EMO eventually assumed financial and operational responsibility for civil defence, as a result of a formal survey of Canadian civil defence commissioned by the Diefenbaker government and carried out by retired Chief of General Staff Howard Graham. Graham's survey also demanded the formal commitment of the armed forces to assume CD tasks formerly managed by the responsible citizens, volunteers in municipal CD warden and rescue services. Civil Defence Canada, formed to meet the threat from bombs and bombers, faced its obsolescence in the missile age, and was ultimately replaced by the EMO.

Sputnik and CD Planning

The world entered the age of the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on 4 October 1957, when the Soviet Union successfully launched *Sputnik*, the Earth's first artificial satellite, into orbit with an unmanned rocket. While U.S. officials informed the public that they had advance knowledge of the launch, its success in fact took the West by surprise. The press offered the public equal parts coverage and speculation about the satellite; all Canadian newspapers carried accounts of its launch and orbit.² U.S. and

² One such radio enthusiast interpreted the signals as Morse code advising against angering the "black bear," *Toronto Star*, 5 October 1957.

foreign experts were quoted in Associated Press (AP) reports, explaining that the “Soviet Moon is Key to Military Victory.” French General Pierre Gaullois told AP that the Soviets’ evident superiority in missile research “makes it possible for Russia to win the peace without ever having to make war.”³ The *Calgary Herald* revealed the direct implications of the Soviet innovation for North American survival: “Moscow to New York in 16 minutes. That is the rate at which the Russian satellite is moving, and that is the length of time it would take a satellite carrying a nuclear-equipped weapon that distance when – not if – it is possible to equip and launch such a weapon.”⁴

The Canadian government declined to comment immediately about *Sputnik*’s implications for CD. When asked to comment on developments, Defence Minister George R. Pearkes merely quipped, “I cannot comment on that because it’s out of this world,” leaving the public to speculate about the satellite’s wider implications.⁵ Civil Defence Canada did not have plans prepared to counteract the ICBM, which added further complications to the already complex task of preparing Canadian cities to evacuate in advance of a Soviet manned bomber attack. These plans, which still depended in 1957 on a three-hour warning period, had not yet even taken into full account the threat posed by the post-attack radioactive fallout that would poison much of the country.⁶

³ “Soviet Moon is Key to Military Victory,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 6 October 1957; See also “Feat Proves Reds can fire missiles at U.S., Expert Says,” *Toronto Star*, 5 October 1957.

⁴ “The Biggest Stick of All?” *Calgary Herald*, 8 October 1957.

⁵ *The Ottawa Journal*, 5 October 1957

⁶ In this regard, CD was well behind progress made by the Canadian military. Military officers at DND had acknowledged in 1956 that the lethality and unpredictable spread of fallout after an explosion threatened the survival of most of North America’s population, even if the cities could be evacuated within the two or three hours of warning air defences would provide. Revised Comments on the Assumptions of Civil Defence Planning CDC 5-11-1, 27 August 1958; Report to the Joint Planning Committee by the Joint Planning Staff, LAC RG 25 Vol 5944 File 50217-40 pt 6.1.

Officially and in public, Civil Defence and the armed forces both discounted the strategic impact of ICBM technology and its implications for survival planning.

In the December 1957 *Civil Defence Bulletin*, Worthington's acting replacement, Major-General G.S. Hatton, offered an early evaluation of the impact the ICBM would have on Canadian CD efforts. He described the ICBM as an inaccurate weapon of war, subject to deflection from its target by the intense heat caused upon re-entry into the atmosphere. He also insisted that the ICBM had not taken the organization by surprise, because it had been a subject of public discussion for several years. Consequently, he noted that Civil Defence was developed to meet the "present" threat, piloted bombers, while keeping an eye to the future. Hatton then attempted to justify the existing evacuation policy by explaining the concepts of tactical and strategic warning. Tactical warning was the short window offered by the North American radar warning lines in northern Canada, triggered by a manifest threat to Canadian airspace. The key to evacuation lay in the strategic warning given to NATO by intelligence gathered from Soviet diplomatic and military preparations that would be entailed in "so vast an undertaking as total nuclear war."⁷ Hatton's article reflected contemporary strategic thought about the Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal in Canada and in the United States. The Joint Intelligence Committee, which reported to the Canadian Chiefs of Staff, assessed the ICBM threat shortly after the *Sputnik* launch and predicted that, over a 10-year period,

⁷ "Civil Defence and the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile," *Civil Defence Bulletin* 69, (November-December 1957)

intercontinental missiles would prove less dangerous than the Soviet Union's massive operational bomber fleet and missile-launching submarines.⁸

Hatton wrote the *Civil Defence Bulletin* article to offer a justification of the federal evacuation policy in light of the increasing "conjecture... about the effects of a war in which the ICBM is a major feature."⁹ Armed with the arguments set forth in Hatton's editorial, it was hoped, CD volunteers would organize for civil defence in communities where faith in the organization had been further shaken by the new threat of a "push-button" nuclear war. This article and others like it were written to shore up the "self-discipline, moral courage and public service" that Hatton believed volunteers would need to carry out their work.¹⁰

Before his promotion, Hatton had served under Worthington as the Deputy Federal Civil Defence Director. Hatton had earned the rank of Major-General during the Second World War, serving as a staff officer in the Middle East and Africa. After the war's end, he commanded British troops in the Netherlands, and served as a senior administrative staff officer in the British Army's Northern and Southern commands, where he worked with the UK's early post-war civil defence planners.¹¹ Like many senior

⁸ Draft Terms of Reference, Threat to North America 1958-1967, 29 October 1957, LAC RG 24 Vol 20853 File 7-26-9 pt 3. Andrew Richter argued that, over the course of the Canadian debate about the military defence of North American airspace, the Department of National Defence's opinion about the strategic impact of the ICBM was contradictory. At various points in the debate, DND officials said that the bomber threat had ended and at others that the missile threat was underrated. By contrast, the Americans maintained that the bomber fleet continued to represent a serious threat to the retaliatory capability of America's nuclear forces. Andrew Richter, *Avoiding Armageddon: Canadian Military Strategy and Nuclear Weapons, 1950-1963*. (Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), p. 39, 52-53.

⁹ "Civil Defence and the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile," *Civil Defence Bulletin* 69, (November-December 1957)

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ In 1949, he cooperated with Sir John Hodsoll, Britain's CD chief, to carry out "Op Britannia" between the UK's CD workers and the Army. Hatton was also involved in most major thermonuclear studies by the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe to 1954. B.M. Greene, ed. *The Canadian Who's Who IX*

British generals, Hatton was appointed to serve out his remaining years before retirement in 1955 on the Army Council of the Navy, Army and Air Force Institute (NAAFI).¹² He joined Civil Defence Canada shortly after arriving in Canada in 1955, and replaced Brigadier-General J.C. Creffield as the Deputy CD Coordinator. Hatton would never be confirmed as Worthington's successor, partly because of his combative and unattractive personality, but mainly as a result of the reforms in civil defence pushed through by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's Conservative government from 1957 to 1959.

The Introduction of Continuity of Government

Changes to civil defence planning and the organization's structure may have been accelerated during Diefenbaker's first term, but the building blocks for these adjustments were laid by the St. Laurent government. Revelations about the destructive power of the hydrogen bomb prompted the Interdepartmental War Book Committee (WBC) to inform the Cabinet in July 1956 that existing civilian emergency plans were "badly out of date and needed revision."¹³ The Committee, composed of Deputy Ministers from the Departments of Defence, External Affairs, Health and Welfare, Agriculture, Transport, and the Privy Council, concluded that civil planning was "out of balance with military planning." The Committee expressed their belief that the structure and planning of the Canadian military rendered it more capable of functioning during a nuclear emergency, but concluded that the same could not be said for the civil defence corps in Canadian

(Toronto: Trans-Canada Press, 1959), p. 482.

¹² Harry Miller described the NAAFI as "a large consumer of gold watches," in the immediate post-war years. *Service to the Services, The Story of NAAFI*. (London: Newman Neame, 1971).

¹³ Cabinet Conclusions, 31 July 1956, LAC RG 2 Vol 5775, Reel T-12185

cities. The survival of the Canadian political system depended on the response of both the military and civil defence community after the first hydrogen bomb was dropped.¹⁴

On the recommendation of the WBC, the Cabinet approved the secondment of a small body of senior civil servants from Transport, Defence Production, Trade and Commerce, Agriculture, National Health and Welfare, Finance, Defence, External Affairs, and relevant government agencies, especially the RCMP and the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, to study civilian war measures for a period of over six weeks in the summer and fall of 1956. The Working Group on War Measures, as it was called, was mandated to study the civil measures necessary to prepare for “new conditions” expected in a major war; namely, the massive destruction of Canadian cities or denial of their use because of radioactive fallout.¹⁵

In late 1956, the Working Group on War Measures received briefings from the DND Joint Intelligence Committee and the Joint Planning Committee about the nature of the nuclear threat. To learn more about American preparations, Committee members also hosted senior representatives of the U.S. Office of Defense Mobilization, the agency of the U.S. government responsible for the civilian and military aspects of wartime mobilization planning. The Working Group considered discussions with authorities in the United Kingdom but did not do so to conserve time. Hatton sat with the Working Group for several days to brief its members on the many difficulties he and Worthington had encountered with other federal government departments and with local and provincial

¹⁴ The Emergency Measures Organization, NA, 16 January 1964, LAC RG 24 Acc 1983-84/215 Box 192 File S-2001-50/53.

¹⁵ R.B. Bryce to Jules Léger, 9 August 1956, LAC RG 25 Vol 6039 File 50306-A-40, pt. 1.1

authorities under existing planning arrangements.¹⁶ In January 1957, the group communicated its findings to the WBC.

Among the Working Group's most important recommendations was the suggestion to establish immediately a federal government agency responsible for co-ordinating all the various aspects of civilian emergency planning between responsible government departments. A collective response was necessary because of the immense complexity of civil emergency planning for nuclear war, which had to integrate many of the functions of CD along with essential elements of national supply, housing, feeding, control and regulation of traffic, continuity of government authority and record-keeping, provision for national transport, and communications. The Working Group's report indicated that much of this work was merely an extension of each government department's peacetime responsibilities, but in the absence of a central co-ordinating agency, "there had been the tendency in departments to leave the solution of these problems to someone else."¹⁷

"Someone else" usually implied Hatton and his officials, who rarely received the support of other departments and struggled, like Worthington, to make civil defence a priority in interdepartmental committees. George Davidson, Deputy Minister of Welfare, observed during the WBC's deliberations that the federal government's "present difficulties" were the result of "past piecemeal attempts."¹⁸ The Working Group on War Measures report proposed the creation of an Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) to ensure best practices and conformity across government departments for civilian

¹⁶ Working Group on War Measures, Memo to War Book Committee, 15 January 1957, Ibid.

¹⁷ Minutes of the Internal Committee on War Book Committee, 30 January 1957, Ibid.

emergency planning. The Working Group report, however, noted many areas where the Emergency Measures Organization and Civil Defence would inevitably overlap, possibly to the detriment of both.¹⁹ In July 1957, WBC discussion touched briefly on this question: "Civil Defence of course is of primary interest to EMO, but until the new organization was well established it seemed best to deal with CD ... through a liaison officer. EMO would in a few months be in a better position to judge whether CD should be integrated within it according to [the] suggestion of the Working Group on War Measures."²⁰ Until the government could resolve Civil Defence Canada's future role, EMO was also to assume responsibility for aspects of civil emergency planning that had not yet been assigned to existing departments for resolution, such as the control of road traffic and the relocation of government in an emergency.

This last responsibility would prove the most controversial and detrimental to civil defence goals. Early in 1957, officials on the WBC recognized that the mere mention of relocating senior elements of the government and civil service to safety had the potential to stir public opinion against civil defence and emergency policy. Committee Chairman Major J.C. Morrison insisted that, while the establishment of a system for emergency government could not be feasibly carried out without attracting public opinion, ministers in the Cabinet "were aware of the problem and while they were not prepared at this time to seek public support ... they had agreed to provide funds for continued planning."²¹ The Working Group's final recommendations, forwarded to the

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Minutes of the Meeting of the Interdepartmental Committee on the War Book, 12 July 1957, Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

War Book Committee and subsequently to the Cabinet, were to quietly establish an Emergency Measures Organization in the Privy Council Office, with a small staff of officials seconded from other government departments, that would answer to Robert Bryce, Clerk of the Privy Council, and to the prime minister. The expenditure associated with planning would be initially hidden from public view through supplementary estimates of various government departments, rather than a separate budgetary allocation which would draw attention from opposition parties in Parliament. The EMO would become a publicly acknowledged government agency only after staff completed the initial planning.²²

St. Laurent's Cabinet approved the expenditure on 4 April 1957 and shortly after assuming office, Diefenbaker formally approved the creation of the EMO in June of that year.²³ On 3 June 1957, R.B. Curry, the National Director of Family Allowances and Old Age Security and the senior official directing welfare planning for Civil Defence in Health and Welfare, began work as the director of the nascent Emergency Measures Organization with a skeleton staff.²⁴ In November 1957, Bryce summarized the organization's aims for the Prime Minister:

The work concerns mainly plans for carrying on the minimum essentials of government during the very chaotic weeks ... expected at the beginning of a major war, and for doing what is possible to prepare to meet the urgent needs of the public at such times. As you have said yourself, we cannot expect in another major war to have time to prepare after it starts. If the government approves, it is expected that a comprehensive "shadow" organization of volunteers [from the

²² Ibid.

²³ Report on Railway Transportation Forum, CCDC, 5-7 November 1957, LAC RG 46 Vol 1177 File W2106-0 pt 2.

²⁴ Record of Cabinet Decision, 4 April 1957; Bryce to Leger, 30 May 1957, LAC RG 25 Vol 6039 File 50306-A-40 pt 1.1

civil service] will be recruited and trained to take on duties in regional and local centres when emergency action may have to be taken on a few hours' notice.²⁵

Over the course of the following year, the EMO laid the foundation for an entirely new system of CD planning to prepare government agencies for attack. For civil defence officials at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels, few of the Emergency Measures Organization's plans had any immediate effect on their daily business. In fact, most officials were unaware that the CD system established under Worthington had fallen out of the government's favour, but there were ready indications that the scarce support for CD would be cut back, and cut again. Reduced federal support for the 1958 National Civil Defence Day served as an example.²⁶ Federal CD provided financial support and millions of pieces of advertising material to the provinces for the first CD Day in 1957, but during planning for the following year this support disappeared.²⁷

The Last National Civil Defence Day, 1958

When planning for federal support to provincial publicity for 1958's celebration of CD organizations, former newspaper journalist and advertising specialist Harvey Adams, the Director of CDC's Information Services Division, had counted on a generous federal allotment to meet the provinces' needs. Adams took requests for materials from provincial officials, which were abundant, because most provincial civil defence organizations were starved for funds.²⁸ The federal office, charged with tabulating the cost

²⁵ R.B. Bryce to Diefenbaker, 12 November 1957, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 58 Reel M-7814, 49095-49098.

²⁶ Adams to PCDCs, 20 June 1958, LAC RG 29 Vol 646 File 100-5-25.

²⁷ In 1957, over two million posters, bus promotions, shopping bags, calendars, restaurant place mats, newspaper mats, and "dodgers" (slips inserted in mailboxes by door-to-door milkmen, laundry service and Boy Scouts) had been produced by the federal government and distributed to the provinces free of charge, at substantial expense. Civil Defence Day Newsletter, Suggestion No. 8, 28 August 1957, Ibid.

²⁸ Adams to Hatton, 8 January 1958, Ibid.

of supporting publicity throughout Canada, determined the bill would reach \$100,000, and promptly balked at the commitment. In late April, Adams sent out an apologetic letter to the provinces explaining the costs and the federal government's reticence: "It will be impossible for us to attempt a programme of such magnitude. No government would even consider supporting such a costly programme for a one-day event. We will be required to cut, and cut drastically, the amounts of material to be supplied to provincial headquarters."²⁹ Only the cheapest paper products remained on the "free" list; every other piece of promotional material had to be purchased from the Queen's Printer by the provinces under the CD Financial Assistance Programme.³⁰

Provincial civil defence offices were angered by the reversal. H.N. Ganong, the Provincial Co-ordinator for New Brunswick, wrote a scathing letter to Adams which offered his frank views of the value of Civil Defence Day in his province: "We have made no provisions for any expenditure in connection with Civil Defence Day, and will NOT repeat NOT spend any money for this purpose. I do not feel it would be justified."³¹ Every province resignedly accepted the free material, and proceeded with a limited publicity program for the event. The federal office was eager to mitigate the damage done by the cutbacks, and so made special provisions for suspected problem areas, especially in Quebec. With the sour aftertaste of Quebec's meagre support for Civil Defence Day in 1957 still present, Hatton was intent on reversing the trend of mutual animosity between the federal government and the province. Adams arranged a special \$7,000 federal grant

²⁹ Hatton to G.A. McCarter, 29 April 1958, Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ He went on to note that the only publicity items which appeared to make any impact were the shopping bags and restaurant place mats, and asked for his entire free allotment in those two items. His request was

through Davidson to give Quebec provincial officials more of the most popular “free” items that were not supplied to the other provinces. The grant was intended to obtain greater support for Montreal’s embattled civil defence organization.³² While the amounts finally supplied did not match their initial requests, Quebec received over 30,000 English and 100,000 French free publicity pieces not sent to other provinces.

Health minister Monteith also attempted a rapprochement with Ottawa’s city council. By 1958, the city had taken few steps towards organizing for Civil Defence. He suggested to the Ontario’s Provincial Secretary, W.M. Nickle, that a parade of Civil Service Civil Defence volunteers, complete with City of Ottawa fire and rescue vehicles, could pass by Parliament Hill for review by the federal cabinet, Ottawa’s mayor, and provincial representatives.³³ Adams was horrified.

A calvacade which includes private vehicles will look more like a wedding in Brooklyn than a Civil Defence show of strength and an attempt to stage a military-appearing display will result in criticism from civilians who will feel we look silly and from the military who will feel we look ridiculous. I believe such a demonstration would only result in Civil Defence forfeiting much of the prestige that we have laboured so hard to build.³⁴

Monteith’s suggestion may have stemmed from his own confusion about the role of Civil Defence and the Militia in protecting Canada, a theme picked up on in Adams’ criticism of his plan. By suggesting an alternative rescue demonstration, Adams sought to “attract and demonstrate the skills taught in the Civil Defence organization. We would be *doing*

politely turned down. Ganong to Adams, 3 May 1958, Ibid.

³² Hatton to Davidson, 2 June 1958, Ibid.

³³ The Civil Service Civil Defence was a voluntary organization drawn from the federal public service in Ottawa, established by Paul Martin to demonstrate federal commitment to civil defence and embarrass Ottawa’s City Council, which did not take CD seriously until after a 1958 gas main explosion destroyed a federal public building in October 1958. Monteith to Nickle, 24 June 1958, Ibid.

³⁴ Adams to C.L. Smith, 26 June 1958, Ibid.

the jobs we are trained to do, not pretending to be something we are not."³⁵ As a secondary consideration, the federal office, cooperating with the province, ensured that the City of Ottawa received a portion of the province's publicity allotment so that it would not be left out of Civil Defence Day.³⁶

Civil Defence Day unfolded successfully in cities across the country on 19 September 1958. St. John's Civil Defence Co-ordinator and former provincial politician Major Peter Cashin reported that his repeated radio and television appearances, editorials, and press notices had the desired effect. All traffic within the city stopped as new air raid sirens wailed throughout the city. Passengers left the comfort of their vehicles and sought shelter within the city. Cashin estimated that approximately 90 per cent of the population conformed to his instructions. At the climax of the exercise, a Lancaster bomber overflowed the city, dropping leaflets. Cashin's instructions to the city to seek shelter where available was precisely the opposite of the existing federal policy to evacuate civilians from the target area, but he interpreted the public's positive response as a show of moral support for the local civil defence organization.³⁷

Quebec's provincial deputy Welfare minister and civil defence coordinator, Fernand Dostie, similarly reported successes in the province. Throughout the province, local officials had made appearances on television interviews, and the province edited and translated a number of civil defence films for display in theatres and televisions. Thirty-four special radio programs had been prepared and distributed to radio stations throughout the province over the six weeks preceding the celebration. In the printed press,

³⁵ Ibid. [emphasis mine]

³⁶ C.L. Smith to Hatton, 14 July 1958, Ibid.

nearly a hundred daily and weekly publications carried civil defence publicity with messages from the Minister of Youth and Social Welfare. 128 cities and towns took part; 65 mounted their own civil defence displays. In each municipality, the mayor spoke out in favour of organizing for civil defence, and supported demonstrations held by the St. John Ambulance, YMCA, and local Militia units. "En résumé, les manifestations ont été grandioses partout," Dostie wrote. The real enthusiasm, however, was found in smaller towns with populations between 20,000 and 40,000, not in Montreal, as Hatton, Adams, and others had hoped.³⁸

During the National CD Day celebrations, the federal, provincial, and municipal governments presented a rare united front to the public. The organization gave no indication that it would soon be replaced by another agency. Throughout the day, the public heard slogans in support of Civil Defence developed by the Information Division and broadcast over radio stations throughout the country. These included traditional messages such as "Plan today to survive tomorrow"; "Ignorance is bliss, but not during a nuclear war"; "Hoping won't stop an H-Bomb. Ward off the threat by making Canada strong." Several made claims that even the federal government no longer officially supported: "Face the facts about disaster and you'll find Civil Defence is the only answer." The boast made most consistently in the publicity was that Civil Defence in Canada was in the ascendant, buoyed up by its citizen volunteers.³⁹

The Emergency Measures Organization was not included in any publicity nor did any of its representatives participate in celebrations or exercises. The celebratory

³⁷ Cashin to Hatton, 23 September 1958, Ibid.

³⁸ Dostie to Hatton, 2 December 1958, Ibid.

atmosphere of Civil Defence Day disguised deep fractures within the organization that had prompted a crucial re-examination of the basic goals and tasks of civil defence. Few of the commentators on civil defence mentioned, for instance, the national inquiry into civil defence that had been underway for nearly six months, managed by Lieutenant-General Howard Graham, the recently-retired Chief of the General Staff.⁴⁰

The Graham Report: A Turning Point

Graham's inquiry was launched by Diefenbaker's government early in 1958 following a Cabinet discussion about the reorganization of departmental functions and responsibilities. Monteith leapt at the opportunity to shed the Department of Health and Welfare of responsibility for civil defence.⁴¹ He revived the War Book Committee's suggestion that CD should be administered through the Emergency Measures Organization, which to that point had operated only as an interdepartmental government planning body, not an agency for civil protection. The minister argued that the shift would improve efficiency and pointed to changes in the United States, where, on 24 April 1957, responsibility for civil defence had been merged into the Office of Civil Defense Mobilisation. Monteith concluded his proposal to the Prime Minister with the advice that a Minister without Portfolio could be given the "opportunity" to advance civil defence, a task he had found "particularly baffling and frustrating up to the present time."⁴²

Monteith received permission to ask Graham to take over the position of Federal Civil Defence Coordinator from Hatton. Graham found Monteith's offer less attractive

³⁹ Civil Defence Day Newsletter No. 3, 29 July 1958. Ibid.

⁴⁰ R.L. Beatty to C.L. Smith, 25 September 1958, Ibid.

⁴¹ It is possible that G.F. Davidson, the Deputy Minister for Welfare, may have had a role in prompting the move, given his past reluctance to move in the field of civil defence.

than an employment opportunity with the Toronto Stock Exchange, but he agreed to work in a temporary capacity to complete an assessment of the Canadian civil defence organizations from coast to coast.⁴³ Graham's appointment was announced in the House of Commons. He was given the mandate to provide a comprehensive review of existing policies at the local, provincial, and national levels, and to suggest revisions of CD strategy that would offer solutions to the intercontinental ballistic missile threat. The response across the country to the announcement of Graham's task was immediate, if unintended. Civil Defence Committees and Councils across Canada feared that their investments of money and time into new plans and equipment could be rendered obsolete by Graham's findings. This caused paralysis at all levels of decision-making from the Federal Civil Defence Headquarters down to the individual civil defence volunteers.⁴⁴

As the review continued, plans were put on hold or starved out of existence, as federal planners refused to dispense funds to programs that were under review. News of the review hit at the worst possible time for some local organizations. In Toronto, after a long wait for approval of plans for evacuation, routes of dispersal, and reception by provincial officials, 25 sirens had been installed and the organization was beginning to enlist the media to promote civil defence to a wider audience. Pamphlets were distributed to homes, enclosed with the monthly hydro bills, and most importantly, local training appeared to be getting off the ground. Yet in early August 1958, the head of the Metro Toronto Civil Defence Committee, Alderman Donald Summerville, reported that Civil

⁴²J. Waldo Monteith to Diefenbaker, 9 May 1958, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26M Vol 48 File 140.

⁴³ Howard Graham, *Citizen and Soldier*. (Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 1987), p. 243.

⁴⁴ On 18 June 1958, Ottawa's mayor announced that the establishment of active civil defence in the city would be delayed in light of the review. *The Ottawa Citizen*, 18 June 1958. The City Council did, however,

Defence had to be “laid over,” until the results of the survey were known.⁴⁵ At the end of the month, the Metro Toronto CD Coordinator, H.H. Atkinson, discovered that every last submission for funding had been rejected by the Federal Civil Defence Headquarters, including shelter survey and signage, on the grounds that it could not be covered by “existing regulations.”⁴⁶ By the beginning of February 1959, the financial implications of Graham’s review were still unclear, and funding for the next year’s civil defence programming had not been given federal approval.⁴⁷

Toronto and other municipalities eventually tired of waiting for Graham to complete his report, postponed for several months while he coordinated the visit to Canada of the Queen in the fall and winter of 1958 at the request of the government.⁴⁸ In Graham’s memoirs, he recalled Diefenbaker’s reaction to his initial reluctance to work on the royal tour because of the pressing deadline for his civil defence survey. The Prime Minister said that “it wouldn’t matter if that is delayed a bit.”⁴⁹ Political scientist James Eayrs had a characteristically pungent reaction:

[It is] more urgent than ever that Canadian citizens be instructed in the hazards of fall-out and provided with protection against them. Yet what is being done for civil defence? Who is General Worthington’s successor? What has happened to General Graham’s report? What, indeed, has happened to General Graham? That question, at least, may be answered. He is planning the visit of the Queen and

vote to set up a Civil Defence Advisory Committee and appoint a Civil Defence Controller, Ernie Jones.

⁴⁵ Summerville to Metro Toronto Civil Defence Committee, 11 August 1958, LAC RG 29 Vol 727 File 112-T1.

⁴⁶ Atkinson to Summerville, 28 August 1958, LAC RG 29 Vol 727 File 112-T1 pt 5.

⁴⁷ WO Waffle to Monteith, 2 February 1959, Ibid.

⁴⁸ At a press conference, Toronto officials blasted the Diefenbaker government, asserting that the Council, had tired of “sitting on its hands” and had decided to vote only enough funds to keep the municipal organization alive until the end of April 1959. Similarly, the Reeve of Swansea, Ontario, declared that organizers were at “their wit’s end” trying to keep volunteers interested, and that one in his area had abandoned teaching civil defence in favour of public speaking lessons to attract volunteers to the organization. “Metro Blast on CD Brings Ottawa Pledge,” *The Globe and Mail*, 30 January 1959.

⁴⁹ Graham, p. 245.

Prince Philip. First things first.⁵⁰

The Cabinet had intended to present Graham's conclusions to the House of Commons and the Canadian public, but after a preliminary review of his findings, submitted in early 1959, their resolve faltered.⁵¹ The report was never publicly released, nor does there appear to be any record of Graham's findings in any of the archives of Cabinet ministers or in departmental records, though over 75 copies of the report were circulated. The Diefenbaker government did not disclose the Graham report for several reasons. Prominent among these was Graham's own recommendation that the report ought to be kept secret. Graham believed that the document, which laid bare the confusion and lack of co-operation in CD across the country, would place national security at risk if made public. Nor did he wish to publish the comments of provincial and municipal officials that he had recorded in confidence.⁵²

In an early draft of his autobiography, Graham revealed his personal impressions of the manner in which civil defence had proceeded in the provinces. In most of his interviews, provincial premiers and responsible ministers had little or no understanding of the organizations for which they were responsible. Civil Defence was left entirely to the discretion of their provincial coordinators. Graham also found no evidence of interprovincial planning or protected communication facilities that could survive an attack and permit governments, federal and provincial, to coordinate rescue efforts across

⁵⁰ James Eayrs, "Canada, NATO, and the Nth Power Problem," *Canadian Forum* 39, (April 1959), pp. 6-7.

⁵¹ In their last meeting of 1958, Diefenbaker and the Cabinet agreed that, given that the report dealt with purely municipal and provincial matters, it could "hardly be withheld." Cabinet Conclusions, 30 December 1958, LAC RG 2 Series A-5-a Vol 1899.

⁵² Cabinet Conclusions, 10 January 1959, LAC RG 2 Series A-5-a Vol 2744.

the country.⁵³

On 21 January, after further study of the report, Monteith argued to his colleagues that:

Tabling the report with its criticism of the government and its comments on provincial situations was inadvisable and self-condemnatory. ... The government would not escape criticism by tabling the recommendations alone.⁵⁴

The Cabinet agreed not to release any of the recommendations or to ever publish the report, but instead to await further study of the subject by Monteith and George Pearkes, the Minister of National Defence. Graham's principal finding was that Civil Defence required an urgent update and reform to be of any use to the public in a thermonuclear war. The ministers recognized that delay might lead to an erosion of public interest in civil defence, but Graham's recommendations were far-reaching; they included greater responsibilities for the armed forces in civil defence, a suggested change in departmental management, and alterations in the relationship between the provinces and the federal government. All of these were serious changes that would take time to implement effectively.

The report has never been released, and indeed appears to have been lost, but the reaction to the report within government agencies, and in particular the newly-established Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) is well documented, shedding light on the

⁵³ First Draft of *Citizen and Soldier*, Book VII, LAC Graham Fonds MG 30 E524 File 10. Over five months, Graham visited Victoria, Vancouver, New Westminster, Abbotsford, Penticton, Edmonton, Wetaskawin, Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge, Vulcan, Regina, Qu'Appelle, Dafoe, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Brandon, Winnipeg, Dauphin, Toronto, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Peterborough, Kingston, Cornwall, Montreal, Edmundston, Woodstock, Fredericton, St. Stephen, Saint John, Moncton, Truro, Halifax, Wolfville, Digby, Charlottetown, and St. John's, Newfoundland. In short, he visited every major civil defence centre and several others besides, always in the company of the provincial coordinator. He strove to obtain the views of the premiers, cabinet ministers, mayors, and average citizens.

content and character of the report. According to the Clerk of the Privy Council, Bryce, It came down firmly against the mixed policy of “evacuation and shelter” that had been periodically articulated since late 1953. Graham’s criticism of the program was based on discussions held with the Commissioner of the Red Cross, the St. John Ambulance Association, the Presidents of the Air Force Association and Royal Canadian Legion, the Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, and the coordinator of civil defence for the United Kingdom, all leading him to the conclusion that mass evacuation was both “impracticable and unacceptable by the population... the danger of ‘fallout’ makes it desirable to stay put.”⁵⁵ The harshest observations were reserved for the federal government itself, which remained reluctant to take full responsibility for civil defence. Graham concluded, like others before him, that the full resources of the country would be needed to fight a nuclear emergency.

Graham believed that a fit, trained, disciplined force would be needed to carry out any plan and that the Canadian Army was the only one remotely qualified to do so.⁵⁶ This was contrary to the Canadian planning process for nuclear emergencies. Entangling the armed forces in a domestic rescue effort during the first stages of a war with the Soviet Union was precisely what the Joint Chiefs of Staff had been arguing against since the Second World War. Graham called for plans with a national rather than regional character, “covering all our resources in men and materials.”⁵⁷ As a logical extension of this finding, Graham recommended that the funding responsibility for civil defence in

⁵⁴ Cabinet Conclusions, 21 January 1959, LAC RG 2 Series A-5-a Volume 2744.

⁵⁵ First Draft of *Citizen and Soldier*, Book VII, LAC Graham Fonds MG 30 E524 File 10.

⁵⁶ R.B. Bryce, Director, Emergency Measures Organization, to R. Burns Curry, 9 January 1959, LAC RG 57 1989-90/216 Box 3 File 1020-2.

Canada should reside totally with the federal government. This advice emerged from his consideration of the likely national distribution of fallout following an attack, and the complete opposition by municipal and provincial officials to CD expenditures he had encountered during his survey.⁵⁸

Though the implementation of Graham's recommendations would be very costly for the federal government, his report did not resemble some municipal civil defence plans that called for extensive and expensive shelter systems and military installations.⁵⁹ He believed, like many defence observers, that the Soviet Union and the United States were so equally matched that a full-scale nuclear war was likely, and that even a limited nuclear exchange would be preceded by a lengthy period of tension which would permit some population dispersal.⁶⁰ However, his survey revealed that plans for mass evacuation of cities hours or minutes before attack were disjointed, inconsistent, unrealistic, and not understood even by the local civil defence coordinators who had drafted them. His recommendations for federal and military responsibility were based on his experience as a military officer and a faith in central planning and authority.⁶¹ As Chief of the General Staff, Graham had introduced survival operations into the Canadian Army Militia's training schedule, an unpopular decision, but one that reflected his belief that the Army could not escape assisting CD in a nuclear war. His report reflected this preference.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Graham, p. 245.

⁵⁹ During his time as Chief of General Staff, Graham believed NATO plans to have Canada send a division overseas after the conflict began were unrealistic, as one side or the other was likely to surrender in three days or less. This is interesting if only for the fact that all NATO planning during this time was based on a period of all-out conflict which would last at most 30 days. Ibid., p. 242.

⁶⁰ As early as 1956, the Departments of National Defence and External Affairs both regarded the retaliatory capability of the Soviet Union and the United States as so evenly matched as to largely rule out the possibility of a nuclear exchange, a view echoed in the United States. Richter, p. 68, 138.

The available evidence suggests that Graham's findings were valid. Canada's CD was broken largely as a result of the intergovernmental obstacles it had encountered since 1948. Graham's advice to the government to increase the military's involvement in CD was a solution that could improve federal leadership, but the Army could not substitute for the large body of trained, if ill-coordinated CD volunteers. Conducting rescue and reconstruction operations in an area destroyed by nuclear weapons required a much larger force than the limited numbers the Canadian Army could provide.

Implementing the Graham Report

The government took the Graham report very seriously, because an intensified superpower confrontation had unfolded in Europe in the fall of 1958. On 27 November of that year, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev delivered an ultimatum to the West to withdraw its garrisons from West Berlin, or he would sign a separate peace with the communist German Democratic Republic (GDR) and allow the GDR to restrict Western access to the city. This would have spelled an end to the democratic Western outpost in the GDR, in which the United States, the United Kingdom, and France had invested extensive military and economic resources. The announcement set off nearly four years of crisis and confrontation.⁶² Riding a wave of success since the *Sputnik* coup, Khrushchev took the gambit to meet several aims. The Soviet premier wanted to stave off an expected NATO decision to station intermediate range ballistic missiles in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), and to shock European NATO allies into recognizing and dealing with the GDR directly as a sovereign state, a position unacceptable to the West, which had

⁶¹ Graham, p. 245.

⁶² John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know*. (Oxford: University Press, 1997), p. 139.

committed to the eventual reunification of Germany.⁶³ Yet neither the Soviet Union nor the GDR believed that the West would actually provoke a nuclear war over Berlin.⁶⁴ Officially, NATO stood by their policy to support West Berlin, threatening war if the West's access rights were abused by the Soviets.⁶⁵ Most NATO countries suspected that the Soviets would never actually eject the West from Berlin with armed force. No one, including the FRG, wanted a nuclear war over the city.⁶⁶ The federal government quietly prepared Canada for war as the crisis deepened.⁶⁷

Against this backdrop, the federal government convened an Ad Hoc Committee on Civil Defence to study Graham's report and prepare recommendations for the federal government. Bryce chaired the Committee, which was composed of members of the Privy Council Office, Davidson from Health and Welfare, the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, and the Chief of General Staff. Over several meetings between 30 January and early March 1959, these representatives considered the future direction of civil defence in

⁶³ In his edited memoirs, Nikita S. Khrushchev explained the policy of squeezing Berlin as "achieving a moral victory without war." His goal was to force the Americans' European allies to urge concessions to the Soviet Union. To Khrushchev, the risks of provoking the Americans were worth the initial rewards, "We were also afraid of war. Only a fool would not be ... that does not mean you can buy yourself out of war at any price, to the detriment of your country's prestige." Nikita Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev* Volume 3, edited by Sergei Khrushchev, translated by George Shriver. (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 297.

⁶⁴ The GDR ambassador to the Soviet Union remarked on this in a report following shortly after the ultimatum was delivered: "Ultimately the issue would come to a crisis for the West as a prestige issue and that therefore in my opinion everything must be done so as to facilitate retreat for the Western powers on this issue." Comments on the Preparation of the Steps of the Soviet Government Concerning a Change in the Status of West Berlin, 4 December 1958, *Cold War International History Project: Germany in the Cold War*. Accessed online on 2 December 2008:

http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=va2.document&identifier=5034F1B1-96B6-175C-9B22BE9FDBA43BB7&sort=Collection&item=Germany+in+the+Cold+War.

⁶⁵ Bothwell, pp. 164-165.

⁶⁶ Memorandum from Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs to Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs, 24 November 1958, *Documents on Canadian External Affairs* Volume 24, Document 302. Accessed online on 3 December 2008: <http://www.international.gc.ca/departement/history-histoire/dcer/details-en.asp?intRefId=6724>

⁶⁷ Sean Maloney, *Learning to Love the Bomb: Canada's Nuclear Weapons During the Cold War*.

Canada. The original point of contention was Graham's recommendation to transfer control of civil defence to the Department of National Defence. Bryce and other members of the committee rejected his advice because the Government of Canada War Book placed this responsibility on all government departments and agencies. Civil defence, Bryce argued, was one component of government machinery in a total war.⁶⁸

Both deputy welfare minister George Davidson and defence minister Pearkes rejected any suggestion that the federal government should assume more responsibility over civil defence. Bryce countered that the federal government would undoubtedly control most resources after a nuclear strike. His agency had found that the public had generally supported municipal and provincial claims that civil defence was a matter of national defence, and therefore a federal responsibility. The public, after all, looked to the federal government for their safety. Bryce concluded that any successful future CD program would require greater federal involvement and visible support.⁶⁹

Pearkes and Lieutenant-General S.F. Clark, the new Chief of the General Staff, initially rejected any army responsibility in coordinating civil defence, but later conceded that the army could carry out operational tasks such as re-entry into attacked areas, search and rescue, engineering, and radiation monitoring under aid of the civil power provisions.⁷⁰ It was agreed at the first meeting of the Bryce Committee that CD tasks would have to be divided between the civilian authority and the military.

An internal EMO report about the economic impact of a nuclear attack informed

(Washington: Potomac Books, 2007), p. 192.

⁶⁸ Graham, p. 245.

⁶⁹ Ad Hoc Committee on Civil Defence, 30 January 1959, LAC RG 57 1989-90/216 Box 3 Interim 284 File 1020-2.

Bryce's plan for the division of governmental and departmental responsibility for CD.⁷¹

This was based on an attack scenario in which every Canadian target was hit in the first stages of the war, and where intense radioactive fallout blanketed the rest of the populated areas in the country. The conclusion was that, in order to ensure the survival of the country, each federal government department, beginning with the responsible minister, would need to assume responsibility for carrying on essential programs in cooperation with their provincial counterparts. These programs would be organized through protected headquarters outside of target areas run by a skeleton support staff, and administered by regional officers empowered by the Privy Council.⁷² The Emergency Measures Organization was to be responsible for planning, organizing and financing local preparations for displaced people in wartime.⁷³ Bryce's plan recognized that municipalities could no longer be held fully responsible for the organization and maintenance of CD organizations, but required trained police and fire services capable of keeping civil order until help could arrive from the military. The Ad Hoc Committee approved this draft plan on 23 February 1959.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ The report, "Economic Problems under Nuclear Attack", was based on the long-standing NATO assumption that any nuclear war would be won in the 'shock phase' of the first 30 days following the outbreak of hostilities or nuclear exchange, and identified critical shortcomings in the area of supply, transportation, manpower, finance, and accommodation, as production in all areas slowed or came to a stop in the ensuing chaos. Preparing industry in all sectors for attack with surplus parts, stocks, or fuel was problematic both because of the distribution of targets, and the essential problem: how to distribute these stocks post attack? Even this assumption, however, lay on "very shaky statistical foundations." Survival would be endangered further because nuclear war was unlike any other conflict in Canadian history – urgent jobs would need to be filled immediately, and any attempt at national registration before attack would be as demoralizing as it would be completely ineffective. There was, in short, no area of Canada that was prepared for attack, nor any area of federal government activity that would not be critically inhibited. LAC RG 57 1989-90/216 Box 3 File 1020-2.

⁷² War Organization; Civil Functions; Plan 'B', 5 February 1959, Ibid.

⁷³ This recommendation was made with Bryce's comment that it was more palatable to fully fund provincial efforts, but that federal control was the only way to ensure that the work would be done. Ibid.

The committee's final report to Cabinet incorporated many of Graham's recommendations, with minor adjustments made by EMO. Since much of the population already believed that the federal government, not individuals, was responsible for the citizen's survival, the Committee concluded that the federal government had to invest in a greater federal CD effort to provide "central planning in peacetime and central direction in war."⁷⁴ The committee rejected Graham's argument, however, that the Canadian Army was the only force capable of directing CD planning and operations, and proposed that with greater federal leadership, the provinces could be convinced to improve their own CD efforts. The committee recommended that the federal government should increase its share of spending for CD projects under the Financial Assistance Program from 50 per cent to 75 per cent, to provide the provinces and the public with immediate evidence of the federal government's new role in civil defence. The Canadian Army would not be solely responsible for civil defence, as Graham had recommended, but the Committee accepted his argument that the Army should have a greater role in re-entering wasted cities to rescue trapped citizens.⁷⁵ In the past, it had been assumed by the Chiefs of Staff Committee that the armed forces in Canada would provide assistance to civil defence during an attack, but the Bryce Committee report formalized their involvement, with far-reaching implications for mobilization and training.

The Bryce report was forwarded to Cabinet and approved on 17 March 1959. It set a new direction for civil defence in Canada. After nearly a decade of federal-provincial-municipal disputes, the principle of local self-sufficiency had been set aside for a

⁷⁴ Draft Report; Ad Hoc Committee on Civil Defence, 9 March 1959, Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Continuity of Government policy, which demanded a greater federal effort. Civil Defence, which had been to that point intentionally civilian in its nature and composition, also moved towards militarization by giving the armed forces influence over CD planning and operations. The Committee also hoped that a substantial increase to the federal government's financial investment in CD measures would resolve the intergovernmental battles about money and jurisdiction that had done so much damage to the credibility of Civil Defence Canada over the past decade.

Yet the new plan ensured that jurisdictional battles would continue, not only between governments but within the federal government itself. While CD had once been administered by one government department, all government departments would now be expected to carry out one or more aspects of the national survival program. In his report, Bryce predicted that the diffusion of responsibilities might lead to breakdowns in communication between departments and cause other complications, but he assured Diefenbaker that the government could "make it work."⁷⁶ The infusion of funds for the Financial Assistance Programme was not matched by greater expenditure for the federal planning office, which would have to conduct expanded operations with its small staff. Bryce informed Curry that he should not expect any new funds for EMO. Instead, Bryce sought to obtain resources for EMO through the first major cuts to the existing federal civil defence establishment in the Department of National Health and Welfare.⁷⁷

EMO absorbs CD

Davidson, like Monteith, was eager to remove Civil Defence from his list of

⁷⁶ Memorandum to Diefenbaker from R.B. Bryce, 19 March 1959, Ibid.

⁷⁷ Memorandum from R.B. Bryce to R.B. Curry, 18 March 1959, Ibid.

responsibilities, and in particular to rid himself of the staff that had occasionally created negative press coverage and criticism of the minister. Bryce's report promised Diefenbaker that the shift of CD responsibility from Civil Defence Canada to EMO would give the government an opportunity to be rid of Major General G.S. Hatton. Hatton's bombastic personality had grated on his superiors, his colleagues, and, most importantly, provincial officials.⁷⁸ Bryce had spoken with Diefenbaker about Hatton, who had been the Federal Civil Defence Coordinator in an acting capacity for nearly two years. In the course of the conversation, Diefenbaker revealed that the army wanted nothing to do with Hatton, nor did National Health and Welfare. Bryce and Diefenbaker concluded that Hatton would serve as a special advisor to the Emergency Measures Organization until he could be quietly dropped.⁷⁹

On 23 March 1959, Diefenbaker announced his planned reforms of civil defence organization to the House of Commons. Newspaper coverage of his speech focused more on elements of his speech indicating that the Canadian Army would be responsible for "national survival" operations in the future, and ignored the important point that "the remaining functions of the existing Federal Civil Defence [not allocated to other

⁷⁸ In the fall and winter of 1958, Hatton had been involved in a number of running battles with Ontario municipalities, which led to accusations by municipalities against the province. The province of Ontario was already dissatisfied with the tripartite arrangement for civil defence, and reacted with hostility against both the municipal officials and Hatton. One such case was especially embarrassing for the federal government. Following a natural gas explosion which partially destroyed a federal government office in October 1958, Diefenbaker and Monteith both expressed their support for the City of Ottawa's emergency services. Hatton, however, chose the moment to attack the City Council for its long refusal to establish a Civil Defence organization. Hatton was censured after the city filed a complaint with federal officials. See "Hatton Remarks Draw Criticism," *Ottawa Journal*, 27 October 1958; "Civil Defence? The City Doesn't Need It – Mayor," *Ottawa Journal*, 31 October 1958. "See 14-month delay in Rewiring Sirens," *Toronto Star*, 22 December 1958; "May Block Cash Until Shakeup," *Toronto Star*, 27 December 1958; "Metro 'Frustrated', Criticizes Ottawa," *Toronto Star*, 14 January 1959.

⁷⁹ R.B. Bryce, Notes to discuss with the Prime Minister regarding new EMO Establishment, 7 April 1959, RG 57 1989-90/216 Box 3 File 1020-2.

government departments] should be integrated with the Emergency Measures Organization.”⁸⁰ Affected federal government departments reacted to the announcement with confusion and bewilderment. *The Ottawa Citizen*, for example, reported that Canadian Army representatives in Ottawa did not know how the military’s new responsibilities would be applied, and that Civil Defence Canada workers were concerned about their future.⁸¹ Employees of Civil Defence Canada were aware that Graham’s report had been under study, but they were caught off guard by the Prime Minister’s announcement.

Hatton’s leadership following the announcement did little to inspire confidence in his federal colleagues. Jack Wallace, a veteran CD planner first recruited by Worthington in 1949, arrived late to CD headquarters on the day of Diefenbaker’s declaration, witnessed Hatton’s reaction, and concluded that the acting FCDC was out of touch with the rest of the organization. Wallace relayed the news to Matthew Penhale, the commandant of the Canadian Civil Defence College in Arnprior, that Diefenbaker’s announced changes had resulted in “many long faces and weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The prime minister’s speech clearly indicated that civil defence was changing, and gave the Emergency Measures Organization more influence than Civil Defence Canada had enjoyed.

Hatton was in Kingston and had not received advance notice about the planned changes. When he returned to Ottawa on 24 March, he reassured the staff that no

⁸⁰ One of Diefenbaker’s MPs, Dr. George Clark Fairfield, remarked on the press interest in the new arrangements, and particularly their indifference to EMO’s much larger role, in his notes on the day’s events. Notes, 14 April 1959, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Volume 48 File 141.

⁸¹ “Atomic Defenders: Army Now Responsible for Canada’s Survival,” *The Ottawa Citizen*, March 24,

significant changes would take place. Wallace concluded from his remarks that “[Hatton] is naïve ... it is quite apparent from the statement that a major re-organization is to take place.”⁸² Hatton, for his part, stated that he would establish three additional sub-committees to suggest which CD tasks could go to EMO and which might go to DND, in order to preserve his organization. Once more, Wallace was pessimistic: “I do not think that those who are responsible for policy are suddenly going to change and ask Civil Defence what things should be changed.”⁸³ The impact was immediately clear to Wallace: Civil Defence Canada, as established under the previous Liberal government, was no longer in charge of the country’s survival efforts. Just two weeks after the announcement, Wallace gloomily told Penhale, even the departmental mail had slowed to a few items a day.

Diefenbaker brought his program of civil defence reform to confused and anxious provincial representatives in April 1959. It was the first time that the Prime Minister had attended a federal-provincial civil defence conference. His presence was required because the EMO was ultimately responsible to him, but his attendance was also meant to signify the importance that his government accorded to emergency measures. Provincial representatives were encouraged by Diefenbaker’s plans to centralize responsibility for emergency measures in the federal government, and the announcement that the Canadian Army would be doing most of the heavy lifting in case of attack. They were most eager to learn more about the federal government’s promise to assume three-quarters of the cost of

1959.

⁸² J.F. Wallace to M.H.S. Penhale, 26 March 1959, LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 G21 Vol 9 File “CD – Daily Diary – Management of CD College and organization of permanent CD Network 1958-1960”

⁸³ Ibid.

provincial and municipal programs.⁸⁴ Pearkes, also present at the conference, provided an unusually detailed assessment of the military threat from the ICBM and thermonuclear weapons, based on NATO's own planning assumptions, which predicted a crisis period in 1961-1963.⁸⁵

The federal government's frank disclosure of problems and threats at the conference greatly impressed the provincial delegates. W.D. Black, the representative from British Columbia, called the conference the "biggest step forward in [civil defence's] history."⁸⁶ Every province's representatives at the conference agreed with the proposed division of powers, which asked for no new commitments from the provinces.

With ratification from the provinces, Diefenbaker's reform package was formalized in Order-in-Council 1959-656, approved on 28 May 1959. The "Civil Defence Order" (CDO), as it was identified, restructured federal responsibility for civil defence along departmental lines. The Department of National Defence assumed responsibility for Canada's air raid warning system, and agreed to create another warning system that would detect fallout patterns after an explosion had occurred. Most importantly, the CDO assigned responsibility to the armed forces for "controlling, directing and carrying out re-entry into areas damaged by a nuclear explosion or contaminated by serious radioactive fallout... and the rescue and provision of first aid to those trapped and injured."⁸⁷ The armed forces would also assume emergency powers over "municipal and other services,"

⁸⁴ Summary Record of the Dominion-Provincial Conference on Civil Defence Arrangements, 24 April 1959, LAC RG 25 Vol 5944 File 50217-40 pt 6.2.

⁸⁵ The assumptions circulated by NATO were evaluated and confirmed by the Department of National Defence's Joint Intelligence Committee, which suggested that the ballistic missile would be a serious threat as soon as 1960. Minutes of the 11th Civil Defence Policy Meeting, September 29, 1958, Ibid.

⁸⁶ Summary Record of the Dominion-Provincial Conference on Civil Defence Arrangements, 24 April

meaning that the Canadian Army would take over the operational control of municipal civil defence, fire, police, and public works during an attack. Planning for Civil Defence was given over to the Emergency Measures Organization, responsible to the Prime Minister. The Department of National Health and Welfare only retained the obligation to assist provinces and municipalities with advice on emergency health and welfare planning. Health and Welfare also continued to operate the Civil Defence College in Arnprior, which trained federal and provincial employees and municipal volunteers in emergency measures doctrine. The CDO took effect on 1 September 1959.

Over the months following the CDO's implementation, Civil Defence Canada employees in National Health and Welfare were slowly parceled out to other government departments, given the option of working out in Arnprior (many refused), or being let go.⁸⁸ The strongest employees were offered posts in the Emergency Measures Organization. Wallace, who had served as the Deputy Commandant of the Civil Defence College, transferred to EMO to serve as its assistant director under R.B. Curry. As federal departments grappled with their new responsibilities, and Civil Defence Canada employees themselves faced an uncertain future, the decision-making process in Ottawa ground to a halt. This, in turn, affected municipal CD organizations, many of which were left waiting for the government's new financial regulations to take effect.

Transition and Confusion

The period following the formal announcement of the new direction in civil

1959, Ibid.

⁸⁷ PC 1959-656, 28 May 1959, LAC RG 2 Vol 2233 File 790 H B.

⁸⁸ Penhale to G.A. McCarter, 14 August 1959, LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 G21 Vol 12 File "McCarter, G.A."

defence was therefore marked by the same organizational paralysis that occurred during the period of Graham's survey. H.O. Waffle, the chair of the Metropolitan Toronto Civil Defence Committee, wrote to Curry in August to complain that his volunteers were bleeding away steadily because the municipality was no longer certain what role, if any, they were meant to play. "In other words," Waffle wrote, "we are maintaining an organization without knowing what our objectives are, or being able to explain them."⁸⁹ In such an atmosphere, obtaining approval for financial projects was impossible, and the recruitment and retention of volunteers "exceedingly doubtful."

The situation was the same elsewhere. W.M. Nickle, Ontario's Minister of Planning and Development, sent a letter of apology to defence minister Pearkes after the Kingston area's civil defence organization folded in November. In his resignation letter, its coordinator, Brigadier-General C. D. Quilliam, likened the local organization to "a bus full of passengers without any drivers." Without policy leadership, municipal interest in volunteering or voting expenses to the organization dwindled. The editors of the *Kingston Whig-Standard* bemoaned the loss of Quilliam and the failure of civil defence to thrive in a principal reception area.⁹⁰

Confusion over direction lay at the root of these events, as provinces and municipalities struggled over their new roles. In some cases, they took little note of the responsibility of the armed forces, the new Emergency Measures Organization, or the much-reduced role of the provinces in civil defence planning. In both British Columbia

⁸⁹ Waffle to Curry, 14 August 1959, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 54 File 87-0.

⁹⁰ Nickle to Pearkes, 23 November 1959, *Ibid.*; "Bus but no Driver: Unable to Rouse interest in Civil Defence, says Brig Quilliam" *Kingston Whig Standard* 20 November 1959; "We lose a Good Man" *Kingston Whig Standard*, 20 November 1959.

and Alberta, civil defence training carried on as usual, with the Coordinators bound to operate under the terms of existing provincial legislation for civil defence, or unwilling to change.⁹¹ Other provincial organizations continued to look to Civil Defence Canada for leadership. When its office doors were closed after 1 September 1959, provincial civil defence offices faced a period of adjustment.⁹²

The transition from CD to EMO was not helped by a public protest from Hatton. Shortly after his involuntary transfer to the Emergency Measures Organization, he published his letter of resignation “in the public interest” to declare that the new organization and its policies were “totally inadequate.” Hatton argued that the Emergency Measures Organization was too small to carry out its tasks, and that reliance on the Army was far too great, since it was not large enough to rescue Canadians if more than one target city was hit: hundreds of thousands of Civil Defence volunteers would still be needed and trained under the old system. He also believed that the diffusion of CD tasks throughout the multiple government departments implicated in the CDO would render coordination in civil defence “ineffective in peace and disastrous in war.” The “disgraceful” treatment of his staff in the civil defence office was further proof of the government’s lack of commitment.⁹³ Yet Hatton’s claim that he intended to resign

⁹¹ C.R. Boehm to Curry, 3 September 1959 LAC RG 57 Box 3 File 155-RO/00.

⁹² A.E. Cooney to Curry, 28 August 1959 Ibid.

⁹³ In this Hatton had greater ground for complaint. The staff received little information about their future, though if any were to come it was to have been Hatton’s responsibility to provide it. On 15 October 1959, Davidson outlined the future for all staff not transferred to other departments to assist in developing their responsibilities. Some 200 positions were called into question. Most of these were automatically transferred to the Civil Defence College in Arnprior, though no transportation or accommodation would be made available to them. He concluded the meeting by urging everyone to look for employment on their own, as any other placements in the civil service would likely be made at a lower job grade. As their salaries had only been guaranteed by Treasury Board until end of fiscal year, Davidson offered no assurances of future employment. Minutes of Meeting, 15 October 1959, LAC RG 29 Vol 52 File 100-1-1 pt 2.

because millions of Canadian lives were at stake was mere posturing. His departure, like the absorption of Civil Defence Canada into the new continuity of government program under the EMO, was already a foregone conclusion.⁹⁴

Conclusion

Canada's civil defence organization was subject to a period of rapid reform after the launch of *Sputnik* in October 1957. The federal government needed to modernize its civil defence plans in any case, because the evacuation strategy did not account for lethal fallout which would blanket the entire populated area of the country and complicate local, municipally-directed CD efforts. After much study, the Canadian government concluded that CD should provide for the continuity of government, and build a federal framework for the central planning and direction of CD operations during the worst period of a nuclear war. The Diefenbaker government rapidly implemented plans laid down by their predecessors, creating the Emergency Measures Organization to begin national survival planning.

The creation of the EMO, kept secret for over a year, was a response to the changing international threat environment facing Canada. Though Civil Defence Canada carried on its operations as usual, even mounting two national "Civil Defence Days" in 1957-1958, these events papered over cracks in the organization's foundation that remained after the celebrations passed. The Diefenbaker government's decision to reassess civil defence conditions across the country in the fall of 1958, carried out by former Chief of the General Staff Howard Graham, was both timely and responsible. It

⁹⁴ Hatton to Monteith, 22 September 1959, LAC Pearson Fonds MG 26 N2 Vol 111.

was motivated by bureaucratic expediency, because health minister Waldo Monteith sought to divorce CD from his department. Even though the Graham survey took place against the background of international tension over Berlin, the government's response to its recommendations was politically driven, and the report itself classified for fear of embarrassing the government.

Graham's recommendations were so incendiary, however, that they could not be ignored. Over 1959, Diefenbaker and the Emergency Measures Organization revised Canada's existing civil defence system based on Graham's findings, assigning new and important tasks to government departments and agencies, and took on greater federal responsibilities for financing municipal and provincial civil defence. Yet Civil Defence Canada's period of transition was also a period of stagnation. As government agencies struggled to understand their new responsibilities, no one could render decisions on vital questions of civil defence financing, evacuation, and shelter planning.

The most important change was to the civil-military balance in Canada's civil defence preparations. Until 1957, CD in Canada had been animated by a principle of communitarian "self-help" where municipalities would depend on their own resources for survival in the first stages of a war, assisted by a CD corps made up of a body of civilian volunteers. With Civil Defence Canada more or less disbanded by 1959 and the Canadian Army assuming responsibility for most traditional civil defence tasks, the principle now was that cities would have to depend on outside help from Canada's military, which was suddenly thrust into the centre of Canada's nuclear survival effort. Additional reforms

were necessary to meet the worst period of international crisis in the early Cold War, from 1959 to the Cuban missile crisis in October 1962.

Chapter 6

Survival Army: The Berlin Crisis and the National Survival Militia Training Plan

The government's 1959 Civil Defence Order had far-reaching consequences for the organization of the federal civil defence organization and government departments responsible for the Continuity of Government (COG) program. The Canadian Army assumed the greatest obligations for civil defence, which began training for rescue and re-entry operations in Canadian target cities. Before that time, these tasks belonged to the volunteers of municipal civil defence agencies but by 1959 the role of these volunteers in emergency planning was greatly diminished, if not abandoned entirely. The Canadian Army, which had chosen to remain on the periphery of CD planning for over a decade, was now central to its success. In the years 1959 to 1963, the Canadian military expended tens of millions of dollars in a scramble to prepare a national warning system, emergency shelter and communications for government officials, and its own forces to fight the "re-entry battle." For this last task, the Canadian Army turned to its citizen-soldiers in the Militia, who were located close to or in many of the target areas.

Army planners soon realized that all of Canada's regular and reserve forces combined would be insufficient to make a significant contribution to the survival of Canadians trapped under rubble or fighting fires in the remnants of their bombed cities. Analysts estimated that hundreds of thousands of civilian volunteers were still required to ensure the country's demographic and economic survival. In peacetime, the Canadian Army devised plans for Militia rescue columns to enter damaged cities and assume command over whatever survivors remained, absorbing their greater numbers into civil-

military rescue cadres, under military discipline, to better coordinate the survival effort. These plans were never made public, though the government repeatedly insisted that civil defence volunteers were still needed in great numbers to work with the military if war came.

The public's interest in civil defence periodically soared during periods of intense international crisis. The Canadian Army's plans would in all likelihood have remained on paper if the Soviet Union had not decided to press the West to withdraw from Berlin in the summer of 1961. Faced with the prospect of imminent nuclear war, the Diefenbaker government launched an ambitious temporary program designed to resolve the military's manpower shortage. In the fall and winter of 1961-1962, the government authorized the Special Militia Training Plan (SMTP) to recruit 100,000 civilians into the Militia for a six-week training course in survival. It remains exceptional as the single largest crash CD training program in peacetime in Canada and, at a cost of \$35 million dollars, the most visible government investment in civil defence since the Korean War. The SMTP, which attracted over 80,000 men, incorporated elements of past civil defence recruiting campaigns, but encountered new problems. The public was skeptical that the force's recruits, mainly unemployed men, were committed to the defence of the country. And a program designed to provide for the civilian defence of the country was administered by the military, whose conception of the rights and obligations of its citizen-soldiers differed from that promoted by CD and expected from its volunteers.

Civil Defence and the Canadian Army to 1959

To properly understand the importance of the entry of the armed forces into CD and the SMTP, it is necessary to retrace the history of the Canadian Army's commitments

to CD in the early Cold War. Throughout the early 1950s, Canada's armed forces arranged their planning in support of existing defence commitments. In North America, this meant aircraft and radar establishments for the defence of North American airspace against Soviet bomber fleets in cooperation with the United States, a relationship formalized in the NORAD Agreement. The Canadian Army, with its independent supply and logistics chains, engineering element, and supply of trained, physically fit men, was the most logical service in the Canadian armed forces to assist in rescue operations and reconstruction of Canadian target areas following a nuclear attack. The Canadian Army's planning was directed to its primary task, which, apart from the prosecution of the Korean War, was the maintenance of the Canadian brigade serving in Germany and Canada's commitment to NATO's defence of Western Europe. The army had agreed in 1951 to prepare two divisions in Canada for immediate despatch to Germany to form a full Canadian army division.¹

Successive Chiefs of the General Staff were adamantly opposed to any diversion from this role, especially in the aid-of-civil-power role that increased support to civil defence would entail. General Guy Simonds, Chief of the General Staff between 1951 and 1955, when asked to reflect on the army's commitment to civil defence, remarked that the CD chief "would have loved to get his hands on my soldiers."² The army was meant for war, not rescue operations. Reluctant the army may have been, but it was implicated in civil defence planning at an early stage.

¹ Sean Maloney, *Learning to Love the Bomb: Canada's Nuclear Weapons During the Cold War*. (Washington: Potomac Books, 2007), p. 11.

² G.W.L. Nicholson, "The Canadian Militia's Introduction to Civil Defence," in Robert Bothwell and Michael Cross, eds. *Policy By Other Means: Essays in Honour of C.P. Stacey*. (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1972), pp. 225-226.

The 1950 Canadian Army Policy Statement concerning “Participation of the Armed Forces in Civil Defence,” prepared by the Directorate of Military Operations and Planning (DMO&P), stated that the work to organize civil defence in Canada was primarily a civilian and municipal responsibility. The armed forces’ support for civil defence was vaguely defined in the policy, which promised that the Canadian Army would supply “mobile reserves in secondary role” and “provision of skilled personnel ... helping to clear debris [and] for restoration of communications and public services; treatment and evacuation of casualties in conjunction with CD medical services.”³ The armed services’ first priority was not protection of the public but rather of their own installations and establishments in Canada during the first phases of an atomic war. At the height of the Korean War in March 1951, DMO&P revisited the policy to eliminate promises of army assistance to civil defence.⁴

Major-General F.F. Worthington, Federal Civil Defence Coordinator from 1948 to 1957, pressured the Army to present a clear picture of its commitment to civilian defence, but he did not want the armed forces to stand in for civilian volunteers. As a retired major-general with experience in two world wars, he realized the limitations and priorities of the armed forces during wartime emergency. Outwardly, he respected and supported army policy, but Worthington insisted on clarity in the army’s policy statements because he did not want to give provincial politicians the mistaken impression that they could simply call out the army if Canada was attacked. Simonds took issue with

³ CAPS No. 65, 27 September 1950, LAC RG 29 Vol 654 File C-102-3-2B.

⁴ CAPS No. 74, 10 March 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 654 File C-102-3-2B; Civil Defence Memorandum 5/52, Davidson to Martin, 11 March 1951, LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12 Vol 24 File 7. The DMO&P did, however, make provisions for increased peacetime liaison between the armed forces and provincial Civil Defence agencies through District and Area Army Commands, a change welcomed by the Department of National Health and Welfare.

Worthington's request, during a 1952 revision of the army's policy, that the "Armed forces should take over until alternate civil authorities can be supplied," if a city's civil defence force was destroyed in the first stages of a nuclear war. If Civil Defence proved inadequate to the task, Worthington wanted first to draw upon support from untrained soldiers and new recruits, then troops awaiting overseas deployment, and only as a last resort experienced, combat-ready soldiers, depending on the country's need.⁵ Both of Worthington's suggestions were rejected in the annual reiteration of the policy in 1952. The Army maintained that it was "undesirable that troops under training... should be involved in civil defence tasks, either as units or individuals, except as a last resort."⁶

Thermonuclear weapons forced the Canadian Army to reassess its commitment. In February 1954, DMO&P reiterated the primary responsibility of the civilian authorities to prepare for nuclear attack, but added an important caveat:

It is recognized, however, that these air attacks may create such wide-spread damage in target areas as to extend either beyond the capacity of the local civil defence organization or even to render it completely incapable of carrying out its task. While the Armed Forces are necessarily concerned with other important aspects of the national war effort and should not be needlessly deviated from their primary roles, yet because the alleviation of suffering and the restoration of civilian activity in a bombed area is of immediate importance to the war effort, they must be prepared as a temporary measure to come to the immediate assistance of the civil defence organization within bombed targets or even to assume completely the functions of that organization.⁷

As the federal civil defence agency took its first tentative steps towards a policy of evacuation, the Chiefs of Staff Committee (CSC) reluctantly authorized greater military involvement in civil defence planning. As a first step, the CSC instructed General

⁵ M.P. Cawdron to LCol W.H. Gillespie, 11 October 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 654 File C-102-3-2B.

⁶ CAPS 90, 17 January 1952, Ibid.

⁷ CAPS (not yet approved), 11 March 1954. Ibid.

Officers Commanding (GOCs) Area Commands across Canada to prepare emergency plans to assist provincial authorities.⁸

As part of this process, GOCs surveyed Canadian civil defence agencies to assess how much help they would actually require. GOCs in Central, Quebec, and Prairie Commands expressed “concern” in their reports about civil defence’s apparent unpreparedness for war. The GOC Central Command commented to Simonds that “the larger urban centres ... should be recognized as a major commitment for Central Command and one which will undoubtedly interfere with mobilization if enemy bombing activity is severe and continuous.”⁹ GOC Prairie Command bitterly noted that the provisions of the most recent Canadian Army Policy Statement could only apply if “a civil defence organization is, in fact, in existence and can operate. ... Such is not the case in Prairie Command.”¹⁰ In every assessment provided by GOCs, training installations and mobilized Militia (reserve) forces were highlighted as the most important source of manpower for use in support of civilian defence organizations.¹¹

In February 1955, the suggestions of the GOCs were incorporated into the annual policy statement, which outlined in clear terms that the armed forces should be prepared to “assume the functions of civil defence, as a temporary measure, in the event that the local civil defence organization has been overwhelmed.”¹² Worthington’s consistent emphasis on clearly distinguished roles for the armed forces and civil defence

⁸ Minutes of the 559th Meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 12 March 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 654 File S-102-3-2A.

⁹ Appendix A to CCS 2090-1, 17 May 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 654 File C-102-3-2B.

¹⁰ Ibid. Saskatchewan, in particular, took few preparations for civil defence, because provincial officials believed that the province contained no targets of any strategic value.

¹¹ The study of Canadian Army planning for civil defence is, in reality, another dissertation in itself. In the interests of brevity, the details of the various Command Plans are not recounted here. Interested researchers can, as a first step, consult Appendix ‘A’ ECC 2090-1 Vol 2 (G), 14 May 1954, Ibid.

¹² CSC Paper No. 1(55), 14 February 1955, Ibid.

organizations was not founded solely on respect for the Canadian Army's mission within NATO. He and other federal civil defence officials were also worried that the armed forces' involvement in CD could negatively affect enrolment of civilian volunteers, and reinforce the impression of Quebec and Ontario provincial and municipal officials that civil defence was an Army responsibility. Provincial officials often argued that civil defence was an element of national defence in public disputes with the federal government over who should pay for CD preparations. Upon seeing the 1955 policy statement, George Davidson, the Deputy Minister for Welfare, sent an anxious note to Worthington asking whether it would be wise to "soft-pedal" the policy before releasing it to the provinces, given the "do-nothing" attitudes in Montreal, Ottawa, and Quebec.¹³

Worthington worked with Simonds to develop a joint announcement of the 1955 policy for health minister Paul Martin and defence minister Ralph Campney. The guiding principles of civil-military cooperation in Civil Defence were laid out clearly to prevent the provinces from misinterpreting its impact on the need for continued local support: "The military are to assist civil authorities *but not replace them*; They will normally be employed in formed bodies under their own Officers and NCOs. GOCs are empowered to delegate troops in aid of Civil Defence as to the task to be performed."¹⁴ The supporting role of the Armed Forces in Civil Defence was made clear when the policy was formally announced by Campney in the House of Commons: "They will not, therefore, become part of the Civil Defence Organization or assume any of its functions, but they will stand ready to provide assistance in an emergency, if called upon by the civil authorities."¹⁵

¹³ Davidson to Worthington, 15 March 1955, *Ibid*.

¹⁴ Worthington to Martin, 14 July 1955, LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12 Vol 24 File 7.

¹⁵ Statement by the Hon. Ralph Campney, AFN 28-55, LAC RG 29 Vol 654 File 102-3-2.

In April 1956, a General Staff Instruction introduced the first training regimen for “national survival” tasks. While GOCs were officially instructed to use both regular and reserve forces in support of Civil Defence if asked, George Urquhart’s survey of earlier draft plans reveals that, in nearly every Canadian Command, reserve forces were almost exclusively tasked with civil defence duties. The regular forces remained earmarked for deployment overseas. As a result, General Staff training directives for 1957-1958 called for the development in each Command of a “small nucleus of militia units capable of assisting the civil defence organizations.”¹⁶ Militia Groups were still trained for war, but their training programmes reflected the demand for reserve units specializing in communications and engineering duties, both essential for aid of the civil power exercises. For example, infantry and artillery units received greater training in first aid and traffic control.

As training progressed, the Canadian Army began to fashion local Militia groups into self-contained “Mobile Support Groups,” capable of assuming additional communication, reconnaissance, route clearance, rescue, traffic control, and first aid to bombed out areas where civil defence organizations existed, and all functions of CD in those areas where the organizations did not exist or had been destroyed.¹⁷ By May 1957, a policy for mobile columns existed in draft which inextricably tied the assistance of the reserves to support of the “static [civilian] civil defence force which would have its hands full in executing the dispersal plan.” The concept of mobile columns demanded unique

¹⁶ George Mackenzie Urquhart, “The Changing Role of the Canadian Militia, 1945-1975” (Victoria: University of Victoria M.A. Thesis, 1977), pp. 73-74.

¹⁷ Instructions for Provincial Civil Defence Coordinators, 10 May 1956, LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12 Vol 24 File 7.

units experienced in national survival operations, with their own leaders: “they require to be self-sustained and not dependent on other services.”¹⁸

The decision to employ reserve forces in support of civil defence was not confined to Canada. In Denmark and the Netherlands, mobile columns were recruited from universal service conscripts. The columns were assigned officers, and maintained as a unit. In the United Kingdom, mobile columns were composed of three-company units, selected from National Service conscripts, who trained for 30 days a year in National Survival. By 1957, the United States had no formal armed forces mobile columns, but units of the National Guard were considered for the role by several state governments.¹⁹

The concept of reserve mobile columns was complementary to the civil defence concept associated with evacuation in Canada. General evacuation planning for civil defence consisted of three phases. Phase A was the pre-attack “strategic evacuation” of a city, carried out by civil defence volunteers in a period of strategic warning. Phase B was the “tactical evacuation,” where the remaining citizens in a city were meant to leave during the three hours of expected warning from attack, a process coordinated again by civilian volunteers. Phase C was the mop-up period, when rescue squads were required to enter destroyed cities to salvage what life and industry they could. Under the armed forces policy, the reserve forces were responsible for this last phase, since Civil Defence Canada had admitted by 1956 that there was no civilian organization in the country equipped for the task. However, the 1957 army policy statement read that military support for Phase C would only be temporary, because the armed forces could not “become needlessly diverted from their primary role.” Local civil defence authorities

¹⁸ DRAFT ONLY – Mobile Columns, 17 May 1957, LAC RG 29 Vol 654 File 103-2-3.

¹⁹ Ibid.

were warned that they might receive the Army's help with the evacuation stages, but "this should not be counted on ... and should be considered a bonus."²⁰

The evacuation policy was badly dated by 1958, and tended to ignore the problem posed by the effects of radioactive fallout that could kill evacuees without shelter. Development and integration of intercontinental ballistic missiles into the superpowers' nuclear arsenals after 1957 also undermined the evacuation concept, which depended on at least three hours' warning to empty as many people as possible from cities. Under ideal conditions, the estimated warning that a missile had been launched was a little over 15 minutes.

An Uneasy Relationship: The CASO Conference

Civil Defence, the Emergency Measures Organization, and the Canadian Army all faced a need to update and coordinate their strategies. On 24-26 March 1958, the Canadian Civil Defence College in Arnprior became a forum for discussion at the first Common Approach to Survival Operations (CASO) conference. The CASO conference was convened at the request of the Ministers of National Defence and National Health and Welfare, George R. Pearkes and J. Waldo Monteith, as part of the Diefenbaker government's reassessment of Civil Defence strategy following the 1957 election. Its aims were to study Civil Defence's plans for obtaining military assistance, and the best means to organize and mobilize the armed forces in support of national survival operations. Major-General Howard Graham, the Chief of the General Staff, Major-General G.S. Hatton, the acting Civil Defence Coordinator, R.B. Bryce, Secretary to the Cabinet responsible for the Emergency Measures Organization, and senior officers of the

²⁰ HQC 2090-1 TD 7115, Assistance of the Armed Forces in Civil Defence, 25 April 1957, LAC RG 29 Vol 654 File 102-3-2B.

armed services and federal, provincial, and selected municipal CD officials attended the conference. Civil Defence representatives were primarily concerned with obtaining the military's assistance and cooperation in planning, but the military representatives were, at CASO's outset, skeptical that there was much of a CD organization to support. The differences between the two spheres were reflected in Pearkes' and Monteith's joint address to the conference:

Civil Defence must be regarded as an essential element in the national effort for survival and the maintenance of the morale of the civilian population. For some time it has been established that the Armed Services ... will come to the aid of Civil Defence. The effectiveness of military aid will be dependent, however, on the existence of strong local Civil Defence organizations ... for whom definite tasks can be undertaken.²¹

The conference participants addressed common problems, such as how to cope with the evacuation strategy's obsolescence, joint military-civilian warning systems, and the need for a "comprehensive master plan for national survival."²² Over the course of these discussions, military and civilian representatives at the conference agreed that neither the military nor Civil Defence had the capability to carry out an effective survival effort across the country, primarily because of the uneven development of local CD organizations across the country. The military representatives at the discussion "adamantly" refused to offer any further peacetime commitment of its forces or resources for civil defence tasks. The organizations could only agree that a policy decision was required to resolve the question of whether the Armed Forces should assume a greater role in Civil Defence in peacetime.²³

²¹ Report on CASO Conference, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 2 File 2-5.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid. Hatton's address to the conference reflects the heated discussion: "Now, we have come here, and we have let our hair down, and told each other certain shortcomings that we see in each other's departments

The survey of civil defence carried out by Graham in 1958, and the subsequent Civil Defence Order, resolved and formalized government policy concerning the assistance of the armed forces in civil defence. The Emergency Measures Organization took responsibility for national civil defence planning, including the coordination of peacetime evacuation and shelter plans with the provinces. The armed forces were asked to provide attack and fallout warning, and to lead re-entry and rescue operations in destroyed cities. As a consequence, they were also given the responsibility for directing emergency workers in and around destroyed cities. In effect, the army would now be in charge of Civil Defence. Though the army had played a supporting, and largely ad hoc, role in Civil Defence for nearly a decade, the Civil Defence Order was the first time that the armed services were directed by government policy to lead preparations for civil defence measures in peacetime.

The Manpower Problem

Before the Civil Defence Order, the army had pledged only 3500 troops from the regular force for continental defence; the rest were reserved for deployment to Germany to fight the Warsaw Pact.²⁴ Most of these soldiers were, however, located close to target areas. The Militia's establishment was limited to just 45,000 part-time soldiers who could be mobilized in an emergency. In November 1959, defence minister Pearkes was forced to clarify the government's policy. He stated that the army's new role had not eliminated the need for civilian rescue workers trained in civil defence by the provinces and

and we, as friends, have done it with no malice or ill feeling. ... Now, nobody likes re-thinking all over again, but we know very well that we have got to do it. We can also appreciate the reluctance of the Armed Services to have a policy of evacuation, with their armouries in the wrong places, with their mobilization stores, from this point of view, in the wrong places, with their labour being taken away from them and their mobilization schemes having to be re-written all over again. It would be very much more convenient, I can see from your point of view, if it was Civil Defence who had to do the re-thinking instead of the Armed Services. But the hard facts of life are that we have both got to do this re-thinking."

²⁴ J.L. Granatstein, *Canada's Army*. (Toronto: University Press, 2002), p. 349.

municipalities. The federal re-organization left municipal and provincial civil defence organizations more or less intact, though many local CD organizations lost volunteers during the transition from CD to EMO.

The army believed that 300,000 civilian volunteers were still needed to salvage life from the ruins after a nuclear war.²⁵ This was not an arbitrary number, but the result of detailed studies of requirements for national survival carried out in the United States and Canada. In February 1960, the Chief of the General Staff asked the new Directorate of Survival Operations and Planning (DSO&P) to study the needs of the Army in light of the emphasis on re-entry and rescue operations in civil defence. The study built upon the findings of the U.S. Committee on Disaster Studies, the Defence Research Board's nuclear attack assumptions, and the Canadian Army Operational Research Establishment's assessment of the post-attack situation in Canada. DSO&P concluded that, in an "average" scenario, all of Canada's major cities would be destroyed. Half of Canada's industry would be crippled, as would rail and air transport for lack of reliable fuel. Telephone, telegraph, and radio communications would be severely disrupted, since most wire traffic channeled through major cities. The army would be left with fewer than two days' supply of food and less than one day's petrol supply. Nearly a million Canadians would be trapped in the rubble, requiring rescue.²⁶ Fighting fires alone would require seven times the personnel and resources then available in all Canadian target cities. In a near-ideal attack scenario, the army would only be able to rescue 19,000

²⁵ Statement by Department of National Defence AFN 48-59, 5 November 1959, LAC Pearson Fonds MG 26 N2 Vol 111.

²⁶ The "worst case" scenario was not postulated in this document. Canadian Army Survival Operations – Re-entry and Maintenance of Law and Order, February 1960 LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 G21 Vol 11. See also CAORE Memorandum 59/4: The Post Attack Situation in Canada 1960-1970: Casualties and Resources, DHist 81/256; EMO RO-376, Defence of the Canadian Population Against Nuclear Attack, 28 January 1963, LAC Wallace Fonds MG30 E211 Vol 3 File 3-10.

people with their existing resources. The rest would succumb to fallout, but more likely to fires and smoke inhalation as many small conflagrations spread throughout devastated cities.²⁷ These figures were never released for public consideration.

The report found that regular and reserve forces of the Canadian Army combined were not large enough to save a single bombed Canadian city. Winning “the re-entry battle,” as DSO&P defined the phase, depended as much on trained and prepared personnel as the plans drafted by Civil Defence Canada in the 1950s. From February 1960, DSO&P therefore argued for re-entry columns composed of a mix of civilian and military personnel. The military reasoned that they could provide leadership if civilians could provide the numbers. They also recognized that the maintenance of a large force of civilians trained in civil defence in peacetime was a task that neither Civil Defence Canada nor they could master. DSO&P concluded that the army would be forced to depend on civilians who were willing to save lives *after* the bombs started falling.²⁸

The Directorate of Survival Operations predicted that the re-entry force’s greatest ally would be Canadians unharmed in the first attacks against cities. The military believed that survivors would not quit the outskirts of a destroyed city, but in some cases would move toward the destruction. DSO&P based this assumption on conclusions of research projects commissioned by the US Committee of Disaster Studies, as well as their own observations of major natural disasters.²⁹ One such report pointed to “convergence behavior” among survivors of disasters, who flocked to the site of disasters to help, to

²⁷ Canadian Army Survival Operations – Re-entry and Maintenance of Law and Order, February 1960, LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 G21 Vol 11.

²⁸ Ibid. pt I, p. 22

²⁹ The Department of National Defence’s report on the 1960 earthquake in Agadir, Morocco, which killed nearly a third of the city’s population, indicated that “Local officials stated that most of the population appeared to be in a state of shock, unwilling to leave the town, but afraid to re-enter the buildings.” LAC RG 24 1989-90/212 Box 18 File 2100-6.

satisfy curiosity, or merely to exploit the chaos.³⁰ The challenge facing the Canadian Army, DSO&P planners reckoned, was to harness the potential of “the convergers” to transform the civilian population’s predicted curiosity, anxiety, and opportunism into useful work in support of the army’s responsibilities for National Survival.³¹ The Canadian Army directed the Militia to confront the problem.

The Militia was ideally suited to absorb spontaneous civilian volunteers because of its top-heavy composition. With officers and non-commissioned officers comprising over a third of the personnel in the Militia’s mobile support column structure, labour was in short supply. Planners suggested that the small numbers of “career privates” in the reserve force provided an opportunity for the Militia to integrate masses of disorganized survivors into civil military cadres, boosting the numbers available for the mobile support columns while keeping the effort under military leadership. Through this process, the military hoped to increase the size of its mobile support columns from a company-sized organization to a battalion-sized rescue force composed of 120 soldiers paired with 380 additional civilian volunteers. While the military expected that the “convergence” phenomenon would supply the numbers of survivors they would require for rescue, DSO&P recommended that the public should be prepared for the task through education. They hoped to encourage, through publicity efforts, 20 per cent of male Canadians between the ages of 16 to 60 to join up “at the last moment” for rescue work.

³⁰ Canadian Army Survival Operations – Re-entry and Maintenance of Law and Order, February 1960, pp. 15-16.

³¹ Their conclusion was based, ironically enough, on the same “outdated” British wartime experience with civil defence that had animated much of the civilian planning over the 1950s. In a July 1960 study, planners quoted extensively from Terrence O’Brien’s official history of British civil defence during the Second World War, citing that visible activity from the authorities persuaded volunteers to come forward and take part in their own defence. Volunteers in National Survival, 29 July 1960, LAC RG 24 1989-90/212 Box 18 File 2100-6.

Civil Defence Canada and EMO had both been confronted with the same problem. Maintaining a large body of volunteers indefinitely was expensive and impractical. Civil Defence Canada asked the volunteer to become part of a standing defence of the city--part warden, part paramedic, part firefighter--which required substantial training and a commitment that most Canadians had not seen fit to make. The military proposed a novel approach to the volunteer in survival operations. Because of the problems encountered by CD organizations, army planners recommended that the best course of action was to "accept the situation as it is and devise ways and means to get the basic training necessary across to as large a portion of the population as possible in conjunction with some normal everyday activity."³² To do so, the military planners turned to the same stakeholders that had supported CD in past recruitment drives, including government departments, municipalities, national and local industries, and service associations such as the Canadian Legion, Women's Institutes, the St. John Ambulance, and the Boy Scout Association. For the program to succeed, the federal government would have to take the lead by supporting a highly visible program of public indoctrination in rescue.³³ "The only alternative," the DSO&P concluded, "is some form of compulsion."³⁴

Over the following year, the military gradually increased its commitment to national survival. Defence Construction Limited and military engineers of the Army Works Service supervised the efforts to dig out emergency government bunkers such as the Central Emergency Government Headquarters, colloquially known as the

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Canadian Army Survival Operations – Re-entry and Maintenance of Law and Order, February 1960, p.

“Diefenbunker,” outside Ottawa.³⁵ This emergency shelter, completed in late 1961, was the evacuation site for the federal government and a skeleton civil service staff under the Continuity of Government program, and a communication hub with regional emergency headquarters built in the provinces. All regional emergency sites, as their communications facilities became operational, were staffed with a complement of military signalers.

Over 1960-1961, the Canadian Army also slowly extended the national network of warning sirens, replacing aging or underpowered sirens in Canadian target cities.³⁶ The Canadian Army moved officers into the Royal Canadian Air Force’s Air Defence Coordination Centre in St. Hubert, Quebec, linked in with NORAD, and established rearward links with the Federal Warning Centre in the Diefenbunker, responsible for disseminating the military warning to the public.³⁷ Regular and reserve units reluctantly integrated national survival and rescue courses into their training programmes, with much grumbling from the ranks about having to play “snakes and ladders” in a rescue role during the next war.³⁸ From its existing forces, the army organized 22 Regular mobile

³⁵ K.J. Holmes, *History of the Canadian Military Engineers*, Volume 3. (Toronto: Military Engineering Institute of Canada, 1997), pp. 280-281.

³⁶ Designs for emergency regional sites had been approved in the spring of 1961 for five provincial centres, and surveys were under way in the remaining provinces. Training offered to the public had fallen off as regional and federal officials received official survival training for use at these BRIDGE sites, and their completion was eagerly awaited so that greater emphasis for a new public training program could be initiated. Progress Report on Planning Activities, 10 April 1961, LAC RG 57 1984-85/658 Box 3 File 155-1.

³⁷ Major General Arthur Wrinch, “The Army and National Survival,” *Medical Services Journal* XVI, (April 1960), p. 267

³⁸ From 1959 to 1963, the Directorate of Survival Operations and Plans launched an extensive publicity drive within the Canadian Army to promote National Survival training. Major-General A.E. Wrinch, responsible for co-ordinating the Army’s National Survival efforts and liaison with the Emergency Measures Organization, delivered countless lectures at mess dinners and corps associations to explain the army’s role. He and his advisors from the various Army services (engineering, medical services, infantry, etc) ensured that every corps and service publication carried at least one article about the strategy and tactics of rescue and re-entry. Every edition of *The Canadian Army Journal* published between 1960 and 1963, for instance, devoted a special section of its pages to national survival.

support columns and a further 44 Militia mobile support columns. On 16 March 1961, the Cabinet accepted the military's concept for survival operations, including provisions for Militia and Active force units to take command of civilian workers. Defence Minister George R. Pearkes made press announcements that the military would require hundreds of thousands of civilian volunteers to assist with rescue work in a war, but the government did not undertake any special public education program, so the public did not learn that CD workers would fall under military command during a nuclear war.³⁹ The central requirement on which the military's effectiveness hinged was the efficient integration of civilian volunteers with military personnel during an emergency. In the two years following the implementation of Diefenbaker's 1959 Civil Defence Order, neither the military nor the federal government undertook a concerted effort to present the problem to the public, and it was not addressed realistically in the military's own plans.

The 1961 Berlin Crisis and the Acceleration of National Survival

The possibility of nuclear war was closer than the Cabinet would admit publicly. Economic conditions in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) had continued to decline since the first Berlin crisis in 1958, when Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev delivered an ultimatum to the West to withdraw its garrisons from West Berlin within six months or lose its access rights to the city. Khrushchev allowed this ultimatum to expire without incident. East Germany continued to hemorrhage skilled workers to the Federal Republic of Germany at a crippling rate. GDR leaders claimed the exodus cost them nearly a billion marks a year, and sought assistance from the Soviet Union. Khrushchev was content to defer any decision until the Vienna summit in June 1961 with the new US

³⁹ Lieutenant-General S.F. Clark to Penhale, Curry, 17 March 1961; Concept of Re-entry into Damaged Areas, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 3.

president, John F. Kennedy.⁴⁰ Seeking to challenge the younger, less experienced Kennedy, Khrushchev renewed his ultimatum and the threat of war over Berlin.

Khrushchev's behaviour at the summit and his clumsy threats unnerved Kennedy, but did not move the United States' position on its access rights to West Berlin. In a public address on 25 July 1961, Kennedy articulated the United States' intent to defend its rights, and by extension democratic Berlin, by force if necessary. With the support of Congress, Kennedy also announced an increase in the size of the American garrison in Berlin, in addition to raising the ceiling on the army's strength from 825,000 to 1,000,000.⁴¹ Concurrent with the military increases, Kennedy sought a dramatic increase in civil defence spending to fund a nation-wide survey of public buildings to locate fallout shelter spaces for Americans.⁴²

Taking Kennedy at his word to defend West Berlin, the GDR promptly put into motion plans to divide the city in half to restrict its citizens' chances for escape. On 13 August 1961, concertina wire and roadblocks split the city in two. This audacious move by the GDR secretly relieved the West, since it put an end to the exodus of workers and effectively resolved the conflict, however inhumanely. NATO and Warsaw Pact forces nevertheless remained on high alert in Germany. In Berlin itself, American and Soviet forces stared each other down in a three-day standoff in October at Checkpoint Charlie, a crossing point into East Berlin where border guards challenged American access rights. Earlier that month, Khrushchev had announced the successful detonation of a 50 megaton bomb in Siberia as evidence of the Soviet Union's military strength and technical

⁴⁰ Frederick Taylor, *The Berlin Wall, A World Divided 1961-1989*. (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), p. 123.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

⁴² John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History*. (Oxford: University Press, 1997), p. 146.

prowess. The world, while not quite on the brink of war, was edging towards it in the summer and fall of 1961.

Diefenbaker's own tentative, uncertain response to the Berlin issue is clear from the available Cabinet conclusions. His Cabinet did understand the very real threat of war if the Soviet Union allowed the GDR to squeeze the West from Berlin. In July, Diefenbaker, the hawkish defence minister Douglas Harkness, and the pro-disarmament Secretary of State for External Affairs Howard Green reached consensus that Canada should support the United States' stand on Berlin, even if that meant going to war.⁴³ According to Canadian Institute of Public Opinion Polls, most Canadians agreed. Approximately 60 percent favoured risking nuclear war to defend Berlin.⁴⁴

As the crisis reached its peak in August, the United States persuaded its allies to increase their general military preparedness and funding for CD.⁴⁵ Diefenbaker's Cabinet met five times in late August to approve measures that would proclaim Canada's moral and military support for the United States and Berlin. At these meetings, Harkness presented a long list of actions the government could take to augment its military and passive defences. He recommended the immediate dispersal of food rations, military vehicle stocks, and emergency clothing from central warehouses to depots outside Canadian target areas. Harkness also requested more money to speed the purchase of radiation monitors that the Canadian Army needed for re-entry operations.⁴⁶ The Cabinet

⁴³ Cabinet Conclusions, 24 July 1961, LAC RG 2 Series A-5-a Vol 6177. Green was less inflexible in his support for the United States, arguing that countries should not take up threatening positions in imitation of the Americans either. Cabinet Conclusions, 17 August 1961, Ibid.

⁴⁴ Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, "Should Fight Berlin as Russ Won't Stop There," 8 November 1961.

⁴⁵ Cabinet Conclusions, 17 August 1961, LAC RG 2 Series A-5-a Vol 6177.

⁴⁶ Rescue operations could only occur from approaches to the city not covered by radioactive fallout, and even then within reasonable safety limits for exposure. Radiac meters were an essential tool for the re-entry columns that were in short supply.

approved both of these plans, but rejected Harkness's suggestion that the government should build 23,868 fallout shelters on DND property. Cabinet members were concerned that Canadians would be angered if the government erected shelters for its employees rather than providing shelter spaces to those who could not afford to build their own.

Cabinet's fragile backing of Kennedy's robust stand began to erode once the GDR closed off East Berlin. Green and others were convinced that the GDR's actions presented a possibility for negotiation. Harkness, clearly aware of the limited strength of Canada's armed forces in comparison to its allies, and of the divisions within Cabinet, recommended a very slight increase of 1,100 soldiers for the Canadian NATO brigade in Germany. The Cabinet also agreed to raise the manpower ceiling of the Canadian armed forces from 120,000 to 150,000 during the crisis. This measure met Canada's NATO commitments; in the event of a conventional war with the Warsaw Pact, Canada would send two additional brigades and a headquarters to Europe.⁴⁷ Harkness and the other ministers recognized, however, that if the crisis resulted in an immediate nuclear war in Europe, Canada's army brigades would be of little help to NATO, and would be better employed at home to save Canadian lives.⁴⁸

In the delicate international situation, the government was prepared to enact measures to increase its emergency preparedness at home, but quietly. An innovative program introduced by Harkness during the Cabinet meeting on 21 August underlined the severity with which his department viewed the Berlin Crisis. DND would introduce a large-scale public training course in national survival skills. The Chief of the General Staff proposed a nation-wide recruitment drive that would enlist over 100,000 Canadians

⁴⁷ Cabinet Conclusions, 17 August 1961, LAC RG 2 Series A-5-a Vol 6177.

⁴⁸ Cabinet Conclusions, 21 August 1961, Ibid.

as paid privates for special Militia survival training courses over the winter of 1961-1962.⁴⁹ Harkness believed the CGS' plan offered a temporary solution for the National Survival program's greatest obstacle: a lack of personnel trained to look after the wounded and homeless in a nuclear war. The program represented the military's effort to overcome the problems Civil Defence Canada had encountered in the "self-help" model of volunteer recruitment over the past decade. For the first time, Canadians would be paid to undergo civil defence training. The proposal illustrated the fundamental changes brought about by the 1959 re-organization of civil defence. The military, for years opposed to any substantive role in civilian defence, would now be in charge of instructing the largest group of paid civil defence workers in Canadian history, who would receive military indoctrination over the course of their training.

The Special Militia Training Plan, 1961-1962

The Cabinet agreed to Harkness's ambitious program because of the possibility of war over Berlin, but also to address unemployment. Canada's slow economic performance in the late 1950s led to rising unemployment; with 356,000 Canadians affected by July 1961. The training program would benefit the government by temporarily lowering the number of unemployed men between 18 and 55 and reducing the drain on Canada's unemployment insurance funds.⁵⁰ When he presented the Survival Militia Training Plan (SMTP) to Cabinet, Harkness noted that the plan would be attractive to Canadians largely because the pay rate of an unmarried private in the Militia

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ The Unemployment Insurance Commission was in dire financial straits through much of the Diefenbaker government. Finance Minister Donald Fleming recalled in his memoirs how Cabinet was forced to loan the Commission \$70 million dollars to prevent further sell-off from its bond portfolio as early as 1959. Donald Fleming, *So Very Near: The Political Memoirs of the Honourable Donald M. Fleming*, Volume 2. (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1985), p. 77.

was \$20 per month more than the maximum payable unemployment insurance.⁵¹ During Cabinet discussions about the SMTP, ministers sought to recruit as many unemployed as possible into the training courses to reduce unemployment figures. The government recommended that National Employment Service Officers should “suggest the availability of the programme” to those without work, stopping just short of refusing payment of unemployment insurance if the unemployed refused.⁵²

The SMTP’s benefits as an unemployment relief measure made the significant expenditure easier for Cabinet ministers to accept. As Finance Minister Donald Fleming argued in his defence of the program, “It was difficult to know whether the programme was worth \$30 million because benefits were very hard to measure in the civil defence field, but the plan seemed to be a good one and unless civil defence was going to be useless in a nuclear war, such a programme as this should be undertaken.”⁵³ In his memoirs, Fleming recalled that he had argued against Cabinet authorization of further expenditures so soon after he had tabled the government’s budget in the House of Commons. The additional defence costs, he lamented, defeated the government’s larger goal of restoring stability to the economy.⁵⁴

The SMTP, like all other civil defence plans, was an example of government contingency planning for nuclear war. The implementation of the SMTP was largely improvised. A slight objection to the plan emerged during discussion of its emphasis on military training as the foundation for the rescue, firefighting, and first-aid skills. Civil Defence recruiting had traditionally called upon the citizen to contribute to the defence of

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Cabinet Conclusions, 22 August 1961, LAC RG 2 Series A-5-a Vol 6177.

⁵³ Cabinet Conclusions, 28 August 1961, Ibid.

⁵⁴ Donald Fleming, p. 372.

the country in a non-military capacity, and volunteers had trained in their community with other civilians to prepare for this task. Civil Defence was a means for the public to defend their community and, by extension, their country, without the prerequisite of joining the armed forces. Paying the public to train in military discipline posed the risk of erasing the distinction between the citizen-as-defender and the country's profession of arms. Unpaid CD volunteers would no longer be offered the status of local leaders contributing to the survival of the community, but that of private soldiers in a much larger force. In short, paid military training would diminish the CD volunteer's civic importance to the community. As a result, Cabinet ministers were divided over how the public would respond to the military's prominent role in training civilians, and agreed that the military aspects of training should be reduced.⁵⁵

The training plan was approved and announced to the public in the House of Commons on 12 September 1961. The first course was scheduled for 14 November 1961, with three to follow, each aiming to train 25,000 Canadians in survival skills. Though the trainees were under no obligation to join the Militia after the six-week course was finished, but all were subject to a continuous call-out during the course. If a nuclear emergency appeared likely during the training period, the trainees would be placed at the government's disposal. At the end of the course, trainees were given the option to enlist voluntarily in the Militia.

Publicizing the training program was the next step, first through advertising its existence to employers and then to the public through mail-outs, newspaper inserts, and public speaking. The DND Director of Manning, Colonel J.M. Houghton, oversaw the distribution of advertising materials across the country, including posters for placement in

⁵⁵ Ibid.

shop windows, recruiting offices, and armouries. Radio advertisements were purchased on 35 English and 13 French stations, and complemented by a national newspaper advertising campaign, in 67 English and 11 French daily newspapers. Finally, a sixty-second TV advertisement was prepared and broadcast after 1 December 1961. Much of the advertising was through brochures delivered to the offices of the National Employment Services in target areas and surrounding communities, which lent greater weight to the perception then and since that the SMTP's real target was to reduce unemployment.

The SMTP was a military recruiting program, if temporary, but its publicity employed similar messages as those used in past CD campaigns used to attract unpaid volunteers, and included appeals to civic responsibility. A lurid mushroom cloud dominated the centre of the recruitment brochure, surrounded by sketches of Canadian militiamen consulting a map, sending radio broadcasts, carrying stretchers, and rushing to the scene of a bomb blast in a jeep. The recruiting drive's appeal was directed at local communities' volunteerism: "Take time out NOW to help your community and your country prepare for any future emergency."⁵⁶

Harkness explained the program to the public in a letter published on the inside cover of the brochure. His message was more plaintive than most civil defence publicity, which had stressed the *duty* and *responsibility* of Canadian citizens to participate in Civil Defence. Almost apologetically, Harkness explained that, though the army was responsible for rescue services, it required reinforcement from trained civilians. The unwritten admission of the recruiting campaign was that the Canadian Army was not

⁵⁶ The Canadian Army Militia Special Six-Week Training Program, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 57 File 87-6 pt 4.

capable, either in terms of its manpower or resources, of saving Canadian lives without outside help. The minister concluded his letter with a plaintive appeal to civic pride:

“Will you lend a hand? Even if nuclear war does not come, as we pray it may not, I feel certain you will always be proud of having taken a little time out to ensure – whatever happens – that Canada can carry on.”⁵⁷

One element of the advertising for the national survival course was unique in the history of Canadian civil defence. For the first time, civil defence volunteers were being sought through the armed forces, and the language of advertisements reflected the martial nature of the program. The tone and pitch of newspaper advertisements were not aimed at enlisting married men and women with families, who had been targeted for most local CD recruitment drives over the 1950s. The military’s publicity was, however, as gendered in its approach as the appeals published by CD and EMO. The Militia reached out to young, unemployed single men using a campaign built around a traditional concept of military service as a virtue of a masculine citizenship.⁵⁸ An advertisement in the

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Cross-cultural studies have suggested that the concept of an “achieved masculinity” is a key component to constructions of gender identity. David Gilmore and others indicate that, in many societies, males must undergo social rituals and take specific actions to achieve the status of manhood. This is distinct from most concepts of “becoming” a woman, which in most societies is defined by a biological process. Joshua Goldstein, in his 2001 work about the relationships between war and gender, indicated that, in Western culture, “the military provides the main remnant of manhood-making rituals,” through the process of recruiting and basic training. At every stage of developing a volunteer army, officials challenge “boys” to become “men” through military service. Recruiting campaigns, like the one undertaken by the Canadian Army Militia, subtly or overtly shame civilian males into joining to prove their masculinity, intake officers assess recruits based on their physical and mental suitability as warriors, and, as John Farris has illustrated, “basic combat training includes an emphasis on masculinity and aggressiveness... the emphasis on masculine toughness combined with the threat of being labelled feminine ... is traumatic for insecure trainees.” Finally, once socialized into the military, unit actions and teamwork provide a mutually reinforcing set of masculine gender norms. Military service, like most aspects of “active citizenship,” are traditionally a male reserve. Citizenship theorists such as Herman van Gunsteren have indicated that citizenship itself is usually considered as an activity taking place in the public sphere, admission to which was normally reserved for men, and whose virtues, such as ordering society through active participation in politics, were “universally masculine.” See Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender shapes the War System and Vice Versa*. (London: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 252, 264-265, 269, 278; John H. Faris, “The Impact of Basic Combat Training: The Role of the Drill Sergeant,” in Nancy Goldman

Montreal Gazette on 20 October challenged applicants to become citizen-soldiers, willing to make “a man-size contribution to Canada’s defence, the safety of your family and your own future.” The advertisement simultaneously challenged readers’ masculinity, offered reminders of citizenship’s obligations, and offered applicants a career in the military.⁵⁹ The SMTP recruiters were seeking men for CD rescue duties, a field in which women had never been permitted to train, and, as a military recruiting campaign, the advertisements were placed where they could reach the largest number of young and available men. In the case of the *Globe and Mail*, the ad occupied the bottom corner of one of the Sports and Outdoor Life pages, as well as multiple listings in the classified section at the end of the paper. These were locations that were more likely to be read by active young men, as well as the unemployed.⁶⁰

The government supplemented its public advertising, primarily directed at the unemployed, with appeals to industry to provide skilled employees with special paid leave to encourage them to take the training course. The needs of the survival program included highly skilled industrial workers, community leaders, and municipal staff familiar with existing municipal and industrial infrastructure.⁶¹ The Department of National Defence sent out a letter under Harkness’s signature to 8000 recipient-institutions, including all Canadian crown corporations, civil service departments at the

and David Segal, eds., *The Social Psychology of Military Service*. (London: Sage Publications, 1976), pp. 13-27; Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face to Face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare*. (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p. 99; Ruth Phillips, *Citizenship: Feminist Perspectives*. (New York: Pgrave MacMillan, 2003), pp. 31, 68-73.

⁵⁹ “Take Time Out for Survival!” *Montreal Gazette*, 20 October 1961, p. 16.

⁶⁰ “Earn and Learn”, *Globe and Mail*, 24 October 1961, p. 30; “Take Time Out for Survival!” *Globe and Mail*, 25 October 1961, p. 21.

⁶¹ A year earlier, DSO&P had concluded that industry provided the most fertile ground for national basic training in survival skills. Department of Labour figures indicated that over 435 companies across the country carried out in-house training programs which involved over 500 people at a time. The military estimated that industry training programs alone could reach a *minimum* of 217,500 Canadians across the country. LAC RG 24 1989-90/212 Box 18 File 2100-6.

federal and provincial level, large industrial concerns, and small companies. The federal and provincial civil services, after some legal wrangling and disputes with Treasury Board, agreed to the request, and so did many businesses across the country. The list of those responding in November 1961 included Algoma Steel, Calgary Power Limited, General Foods of Toronto, Atomic Energy Canada, the Reader's Digest Association of Canada, Inco, Prudential Insurance, the Canadian National Railways, and the City of Verdun.⁶²

The Berlin crisis sparked public interest in local CD organizations across Canada. According to a Canadian Press survey, the number of people who had contacted the Metropolitan Toronto Emergency Measures Organization from September to November 1961 exceeded the organization's correspondence for all of 1960.⁶³ Even in areas where financial support for civil defence was very low, such as in Montreal, local organizations struggled to keep up with demand. In September-October 1961, Montreal Civil Defence, an organization made up of 1000 volunteers, trained 400 people, an enormous increase over their regular intake.⁶⁴

The crisis, accompanied by growing unemployment, presented an ideal atmosphere for SMTP recruitment. Local militia commands under Western, Central, and Eastern Commands struggled to muster sufficient training staff across their areas of responsibilities to deal with the expected influx of volunteers. 2,700 experienced trainers were required for the first intake of 25,000 recruits alone. The Militia reserves, already strained, required assistance from the regular forces. In the first week of enrolment,

⁶² LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 57 File 87-6-1.

⁶³ Dave McIntosh, "World Tension Sparks Survival Interest," *Montreal Gazette*, 6 November 1961.

⁶⁴ As W.O. Asselin, Montreal's civil defence coordinator, astutely pointed out to his interviewer, it was the considered opinion of their experts that they needed at least 100,000 dedicated volunteers to have a chance at survival. Bill Bantey, "1,000 Volunteers for Civil Defence," *Montreal Gazette*, 11 November 1961.

approximately 5,000 men reported across the different commands, and by 3 November, numbers had reached 12,376, nearly twenty per cent of whom had joined that day.⁶⁵

Advertising over press and radio and by word-of-mouth drew the press's attention, a development which benefited and hounded the program over its entire course.⁶⁶ Press reporting on the SMTP attracted additional volunteers to the program, but also highlighted its many shortcomings and gave dissatisfied citizen-soldiers an outlet to vent their grievances about the program's military nature.

A Band of Scavengers: Unemployed Citizens, Unreliable Guardians?

Speculation about the program's success emerged shortly after it was announced in the House of Commons. The Canadian Press published a story on 19 September quoting sources that claimed the Militia had reduced its recruiting standards to accommodate the influx of new trainees. The author suggested that the survival courses would be filled with rejects, many of whom would join for the dental benefits, just to get their teeth fixed.⁶⁷ The report had some basis in fact. The Canadian Army had two recruiting standards. One was designed to find soldiers who would likely see battle and another sought soldiers to fill support roles on Canadian bases. For the training program, the Militia used the second standard because they could not afford to reject every candidate who did not meet the physical requirements needed for front-line

⁶⁵ David McKenzie Brown to Harkness, 3 November 1961, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 56 File 87-6 pt 1.

⁶⁶ Norm Depoe, Parliamentary Correspondent for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, volunteered to take the first course at an armoury of the Department of National Defence's choosing and film the training for broadcast over the network. William H. Dumsday, Directorate of Public Relations, to Harkness, 27 October 1961, Ibid.

⁶⁷ Canadian Press clipping, 20 September 1961, found in LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 55 File 87-0 pt. 4.1.

infantrymen.⁶⁸ Rather, they valued quantity over quality. To counter press criticism, Harkness assured the public that his program would attract an “exceptionally high class of recruit.” He predicted that most recruits would be young men in their teens and early twenties, eager to make a contribution to the safety of their country, but just out of high school and without winter employment.⁶⁹

Problems arose almost immediately as volunteers enlisted for the courses. In another instance of the gulf that existed between federal CD planners and municipal officials designated to implement plans developed centrally, Carl Signoratti, president of Local 524 United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America in Peterborough, wrote an excoriating letter to Diefenbaker about abuse of the SMTP by municipal employees. Signoratti reported that the local welfare committee had refused to deliver welfare payments to unemployed persons who decided not to apply for the course. It is unknown how widespread the practice was, but in St. Boniface, Manitoba, at least 40 welfare recipients were refused their checks and forced to apply for the program.⁷⁰ Excesses like this did little to diminish suspicion that the training program’s true purpose was to reduce unemployment figures.⁷¹

Newspapers in central Canada were critical of the survival training plan, especially when the number of recruits did not match the government’s targets. The statistics did not help the government deflect their criticism. Nearly 12,000 applicants of the approximately 18,000 who signed up for the first intake of recruits were unemployed

⁶⁸ These were the PULHEMS standards: Physique, Upper Extremities, Lower Extremities, Hearing, Eyesight, Mental, and Stability. There were both Battle and Base PULHEMS. Clark to Harkness, 20 September 1961, Ibid.

⁶⁹ Canadian Press clipping, 20 September 1961, found in Ibid.

⁷⁰ “Survival Courses,” *The Globe and Mail*, 19 March 1961.

⁷¹ Carl Signorotti to Diefenbaker, 16 November 1961, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 56 File 87-6 SMTP pt. 1. Harkness, replying for the Prime Minister, pointed out rather weakly that, in his experience, newspaper reports were “frequently inaccurate.”

when their course began. A journalist from the *Montreal Gazette* spoke to ten recruits at the Craig Street Armoury on their first day. When asked why they had joined, five responded that they were unemployed, three cited the nuclear crisis, and two could not recall why they applied.⁷² In Montreal, fewer than half of the 2,500 men required turned out on the first day. In Toronto, slightly more of the original intake attended, but absenteeism grew over the second and third days of the course.⁷³ The expected number of recruits was exceeded only in Atlantic Canada, which can be explained by Eastern Command's relatively low quota (2,500) and the high levels of seasonal unemployment in the Maritimes during the winter months.⁷⁴ Few of the recruits for the program appeared to be as young, physically fit, or as committed to the program as DND had hoped.

Questions also emerged about the quality of the men who signed up for the program. Harkness and Diefenbaker received letters from the public, many of whom doubted that the strategy of paying citizens to train in civil defence would result in any benefits for the country's survival, especially when that plan depended on what some Canadians considered the dubious moral character of the unemployed. Two graduates of the first course, in discussions with their local MPs, were very pleased with the concept of the course and their own training, but "aghast" at the quality of their colleagues, 20% of whom were "graduates of reform school and... after the course ended, unemployable in any other field."⁷⁵ Contempt for the "survival army" was particularly evident in newspaper coverage and in Diefenbaker and Harkness's correspondence. *L'Action Populaire* reported on 24 January 1962 that the Armoury mess catered exclusively to

⁷² *Montreal Gazette*, 8 November 1961.

⁷³ "Army's Recruiting Results Fall Well Below Objective," *Montreal Gazette*, 11 November 1961.

⁷⁴ "CD Recruit Target Hit Only in East," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 8 November 1961.

⁷⁵ Alexander Best to Harkness, 26 December 1961, LAC MG 32 B19 Vol 56 File 87-6 pt. 2.1

SMTP trainees on Friday nights, and “it appears that on the following Monday several of them show up at the Welfare Office for money to pay the rent or heat, having gone through all of their \$43 pay at the Training Centre.”⁷⁶

To these critics, the government’s new emergency workers were a liability. Letter-writers thought of them as unemployed and unemployable, who were at best opportunists, at worst listless alcoholics. A letter written to opposition leader L.B. Pearson by a Royal Canadian Navy veteran, after he had attended the first day of the National Survival course, illustrates the sentiment:

I am sure, and I swear beyond a doubt – that any mental patient in Ontario could enroll for this course. They are picking up every derelict in the City of Toronto. I have never seen such an assortment of Alcoholics and Criminals [*sic*]! Men, and many beyond the age of boot training, are being given boot training. They could tell these guys anything... and a medical by interns that couldn’t detect a man with rabies. All the recruiting wants is numbers. If they paid these fellows on Monday instead of Friday they wouldn’t have any next week. ... As it stands many people would prefer to die a neuclear [*sic*] death than have this band of scavengers from the City Relief Rolls protect them....⁷⁷

The perception that the training plan was unemployment relief in disguise proved unshakeable. Even those in favour of the program viewed it almost exclusively as a tool for local economic stimulation. Communities affected by the slowing Canadian economy flooded the Department of National Defence with requests to extend the program and to establish recruiting courses in their areas, many of which were far removed from target cities. While some localities requested courses as a means of exploiting the public’s renewed interest in civil defence, most bluntly demanded courses to stave off

⁷⁶ “Très étrange façon d’entraîner les miliciens de 18 à 50 ans à des secours urgence,” *L’Action Populaire*, 24 January 1962. The following week the newspaper printed a retraction, saying the original story had been based on exaggerations and lies. “L’exagérations et faussetes en marge de l’entraînement des miliciens de 18 à 50 ans pour secours d’urgence.” *Ibid.*, 31 January 1962.

⁷⁷ A Lovell to Lester B. Pearson, 7 November 1961, LAC Pearson Fonds MG 26 N2 Vol 3 File 141.

unemployment.⁷⁸ Martin Merner, President of the United Steelworkers of America, demanded that National Survival courses be continued in Sydney, Nova Scotia, until his union's members could obtain jobs in other fields.⁷⁹ Ted Outram, the City Clerk of Peterborough, writing in early October 1962, some time after the courses had expired, asked if any similar courses would be introduced for the next year. "The information," he suggested, "will be most helpful in planning any make work jobs of a municipal nature at the expense of the municipal taxpayer."⁸⁰

The government of Canada depended on the unemployed in large part to fill the ranks of the survival training courses, but the program failed to win the public's confidence for the very same reason. "Mr. Diefenbaker's Private Army," as it was called in Toronto, became the source of ridicule for an already beleaguered government. Reeve Norman Goodhead of North York, one of the training program's supporters, complained that the public's understanding of the force's purpose was buried in ignorance and a lack of appreciation of the necessity of additional manpower to help with rescue.

"Everybody's survival is everybody's business," he argued, noting that criticism of the force's unemployed ranks missed the point entirely.⁸¹ The survival training courses did employ a large number of unemployed persons, but press and public criticism tended to equate "unemployed" with "unskilled" or "unscrupulous." The editorial board of the *Globe and Mail*, examining the goals of the survival program, commented that the government's reliance on the unemployed was at cross-purposes with its goal to develop a corps of trained civil defence workers that could provide the Militia with the needed

⁷⁸ M.D. Macleod to RL Hanbridge 10 February 1962, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 56 File 87-6 pt 2.2.

⁷⁹ Martin Merner to Harkness, 12 April 1962, Ibid., pt. 3.3.

⁸⁰ Ted Outram to Fred Stenson, 4 October 1962, Ibid.

⁸¹ "Goodhead says Survival Force Misunderstood," *Globe and Mail*, 11 November 1961, p. 14.

civilian leadership on which to build in an emergency. “While there would undoubtedly be some [leaders] among the chronically unemployed...” the editorial suggested, “their already proved lack of success in civilian life would indicate that there would not be many.”⁸²

As the third round of courses came to an end, Herbert Herridge, a Co-operative Commonwealth Federation Member of Parliament for Kootenay West, British Columbia, joined the press in criticizing the government’s survival army. On 19 March 1962, he conjured up an image that simultaneously criticized the training program and evoked memories of the Great Depression. Basing his comments on rumours heard from his constituents, Herridge claimed that many survival training recruits were drifters with no connection to the community: “They came into a city, took the course, and then went on [to take it] again.”⁸³

There is no evidence to suggest that a vast army of unemployed actually rode the rails looking for work in survival training courses, but in the House of Commons Harkness offered nothing to contradict the statement. Though the unemployed did make up the majority in the survival course, and at 35-45 years of age, were on average older than the recruits the government had hoped to attract, Herridge’s characterizations were hyperbole. A journalist’s examination of the first intake revealed that the recruits came from a wide variety of occupations and backgrounds, from retired veterans to serving professionals: “There are real estate and car salesmen, carpenters and bricklayers. There are schoolteachers between courses at the university, a dentist who looks after his patients in the evening, a professional engineer ... an unemployed chef and an out-of-work crane

⁸² “A Confusion of Issues,” *Globe and Mail*, 11 November 1961, p. 6.

⁸³ Herbert Herridge, *Debates*, 19 March 1962, p. 1963.

operator.”⁸⁴ In short, the recruits offered skills from a cross-section of the professions the Militia would seek to exploit during survival operations.

What is most interesting about the public’s criticism of the program is that it hinged not simply on the employment status of the recruits, but on the perceived reasons for their enlistment. While most Canadians did not volunteer for civil defence and many questioned the strategies underlying national survival as a whole, few criticized the unpaid volunteers who composed the civil defence corps. Popular rejection of the SMTP was based on speculation that recruits were less committed to national survival efforts because they were paid to take the course, and therefore were prepared to move on as soon as the next job became available. The public took no comfort from the temporary protection the SMTP offered. While CD had not attracted great public participation, the volunteers were rarely so viciously criticized as the survival army, perhaps because the public believed that its unemployed ranks looked first to defend themselves, and not Canadian communities. The public’s reaction also suggests that the value placed on civic voluntarism for CD by its planners had taken some root in the community. The public could support either a valid CD force capable of saving lives, or an army that was able to fill that role. The SMTP was neither, and did not enjoy lasting public support.

The End of the SMTP

The problems with the program were entirely practical ones. The skills of the survival army were only at the government’s disposal for a short six-week period. The government made no provision to keep track of the tens of thousands of Canadians it was training in civilian defence. Once the recruits had graduated, they were released from

⁸⁴ James Senter, “Touches of Bilko, but Force Taking Shape,” *The Globe and Mail*, 11 November 1961, p. 1.

service, classed by the military as trained militiamen, but were not asked to make any further commitment to return to service in the event of an actual nuclear emergency. Discovering this failure of planning in December 1961, Liberal defence critic Paul Hellyer denounced the program as “futile as well as the most expensive civil survival training that has ever been undertaken in Canada.”⁸⁵

The government’s reply to this charge was that it had no more control over the Canadian Army’s reserve forces than it did over the survival trainees. If the whole of the Militia decided to quit, the government would have little choice to accept it. Harkness likened demands for a permanent list of names to national registration, a step away from conscription.⁸⁶ The point of the training course was never to boost permanently the size of the Militia, but rather to provide a foundation of trained civilians with whom the Canadian Army could work to rescue injured Canadians. The addresses, occupations, and names of the recruits, Harkness added, would be given to local EMOs for their use in the event of an emergency.

Another practical problem emerged over the content of the training courses. For members of the program, the militarization of civil defence was problematic enough without conscription. The Cabinet had stipulated that survival training would take precedence over military indoctrination. According to the recruits themselves, however, the Militia appeared to disregard the Cabinet’s instructions, placing a heavy emphasis on military discipline and tactics. Several correspondents who had signed up for the program to learn more about civil defence were dismayed at the heavy emphasis on drill and military culture. In a six-week course, recruits spent the first three weeks learning the

⁸⁵ Paul Hellyer, *Debates*, 19 March 1962, p. 1973.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1973-1974.

basics of the parade square, military law, but only several days on first aid. The fourth week prepared them for a test of these skills, and intensive rescue training took place in the last two weeks. Corporal G.J. Andrews, an amateur poet who graduated from the program hosted in Belleville, confided in verse that the last week was partially dedicated to preparations for the graduation ceremony, where “even the mediocre shine/when on parade for one last time.”⁸⁷

Shortly after the first course, two graduates informed their Member of Parliament that their training reflected total ignorance of the plans for survival in event of attack, let alone the technical aspects of fallout and radiation detection equipment.⁸⁸ Cleveland Clifton of Vancouver sent a blistering letter to the Major-General J.M. Rockingham, commanding officer of the Seaforth Highlanders, and Harkness, with a copy to a local radio broadcaster. Clifton remarked that an otherwise worthy project had been “prostituted” by the inclusion of army routine: “it was said among us that while we hadn’t had time to properly learn about rescue work and first aid, we can surely keep you amused while you are dying, with our unlovely... postures and gesturing, a la left and right by numbers [*sic*].” He further commented that “in the event of a national emergency the only presenting of arms that I may do will be alongside the head of any of the gold braid boys who get in my way when I’m doing my best to cope.”⁸⁹ Clifton was not alone. Another trainee who quit after a week wrote to complain that the survival courses were “just plain old Militia in disguise.”⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Cpl G.D. Andrews, “The SMTP Recruit,” nd. LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 57 File 87-6 pt. 3.1.

⁸⁸ Alexander Best to Harkness, 26 December 1961, *Ibid*.

⁸⁹ He concluded his letter by asking “But do cut out all this damned silly might army nonsense. It if weren’t for Uncle Sam and the Royal Navy, the Swiss Army and a Pope’s Guard could kick the hell out of us.”

Cleveland Clifton to OC Seaforth Highlanders, Harkness, and Jack Webster, nd, *Ibid.*, pt. 2.1

⁹⁰ P. Bruck to MGen JPE Bernatchez, VCGS, 5 December 1961, *Ibid*.

Some of the volunteers' disillusionment with the STMP and the Militia's civil defence role in general can be explained by the differing notions of the citizen's responsibilities to the state that were put forward by CD officials and the military. While both organisations asked volunteers to contribute their time to help prepare the country for the worst, Civil Defence Canada had always approached the issue of recruitment from the "self-help" model. Individuals were asked to sacrifice some of their time and, later, their money in defence of their community. The ability of volunteers to survive and help themselves, their families, and their communities was crucial because they would be able to step in for the state when services broke down or were overrun during wartime, as they inevitably would be. By enhancing their self-dependence they would, by extension, help to ensure national survival and ease each individual community's eventual (if hypothetical) reconstruction. Civil defence manuals and training tried to make this connection clear so that volunteers understood that learning something as apparently simple as first-aid was a component of national survival in the event of nuclear war. Civil defence was pitched to Canadians as a means of insurance necessary in the nuclear age. By taking the training, Canadians would know how to prepare their family to survive, and would be prepared to come to the assistance of their neighbours. In effect, the civilian model of this type of citizenship taught the individuals that they were of prime importance to ensuring the survival of the country.

The military's approach to survival operations was an inversion of the responsibilities of citizenship. This was in part because, as geographer Deborah Cowen has argued, the soldier's citizenship was "exceptional." Concerns for the soldier as an

individual were always secondary to the needs of the state.⁹¹ In traditional warfighting scenarios, the responsibility meant that, by virtue of his occupation, the soldier could be asked and was expected to obey orders that may lead to his own death. Applied to the civil defence role, the militia infantryman could be expected to enter areas with high risk of radiation poisoning and death by fire or building collapse. That unquestioning ideal of obedience was the first and only goal of the military's training. In contrast to the civilian model, plans for self-preservation and family protection were secondary.⁹² An example of this is found in the notes for a staff re-entry exercise at a Militia staff course held in Kingston in 1959. Instructors there informed attendees that it was their responsibility to have a plan for their family in peacetime. Their failure to do so would prevent them from passing the course, because the military would consider them "non-effective" and a possible risk for absenteeism. They were asked to make the plan so they would not be distracted when the state demanded that they meet their wartime obligations as officers in the Canadian Army.⁹³ Civilians who signed up for the SMTP expecting to receive civilian defence training found the military's version incompatible with their expectations. In the military's conception of national survival operations, the individual citizen was merely a means to an end, just like any soldier. The SMTP was an emergency measure designed to help the military cope with the possibility of an impending war. Though the aims of both

⁹¹ Deborah Cowen, *Military Workfare: The Soldier and Social Citizenship in Canada*. (Toronto: University Press, 2008), p. 17

⁹² The extent to which this was the case was clear from the manner in which the question of fallout shelters for full-time members of the Canadian Army was handled by the government in 1959-1961. Soldiers did not receive additional protection in exchange for their service, rather, "members of the Married Quarter Community, as citizens – have a responsibility to provide from their own resources those facilities and services which they need but are not normally provided at public expense in the average civilian community." Shelters were no exception to this blanket rule. LAC RG 24 83-84/167 Box 4351, file 9700-8 v. 1, cited in Deborah Cowen, p. 114.

⁹³ Militia Staff Course Part II – 1959, Exercise Jericho DS Notes – Requirement 1, Canadian War Museum, George Metcalf Archival Collection 58A 1 168.12

the civilian and military CD organizations were compatible, their conception of the individual within their respective programs was less so, and this had an impact on the success of the SMTP as a whole.

In all, over 80,000 Canadians enrolled in the SMTP between November 1961 and May 1962. Members of the SMTP were only temporarily enlisted in the Militia, though they had the option to enlist with their local reserves at the end of the course if they so chose. By the time the training program ended, over 14,000 of the trainees had enlisted in the Canadian Army's reserve mobile columns for national survival. As historian G.W. Nicholson has argued, these trainees were joining an organization that was still in turmoil over its shift in role from a war-fighting establishment to an aid-of-civil-power role. The requirement to assist with civil defence undermined the historic appeal of the Militia and led to a severe decline in enlistment and retention figures.⁹⁴ Most of the reserve columns depended on volunteers and were severely under-strength well before the federal government initiated the SMTP, partly due to the unpopularity of civil defence, but also because of financial restrictions. First imposed in 1957, cuts to Militia training hobbled many regiments and closed summer training camps.⁹⁵ Since many Militia units ignored survival operations and instead carried out their war training, "without pay and on their own time," it is unsurprising that, at the end of the Berlin crisis, their instructors were less than eager to apply CD lessons to so many possible recruits.⁹⁶

The SMTP had served its purpose, however, by providing a large reserve of men who could have been employed in an emergency during the Berlin crisis. Once that crisis had been resolved, the rationale for such a drastic program disappeared. No program like

⁹⁴ G.W.L. Nicholson, p. 221.

⁹⁵ Graham, p. 240

⁹⁶ Granatstein, p. 351.

the SMTP was repeated, much to the chagrin of municipal planners seeking to cut their relief rolls. Nor did the army's emphasis on civil defence and national survival long outlast the training program itself. By 1963, the situation had "normalized," much to the relief of Militia regiments across the country, many of whose members blamed their aid-of-civil-power role for their declining recruitment and retention numbers. Though the Canadian Army retained responsibility for fallout reporting and the maintenance of the national shelter system, the Militia's responsibility for rescue was once again made secondary to forming a reserve for overseas deployment in the event of war.⁹⁷

Conclusion

The years 1959-1961 witnessed a series of transitions in the structure, purpose, and capabilities of the Canadian civil defence. The federal government sought to invigorate the organization by taking on a greater level of responsibility for the passive defence of the country. The Canadian military gamely tackled preparations for nuclear attack, though many of its members resented the shift from a war-fighting to a rescue role. By assigning the military to this role, the government had hoped to bolster the ailing civil defence organization, and provide tangible evidence of their commitment to the survival of Canadian communities threatened with destruction. The military soon found that their numbers would be insufficient to operate effectively under nuclear warfare conditions, and advocated a wider public education program to familiarize as many Canadians as possible with the skills needed for national survival. The military depended on these semi-trained survivors to increase their own numbers for re-entry operations.

⁹⁷ Nicholson, p. 242. Nicholson's argument is, however, open to dispute. Certainly the combined issues of reduced financial resources and an unpopular training scheme may have contributed to the Militia's decline in the late 1950s-early 1960s, but the numbers continued to drop well into the 1960s. Nicholson blames this on the policy of unification and continuing confusion over the role of the Militia. However, this may also be due to the rise of 1960s youth culture and a societal drift away from a career in the armed forces.

The fact that the SMTP was launched was evidence of the seriousness with which the Diefenbaker government regarded the problem of national survival, having already invested tens of millions of dollars into the installation of Continuity of Government bunkers and the national warning system. The 1961 Berlin crisis provided the government with further motivation to urgently increase the country's ability to survive a war. The SMTP represented an opportunity to launch a public indoctrination program that could supply the Militia with the additional trained personnel it required to fulfill its CD obligations. The program was at once ambitious and entirely unprecedented in the history of Canadian civil defence preparations, reaching 80,000 Canadians.

Yet, in spite of some initial successes, it quickly became mired in intense media and political scrutiny. Many of the trainees objected to the SMTP's emphasis on military training, while the Militia considered the program to be too "civilian" for those seeking a career in the military. Whatever the motivations of the government, the public did not view the SMTP as a credible means of protection during the Berlin crisis because the program offered only a temporary and imperfect solution to the lack of a substantive CD force in the country. Following the crisis, the military, always reluctant to commit its resources to CD, slowly retreated from its national survival obligations in order to concentrate on its traditional objective of training forces to defeat the Soviet enemy. The public was again left to prepare their own defences.

Chapter 7

The Genesis of Canadian Shelter Policy

Civil defence planners discussed two classes of shelter for the public's protection during the Cold War. The "blast" shelter was most actively considered between the end of the Second World War and 1954. Blast shelters were designed to withstand the shock wave resulting from a nuclear explosion. They required heavy and sturdy building materials such as concrete and steel reinforcement to prevent the structure from collapsing under both the shock wave and flying debris. During Second World War aerial bombing campaigns, many civilians found shelter in communal blast shelters, or in structures that were deep enough underground to be unaffected by conventional blast waves. The fundamental designs of Cold War blast shelters did not differ from Second World War examples. Blast shelters could be built privately, but required a great investment and technical expertise that was beyond the reach of most Canadian citizens. As thermonuclear weapons with much greater destructive power and range were incorporated into the superpowers' arsenals, plans to build blast shelters in major urban centres were abandoned, and planners turned to evacuation strategies to save lives.

"Fallout" shelters, on the other hand, were designed with the aim of placing distance between their occupants and radioactive fallout particles outside. The science undergirding the design was relatively simple. A dense wall of earth, sandbags or cinder blocks would act to absorb the residual radiation in fallout particles. Because the lethal radioactive half-life of fallout was relatively short, shelter occupants could survive in a well-stocked refuge for several weeks until the risks from radiation exposure had fallen to survivable levels. Unlike the blast shelter, which required some specialized engineering

skills and resources, a radiation-shielded fallout shelter could be constructed by householders at a relatively affordable price. Fallout shelters became central to the government's survival strategy because planners believed that radioactive particles would cover most of the country after a major attack against North America, even if only a few Canadian targets were hit. Fallout posed a universal risk, and by 1959 shelters were considered the best, most affordable way to ensure the survival of most of the civilian population. The government looked south, to the more active, costly, and extensive American model of shelter planning and Ottawa adapted Canada's approach to conform to U.S. standards. This decision, officially announced in October 1959, was followed with the first sustained publicity drive to convince every Canadian to build his or her own fallout shelter. The campaign provoked anxiety, controversy, and satire, but did not result in many shelters being built. The public's critical response to the shelter program, and to national survival as a whole, is discussed in the next chapter.

From 1948 to 1959, the primary utility of shelters was for their publicity value. Shelters had been included in some CD plans, but only in vague terms, as the focus of survival strategies shifted over the decade from the immediate postwar "self-help" model of CD, based on fire-fighting and air raid wardens, to the rapid evacuation of Canadian target areas after the thermonuclear revolution. Official support for the promotion and construction of shelters was therefore inconsistent, reflecting the government's own uncertain and shifting civil defence priorities. One consequence of the government's indecision was that the public received little in the way of concrete information about the best form of protection. Yet the absence of a coherent government policy did not prevent official CD promoters from featuring model shelters as highly visible components at

municipal civil defence displays throughout the 1950s. More frequently, private contractors or press outlets built shelter displays to capitalize on the public's anxiety and attract consumers. Officials often co-opted these popular private shelter displays to provide a stamp of legitimacy and tangible evidence of government involvement in shelter planning, where in fact there was none. Canadian civil defence planners promoted model shelter displays during the 1950s with more enthusiasm than they accorded to the development of accurate and current information about useable shelter designs. Model shelters were particularly valuable in advertising the Canadian civil defence policy of the day, and most importantly, in promoting participation in civil defence programs as a component of each citizen's obligation to his or her family and country during the Cold War.

Early Shelter Policy, 1948-1952

The first CD discussions about shelters in Canada investigated the question of how to protect the public living in target cities. These urban populations would require expensive blast shelters made of concrete and steel in order to survive. Initial government research dismissed the threat from radiation because information about its long-term effects had not yet been released by the American authorities. CD officials believed that blast shelters offered a possible solution to the explosive effects of an atom bomb because they had offered good protection against conventional explosives during the Second World War. Since early CD policy was animated by the principle of local self-help, the Canadian government eventually offered advice to Canadians about how to construct blast shelters in their home that could protect occupants from the blast wave or if the

house collapsed. Yet few families had the engineering expertise or resources to build these blast shelters on their own.

In the transition from postwar to Cold War, the government did not act immediately to provide the public with official information about shelters, which was initially in short supply. Most Canadians learned what they could about the effects of atomic weapons, and the countermeasures available to the consumer, from mass-circulation magazines, the press, and radio. The Federal Civil Defence Coordinator, F.F. Worthington, and his officials sifted through the hundreds of articles on the subject. They concluded that the press's descriptions of the available countermeasures would not help the public prepare their homes for an attack. Civil defence planners, however, had only a little more access to privileged information about these sensitive subjects than did the general public.

American secrecy laws surrounded the science of nuclear weapons. Canada and the United Kingdom were wartime partners with the United States in the creation of the first atomic bomb, but after 1943 the Americans assumed full control of the project. The Canadian government was not privy to the results of postwar atomic testing, and so was mainly dependent on information published in reports and by journalists who observed the tests.¹ Canadian civil defence planners turned to open-source American documents

¹ In 1946, the United States Congress passed the McMahon Act, which prohibited the release of information related to atomic weapons to other governments. This included Canada and the United Kingdom, the United States' wartime partners in the Manhattan Project. While by 1947, Canadian and British governments managed to negotiate a partial exemption to the ban on release of classified data through the Technical Cooperation Programme, it was not until 1953 that the terms of this exemption were extended to cover "effect on human beings and their environment of blast, heat, and radiation from atomic explosions..." The McMahon Act was superseded by the United States Atomic Energy Act of 1954, which permitted the United States to share information with allies necessary to develop defence plans with NATO, train personnel and evaluate enemy capabilities. In 1955, the government of Canada signed a bilateral agreement with the United States to have a direct line into American research. This connection was slow to bear fruit, with the Defence Research Board, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and other parties

such as *The United States Strategic Bombing Survey*, and other reports on the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, all of which used extensive eyewitness accounts. From these documents, federal civil defence officials attempted to piece together a rough prediction of what the population would need.²

The federal civil defence office did not produce a Canadian information program until 1951. Before this, federal or provincial officials responded to public inquiries with copies of the American National Security Resources Board's *Survival Under Atomic Attack*. There was no similar Canadian publication. When Civil Defence Canada published its first information booklet, its authors recycled most of the American information, including its title. The Canadian booklet, *Personal Protection Under Atomic Attack*, was nearly indistinguishable from its American counterpart.

Personal Protection Under Atomic Attack advised Canadians that shelters should be considered home insurance. The booklet included costly designs for basement shelters, counselling homeowners to build heavy blast shelters. These shelters required foot-thick reinforced concrete walls, or "a blast wall of earth held together with boards... about two feet [thick]."³ The recommended measures amounted to major (and costly) structural improvements, but CD officials maintained that reinforcing sections of existing buildings would be cheaper and easier than asking the public to erect specialized protective

complaining about the long wait for American officials to clear classified documents. Exchange of Military Atomic Information, 6 January 1955; Agreement Between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America for Cooperation Regarding Atomic Information in Mutual Defence Purposes, 22 July 1955, LAC RG 24 83-84/215 Box 428 File S-9245-30/2-1 pt 2.

² Worthington to Commander E.H. Robertson, 23 January 1950, LAC RG 29 Vol 674 File 108-1-12. Worthington was assisted in these efforts by his staff and by scientific liaison officers from the Defence Research Board, who assisted civil defence research as part of their representation of Canada in the United Kingdom and the United States research establishments. D.J. Goodspeed, *A History of the Defence Research Board of Canada* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1958) p. 82.

³ Canada. Department of National Health and Welfare. *Personal Protection Under Atomic Attack*. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1952), pp. 33-40.

structures.⁴ Furthermore, the possibility that war might break out without warning meant that the public could not count on the government to have the time to build large communal shelters.⁵ The policy was consistent with those of the United States and the United Kingdom. Only a few countries developed a more interventionist shelter policy. In Switzerland, builders were required to include shelters in new construction, while the government dug enormous shelter complexes into cliff-sides.⁶

Who should build shelters? Remarkably, Civil Defence Canada recommended that nearly everyone bore this responsibility, from individual homeowners (the primary audience for the booklet) and apartment building managers responsible for building “one or more good-sized shelters in the basement,” to theatre owners and members of school boards, who were asked to provide large communal shelters on their property for customers and students.⁷ In practice, governments were the only organizations that could feasibly afford to build shelters of the type demanded by CD officials. The federal government had refused to invest the millions of dollars needed to provide shelters for all Canadians, provincial governments were no more willing, and municipal governments were simply incapable of doing so.

The booklet’s prescriptions for widespread shelter construction were puzzling because Canadian civil defence policy aimed to recruit thousands of volunteers trained to fight fires in bomb-damaged areas. This policy was derived from hard lessons learned during the Second World War bombing campaign. Fire killed more civilians and

⁴ M.P. Cawdron to Albert Vachon, 19 May 1952, LAC RG 29 Vol 678 File 108-4-3 pt 2.

⁵ *The Maximum Use of Existing Structures for Shelter*, F.F. Worthington and E.A. Gardner, Chief Architect, 17 March 1953, Ibid.

⁶ “Defence Headquarters in Giant Mountain Shelter – Five Storied Mountain Shelters under Stockholm Boroughs” *Aftonbladet*, 23 July 1951.

⁷ *Personal Protection Under Atomic Attack*, pp. 19-23.

damaged more property following raids than had high explosives. During the first few years of its existence, Civil Defence Canada officials attempted to coordinate fire-fighting between the provinces and municipalities.⁸ By the end of the Korean War, some progress had been achieved in this field, including a successful program to standardize fire hose couplings in Ontario and the purchase of British-made fire pumpers for target areas. No comparable support existed for shelter construction, at least not from government sources.

With no official designs forthcoming from the Canadian government, concerned citizens and businesses sought to obtain government approval for their shelter designs. In 1952, the Department of National Defence, the Prime Minister, and civil defence offices across Canada were inundated with modest proposals, such as a Sault Ste Marie hospital's request for financial assistance to fortify their basement, and absurd ideas. Albert Vachon, a private citizen living in Ottawa, sent his secret plans to Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent for comment. He planned to purchase a ten-acre lot 24 kilometres outside Ottawa, and build a 20-unit luxury apartment block 15 metres underground. Civil defence officials replying to his proposal advised against the idea because "in order to recover the costs of the building, the rents for such apartments would have to be

⁸ The near-total destruction of the towns Rimouski and Cabano in fires in 1950 heightened the federal emphasis on fire defence. In an early memorandum describing the importance of fire defence, Worthington mused: "fire services should be treated as a highly essential service on the level of military and treated the same with reference to manpower. ... Likewise, personnel of the fire fighting services should enjoy the same prestige as personnel of the armed forces." Many of Canada's large cities and adjoining communities had 10 or more fire departments, each responsible for small areas; they used incompatible equipment and did not have the ability to communicate with one another effectively. In these efforts Worthington unwittingly recruited Ontario Provincial Fire Marshal, F.R. Scott, as the unofficial spokesperson for fire protection in civil defence. Scott was an enthusiastic support of civil defence, and frequently attempted to rally support among fire chiefs in other provinces, creating considerable resentment and confusion. His counterparts felt compelled to write to the federal government complaining about Scott's correspondence. In New Brunswick, Fire Marshal H.W. Armstrong threatened to discontinue any work in the civil defence field until Scott was muzzled. Worthington to F.R. Scott, 9 August 1949, LAC RG 29 Vol 673 File 108-1-4 pt 1, Armstrong to MacCallum, 20 July 1950, *Ibid*.

uneconomically high.”⁹ The most ambitious plan presented to the federal government came from William Rogers, a First World War veteran employed by the Atomic Bomb Subterranean Shelter Engineers, a company operating out of Wisconsin. Rogers attempted to sell civil defence domes, each housing 200 people and equipped with “atomic anti-aircraft batteries”¹⁰ Like other bids received by the civil defence office, Rogers’s offer was politely declined.

More practical proposals also arrived from a plethora of construction and engineering firms, most of whom sought to profit from a possible shelter market in Canada. A Montreal representative of a West German firm that had constructed large communal shelters for German citizens during the Second World War offered secret formulas for heat-resistant concrete for the government’s use in building shelters. A structural engineer from Toronto inquired if there were any legal restrictions on advertising his services as a builder of atomic shelters in newspapers; federal civil defence was wary, advising that “no builder should advertise as a builder of atomic bomb shelters.”¹¹ Canadian civil defence officials reached this decision because they did not have sufficient information to design a structure strong enough to withstand an atomic blast. CD officials had no objection to shelter advertising so long as firms did not mislead the public into believing their products had official government approval, or make unsubstantiated claims about their shelters’ protective properties. In the event, few prospective shelter builders advertised in Canadian newspapers during the early 1950s.

⁹ Albert Vachon to Louis St. Laurent, 19 May 1952; Cawdron to Worthington 28 May 1952, *Ibid.*

¹⁰ What, precisely, these batteries would shoot was not described in the correspondence. William Rogers to Canadian Civil Defence Administration, 16 November 1953, *Ibid.*

¹¹ Dr. J. Hartman, Western Enterprises to Worthington, 29 July 1952; Harry Shiff to Department of National Defence, 5 August 1952; Andrew Zsolt to Department of Civil Defence, 15 October 1952, *Ibid.*

At the same time that Civil Defence Canada quietly discouraged private shelter firms from advertising their shelters, the organization embarked on an extensive publicity campaign that featured untested shelter designs prominently. At first, the tools available for publicity were civil defence manuals and public lectures. However, technical civil defence manuals and public speaking engagements could reach only a very specific, limited audience, and usually those in attendance were already involved in CD. A model shelter display, on the other hand, capitalized on public anxiety and curiosity about the atomic bomb by creating a site for discussion, exploration, and, most important, media attention. Whether or not the shelter display conformed to extant civil defence policies, or even to safety standards, was less important than if the press gave the display a positive review. Such coverage, federal CD officials reasoned, could feasibly convince more people to join up with their local civil defence organization, even if that municipality had no plans or capability to build shelters.

Government was not the only agent interested in building a shelter display. At the same time as Civil Defence officials mounted their first public shelter displays, private builders were also developing advertising for shelters for a variety of motives. Through the 1950s, private citizens, newspaper outlets, engineering firms and realtors erected shelters for public interest--out of patriotic fervor, or for sale. These private shelters typically caught the federal government, provinces, and municipalities off-guard. Civil defence agencies hurriedly took steps to associate themselves with private shelter displays to garner more attention for their organization. In the process, officials legitimized projects they often had little to do with in order to provide evidence of visible progress in CD planning to the public and the press.

Both government and the private sector advertised shelters at the Canadian National Sportsmen's Show in Toronto in 1952. The event marked the Information Services Division of the Department of Health and Welfare's first attempt to promote shelters at large public gatherings. The Canadian Government Exhibition Commission helped Civil Defence Canada erect a mock air raid shelter, complete with supplies, in a prime location on the exhibition floor. At a different booth in the same show, a Waterloo-based insurance company promoted its disaster insurance portfolio, also using a bomb shelter. The company distributed its own civil defence publicity developed by a private advertising firm, and displayed a replica atomic bomb with its larger, more comfortable-looking version of the shelter on view at the Civil Defence booth. Every day of the exhibition, the company held draws for the emergency equipment featured in its shelter.¹² Fewer visitors frequented the insurance company's exhibit than the federal display, but federal officials commended the company for its dedication to public service while asserting ownership over the entire subject of shelters and public safety. Civil Defence representatives politely declined the company's offer of a \$10,000 private donation to finance a joint CD publicity campaign.¹³

The first federal shelter display met with mixed reviews from the public. Sixty per cent of the booth's visitors were drawn in by the prominent federal shelter display, but almost a quarter of these expressed their view that shelter construction was probably an unnecessary precaution. Others, lacking even basic information about the government's

¹² The company developed a pamphlet – "Can You Survive," selling their comprehensive Security Hospital Plan, though whether or not the Company itself would pay for compensation of medical costs due to atomic war was not addressed. Robinson to KBF Smith, 5 March 1952, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-8-51.

¹³ The federal attendants were keen to compliment the company for its leadership as an industry promoting industrial and personal preparedness, but silent on its manager's offer to spend \$10,000 to promote civil defence through a joint publicity campaign. G. Dorval to Robinson, 26 May 1952, Ibid.

civil defence plans, demanded to know if they should begin building their shelter immediately.¹⁴ According to reports from attendants, those most interested in shelter displays were people from the “Old Country,” recent immigrants from the United Kingdom and Germany. The majority expressed the belief that their Canadian basements already offered greater protection than the air raid shelters they had used during Second World War bomber attacks. The technical shelter construction manuals on offer did not interest the general public, but were readily collected by professional contractors interested in expanding their business to include shelter construction.¹⁵ The Information Services Division was satisfied with the results of its first attempt at shelter publicity, and circulated versions of the shelter at the Calgary Stampede and the Pacific National Exhibition in Vancouver.¹⁶

Shelters in the Thermonuclear Age, 1953-1956

With the possible exception of those shelters constructed in the basements of new federal buildings in Ottawa, very few shelters were erected by the time United States detonated the first hydrogen bomb in 1952.¹⁷ The weapon’s effects rendered shelter strategies for built-up areas obsolete. A hydrogen bomb would detonate in the megaton

¹⁴ Ibid., Report on the Civil Defence Exhibit at the Canadian National Sportsman’s Show, held in the Toronto Coliseum Exhibition Grounds, March 14-22, 1952, Ibid.

¹⁵ Most of the British immigrants who commented belonged to the Warden Services in British Air Raid Protection corps during the Second World War, and offered their services to the Canadian organization. Some 750 civil defence manuals were distributed on a restricted basis to interested builders. Most visitors were given a pamphlet outlining basic information about Canadian civil defence but with no specific instruction to build shelters. Ibid.

¹⁶ Homer Robinson, Director of Information Services to A.D. Simmons, Canadian Exhibition Commission, 10 December 1951, LAC RG 29 Vol 108 File 180-5-51.

¹⁷ In the fall of 1953 E.A. Gardner, the Chief Architect at the Department of Public Works, conveyed the findings of a technical shelter committee to Worthington. His report estimated that building shelters in existing government buildings, such as the buildings in the Booth Street federal campus in Ottawa, would cost approximately \$600,000. Gardner to Worthington, 14 September 1953, LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12 Vol 24 File 16.

range, an explosive power calculated in the millions of tons of dynamite.¹⁸ By contrast, the bomb detonated over Hiroshima had the explosive power of 15,000 tons of dynamite. The shock wave from an H-Bomb, whether detonated as an airburst or on the ground, would dig an enormous crater over a radius of eight kilometres. The occupants of basement shelters in cities would be crushed and burned at the same instant. Areas missed by the blast wave from an atomic bomb would be flattened as far out as eight to 16 kilometres from ground zero.

Minister of National Health and Welfare Paul Martin defended his department's civil defence precautions, publicly declaring that the H-Bomb had made co-operation between different levels of government more important than ever. He also reassured the public that his staff was in the process of reassessing civil defence with "intelligent planning, sober judgement and a realistic assessment of the possible risk" from the hydrogen bomb. He urged Canadians to support their civil defence organizations.¹⁹

Privately, Martin instructed his staff to assemble an ad hoc committee to study urgently whether the inauguration of the H-bomb had any impact on civil defence. At the committee's meetings, shelter effectiveness was the subject of heated dispute. Dr. E.E. Massey of the Defence Research Board stated that evacuation was the only solution for Canadian urban centres, though shelters built deep underground might save those unable to leave their cities.²⁰ Martin's Deputy Minister, G.F. Davidson, wanted a bold statement

¹⁸ Ralph Lapp, an atomic physicist (and later activist-cum-civil defence consultant), explained the explosive power of a 20 megaton bomb in dramatic terms during an interview with the CBC in 1961. "It would be, for example, a continuous solid trainload of solid TNT, ... train to train... from let's say Toronto all the way to Moscow." *Close-Up*, 8 August 1961, CBC Digital Archives, accessed 6 February 2009, http://archives.cbc.ca/war_conflict/cold_war/topics/274/.

¹⁹ Canada. Department of Health and Welfare. "Honourable Paul Martin makes Statement of Civil Defence and the H-Bomb," *Civil Defence Bulletin* 35, (June 1954).

²⁰ E.E. Massey, Paper No. 8, Ad-Hoc Committee to Study Effects of Hydrogen Bomb on CD Planning, 14 May 1954, LAC RG 29 Vol 711 File 112-1-5.

incorporated into any future CD policy: if a bomb were dropped on any city, “every person within [the explosion’s] radius would be wiped out,” including those in shelters.²¹

The committee eventually recommended an evacuation strategy, but its members did not entirely abandon the shelter policy. Those caught without shelter in vulnerable areas, they reasoned, had a much smaller chance of survival than those who did.²²

During the years 1954 to 1956, civil defence planners across the country were consumed with efforts to implement and perfect evacuation plans across the country. Shelter planning accordingly fell behind, and Canada depended on shelter research in the United States to keep pace with developments. Rather than develop a pretense of expertise about shelter construction, Worthington decided that Canadian civil defence organizations, if asked, should pass on to the public American CD manuals, the most up-to-date information to which they had access. The North Atlantic Council’s Working Group on Civil Defence had also decided in 1955 that the Americans, the foremost nuclear power with access to atomic test facilities, would take the lead in shelter research and divulge findings relevant to CD to other countries.²³

Canada did pursue some shelter research in cooperation with the United States during the mid-1950s. Canadian defence scientists and CD officials benefited from close working relationships developed with their counterparts in American federal and state

²¹ First Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee to Study the Effects of the Hydrogen Bomb in Civil Defence Planning, 12 May 1954, *Ibid.*

²² Colonel M.P. Cawdron, Paper No VII – Implications of a Thermonuclear Explosion on Canadian Civil Defence Planning, *Ibid.* Even Davidson conceded on this point, stating that complete evacuation would likely not be worth the complications with people asking for funding to support them once they evacuated.

²³ , Worthington to Brigadier P.A.S. Todd, 26 July 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 678 File 108-4-3 pt 3. This decision was taken as a result of a decision of the North Atlantic Council’s Working Group on Civil Defence. Canadian representatives at this body, formed to coordinate refugee and dispersal policies among its European members, reported that the European allies generally discounted the possibility that nuclear weapons would be used at all in their territories, which they considered too valuable to the Soviets to be destroyed. R.B. Bryce to Jules Léger, 6 June 1955, LAC RG 25 Vol 4876 File 50108-B-40 pt 1.

governments. Jack Wallace, a senior member of Worthington's office, was invited with other international observers to attend Operation Cue in 1955. In this set of tests in the Nevada desert, the American Federal Civil Defence administration experimented with shelter and reinforced housing by subjecting them to an actual atomic blast.²⁴ The results were filmed and shared with Canada and the United Kingdom, as part of a tripartite agreement on defence research.

In Canada, the Defence Research Board (DRB) was responsible for testing different types of shelter designs to determine Canadian standards. DRB engineers constructed a shelter at the Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories in Ontario to test its resistance to radiation.²⁵ Atomic testing was not politically viable in Canada, but the DRB, in cooperation with the United States and the United Kingdom, hosted a series of large-scale conventional blast tests beginning in the late 1950s to determine blast effects on structures and equipment.²⁶ The Engineering Section of Civil Defence Canada (and

²⁴ In preparation for the test, the United States government constructed several houses of different structural strength, some with shelters, some without, built at different distances from ground zero. Also constructed were an electrical power station, radio and telephone towers, and large gas tanks. Cars, trucks and other vehicles were also distributed throughout the "city" built for the test. Mannequins were placed in the houses in various domestic montages to see how well they would fare when the bomb hit. High speed cameras recorded the devastation in slow motion, and the results were broadcast live, across the country, on radio, and later in television and film. 5,800 civilian and military observers were present at the blast, and both civil defence officials and military officials carried out exercises near ground zero shortly after the explosion. LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 4 File 4-32.

²⁵ The Chalk River Nuclear Laboratories complex was used for a number of civil defence activities. Reactor leaks in 1952 and 1958 irradiated sections of the facilities. The Canadian military joined clean-up operations alongside military personnel. Jimmy Carter, a young lieutenant in the United States Navy and future president of the United States, was involved in the 1952 decontamination with a USN team. The Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Air Force, and "a few" civil defence officials assisted with the cleanup of the NRU reactor in 1958, working in 12-man shifts, three shifts a day, for two weeks, to gain experience in working with radiation. Wilfrid Eggleston, *Canada's Nuclear Story* (Toronto: Clarke Irwin, 1965), pp. 238-240. See also John Clearwater, "Atomic Veterans: A Report to The Minister of National Defence regarding Canada's Participation in Allied Forces' Nuclear Weapons Trials and Decontamination Work." (Canada: Department of National Defence, 1 January 2007).

²⁶ The first, Operation Snowball, took place in 1964, and involved 500 tons of high-explosive contributed to Canada by the United Kingdom. DRB scientists packed and shaped the explosives into brick charges, which were piled into a hemisphere which was about 30 feet high. Several hundred observers attended the explosion in 1964, which also tested different designs of blast shelters. After the blast, the Chief

later the Emergency Measures Organization) also constructed test shelters at the Civil Defence College in Arnprior, Ontario, to determine the best designs for proper shelter ventilation and comfort for its occupants.²⁷ These studies, however, did not translate into a shelter policy to accompany the evacuation strategy.

The federal government and municipalities had stopped mounting prominent CD displays featuring shelters by 1955. Nevertheless, public interest in the effects of the hydrogen bomb prompted a number of private citizens and organizations to mount their own sample air raid shelters. And federal, provincial, and municipal organizations continued their policy of publicly supporting these displays, usually mounted in major target areas. One illustrative example was a sample shelter built in front of Toronto City Hall in August 1955 by a promotional team from the *Toronto Telegram*. Federal authorities learned about the proposed display in conversation with colleagues in the Ontario government a month before it was erected. The *Telegram*, inspired by a joint Canadian-U.S. press conference between Paul Martin and American Federal Civil Defence Administration head Val Peterson about evacuation and shelter, decided to construct the shelter independently to capitalize on public interest.²⁸ With no approved Canadian shelter designs, Worthington advised the *Telegram* to build a shelter based on American blueprints. He insisted that the federal government participate to put to rest press criticism about the lack of coordination between levels of government on civil

Superintendent of Suffield Experimental Station in Alberta, Archie Pennie, received a call from a farmer in British Columbia, who reported that, on the day of the test, he was riding on his tractor when he heard a blast and was hit by a shock-wave which knocked off his hat. Subsequent testing revealed that the blast wave had refracted off the atmosphere and had actually travelled over the Rockies to disturb farmers several hundred kilometers away. Canadian War Museum Oral History Interview 31D10 Pennie, 16 January 2009.

²⁷ G.S. Hatton to Heads of Branches, 16 September 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 678 File 108-4-3 pt 3.

²⁸ Worthington to D. Summerville, 26 July 1955, *Ibid.*

defence.²⁹ Worthington promised the *Telegram* that all levels of government would collaborate, forgetting, in his enthusiasm, to check beforehand with his superiors, or his counterparts in the city and the province.³⁰

Martin approached the project with his typical caution. The federal government would support the shelter only on the condition that it would not be used as a statement of civil defence policy. No federal or provincial speaker could endorse the *Telegram's* model as an official shelter for construction in private homes. The federal government did, however, take the display seriously enough to ask civil defence liaison officers from the DRB to review the publisher's building diagrams and make modifications to create as accurate a model shelter as possible.³¹

Built above ground at Toronto City Hall out of nondescript concrete blocks, the shelter opened on 4 August 1955 to large crowds. Mindful of Martin's restrictions, speakers at the event never addressed the utility of shelters for civil defence. Federal officials instead used the event as a platform to promote better coordination between the federal CD office and the province of Ontario. Worthington praised the newspaper's shelter as evidence of intergovernmental cooperation in civil defence, a curious claim, because the provincial authorities' contribution was minimal, and the City of Toronto's civil defence organization existed only on paper.³² The coordinator had previously expressed his hopes to Metropolitan Toronto's Civil Defence Committee chairman that

²⁹ For instance, Gordon Sinclair, the editor of *Liberty Magazine*, penned an article which mocked the amateurish and inconsistent nature of civil defence, stating "we need civil defence about as much as we need leprosy." Gordon Sinclair, "Civil Defence – As Useful as a Pea Shooter," *Liberty* (April 1955), pp. 6-7. Worthington to Summerville, 26 July 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 678 File 108-4-3 pt 3.

³⁰ Worthington to W.M. Nickle, Provincial Secretary, 26 July 1955, *Ibid.*

³¹ Worthington to Martin, 26 July 1955, *Ibid.*

³² They used Winston Churchill's March 1955 speech in support of civil defence to make their point: "No city, no family, nor any *honourable* [emphasis mine] man or woman can repudiate their civil defence duties and accept from others help which they are not prepared to fit themselves to render in return." Speech at demonstration specimen shelter Toronto, August 4 1955, *Ibid.*

the publicity from the shelter would create pressure on the city to invest more resources into local organization.³³

At the opening, Worthington congratulated and thanked the newspaper publisher for the shelter and for stimulating public's interest in civil defence. He admitted that the shelter would not provide any protection to the residents of metropolitan Toronto, but suggested that shelters like it could protect Canadians in the city's outskirts, where the blast wave from a thermonuclear weapon might have left some houses standing. The survivability of the shelter was, however, less important to CD officials than its use as a promotional device, and in advertising their display, the *Telegram* borrowed from the federal government's CD publicity line. The publisher touted the construction as "a fine example of participation in civil defence for which this newspaper and the City of Toronto may be justly proud." They were also more optimistic about the shelter's utility, "the like of which will save many lives should an enemy attack take place."³⁴

Both the *Telegram* and civil defence authorities were enthusiastic about the numbers of visitors attracted by the display. 63,000 Toronto residents visited the shelter during the first month outside city hall, and the *Telegram* successfully lobbied to extend the display's life through the entire 1955 Canadian National Exhibition. Generous coverage in their newspaper ensured that those who did not visit the shelter could read about it. As part of the paper's exploration of the issue, journalist Gordon Donaldson, his wife, and their two goldfish spent a weekend confined in the shelter. Writing to

³³ Worthington to Donald Summerville, 26 July 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 678 File 108-4-3 pt 3. Toronto's City Council had disbanded the Toronto-York Committee on Civil Defence shortly following the Korean War, but reinstated CD in Toronto following Hurricane Hazel's passage through the city in October 1954. Over 1,688 people lost their homes in Toronto, a further 81 were killed. Metropolitan Clerk to D.D. Summerville, 2 March 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 726 File 112-T1.

³⁴ *Toronto Telegram* brochure for shelter, found in file LAC RG 29 Vol 678 File 108-4-3 pt 3.

Worthington after the experience, Donaldson noted that “Things weren’t quite so bad as we had feared. ... I did have a go at working the hand operated [ventilation] fan but it was too much like hard work. Cooking didn’t raise the inside temperature unduly, and the fumes were carried away quite successfully up the exhaust vent. The two goldfish ... enjoyed their weekend fine.”³⁵ The *Telegram*’s display was a publicity coup for the newspaper and CD alike, built at no cost to any level of government. Civil defence organizations had shamelessly presented a misleading display built by a private agency as evidence of the CD program’s success.

The Canadian government officially adopted evacuation as the civil strategy for major urban centres in 1956. As discussed in Chapter 4, the evacuation strategy was quickly revealed to be deeply flawed, since it did not take fallout risks into account.³⁶ Nuclear explosions would scatter irradiated particles far downwind of the blast area, blanketing areas of the country once thought safe from Soviet attack with potentially lethal doses of radiation. The health risks of radioactive fallout over long distances became known to the Canadian government following an American nuclear test in the Pacific in 1954, when the crew of a Japanese fishing craft fell ill from radiation poisoning. The government received reports from its own scientific advisors and from the American Atomic Energy Commission that dismissed the genetic risks of radiation from testing, but said little about their effects in a post-attack environment. These reports were followed by independent studies by the American Academy of Science and the British Medical Research Council that concluded radiation from fallout posed risks not only to

³⁵ Gordon Donaldson to Worthington 31 August 1955, LAC RG 29 Vol 678 File 108-4-3 pt 3.

³⁶ Analysis of Survival Plans Project Q, September 1956, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 5 File 5-1.

those exposed to it, but to their descendants.³⁷ Increased public anxiety about fallout risks forced shelters back onto the federal government's agenda. Canada's CD officials proceeded to argue for a clear shelter policy that instructed Canadians to build fallout shelters. By 1957, CD officials in the United States and Canada determined that, for the public to survive a war fought with thermonuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles, individual citizens would need to build shelters for themselves and their families in peacetime, since an attack, once launched, could come with less than 15 minutes' warning.

Towards a National Shelter Program, 1957-1959

Stephen White, the federal civil defence office's chief engineer, quickly recognized his organization's critical lapse in shelter research during the evacuation phase. He believed that the existing policy of encouraging evacuation from target areas while asking homeowners in reception areas to build family basement shelters would lead to a massive loss of life. While homeowners would be as well cared for as could reasonably be expected, evacuees would die without proper shelter. In April 1957, White proposed to ask homeowners to build communal shelters to house upwards of 15 people per basement. In the circumstances, he argued, financial assistance would have to be provided in order to persuade homeowners to either expand their existing shelters or build communal shelters. White submitted that until the problem was resolved, "we are doing more harm than good by attempting to exhort the public into any form of shelter

³⁷ "Academy of Sciences Report: Radiation Declared Harmful to Victim, All Descendants," *The Globe and Mail*, 13 June 1956. See also Paul Martin, "Health Hazards of Radiation and Nuclear Test Explosions," 27 July 1956, LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12 Vol 26 File 16. Martin dismissed risks from testing initially, but did act to restrict unnecessary radiation exposure to the public. For example, in October 1956, the Canadian government ruled that fluoroscopes, x-ray devices installed in some department shoe stores so that consumers could see their feet inside the shoe, should be restricted for medical uses only. PR 1956-26, 13 October 1956, LAC Martin Fonds MG 32 B12 Vol 26 File 1.

and refuge program.”³⁸ White’s letter prompted another series of meetings between Civil Defence, the DRB, and the Department of National Defence to determine what, if any, updates the shelter policy merited.

White’s group had more information at its disposal than the ad hoc committee that had grappled with the impact of the hydrogen bomb on CD in 1954. By 1957, the American Atomic Energy Commission had declassified many of its findings about the effects of nuclear weapons and effective shelter designs.³⁹ The Defence Research Board remained the Canadian authority on shelters. Its scientists had amassed information about the materials needed to withstand blast overpressures and provide adequate radiation shielding. The organization reviewed countless shelter designs received from U.S. sources and independent Canadian designers.⁴⁰ Many of the key issues relating to the provision and construction of shelters in Canada, however, depended on precise political direction as to who was responsible for costs, maintenance, and surveying for shelters.⁴¹ Outstanding questions included whether the government would alter the National Housing Act to establish requirements for shelter construction in new buildings, or provide financial assistance to persuade individuals to build shelters in their existing

³⁸ S.N. White to G.S. Hatton, 30 April 1957, LAC RG 29 Vol 678 File 108-4-3, pt 4.

³⁹ The Atomic Energy Commission published the first edition of *The Effects of Nuclear Weapons* in 1957, a volume which detailed the organization’s comprehensive findings on atomic and thermonuclear weapons effects. Samuel Glasstone, *The Effects of Nuclear Weapons*. (Washington: Atomic Energy Commission, 1957).

⁴⁰ The basic assumptions underlying Canadian technical considerations for shelters were twofold: that manned bomber fleets remained the primary Soviet threat, and that the nominal bomb dropped on Canadian target areas was not likely to be greater than five megatons (5MT). Those attending the shelter meetings agreed that the two factors were unlikely to change by 1967. This is important because civil defence planners assumed three hours’ warning time for evacuation that no longer existed, and the use of larger bombs would necessitate further dispersal. Summary of Proceedings held to discuss Shelter and Refuge Policy, 29 May 1957, LAC RG 29 Vol 678 File 108-4-3 pt 4

⁴¹ As Worthington’s replacement, Major-General G.S. Hatton observed to his superiors in November 1957, “before we can place the Civil Defence stamp of approval on these designs, it is necessary to know what government policy will be and [the] financial or material budget which would be fixed by such a policy.” Hatton to Davidson, 14 November 1957, *Ibid*.

homes.⁴² Without a firm answer on these policy questions, both Civil Defence and Canadians who sought answers about their protection were left guessing.

The gap was noticed by municipal planners, who had greater contact with concerned citizens in their communities. In early 1958 Mary Cameron, a civil defence training officer in Vancouver, British Columbia, was forced to use outdated CD shelter pamphlets that did not contain approved shelter designs to answer public enquiries. In a letter to her federal counterpart, Cameron asked for clarification about CD policy since “some people are most insistent and believe we are simply withholding information from them.”⁴³ The reply to her letter, arriving a month later, was sympathetic, surprisingly frank, and totally unhelpful. “At the moment we are not anxious to issue any instructions in regard to home shelters because of possible confliction with the evacuation plan.”⁴⁴ Officials were invariably forced to respond to inquiries with vague assurances that study was ongoing, when in fact the lack of policy had effectively paralyzed the approval process for any Canadian shelter designs. Toronto alderman Donald Summerville, director of the Metropolitan Toronto Civil Defence Committee, reflected that the federal government’s indecision had undermined civil defence’s legitimacy. He predicted that CD organizations would have difficulty convincing the public to co-operate with a shelter policy even after the federal government made up its mind.⁴⁵

The continued absence of a shelter policy was not a sufficient deterrent to prevent the Information Services Division from using images of shelter in its CD publicity and

⁴² Shelter Policy – Decisions to be Made, nd, Ibid.

⁴³ Mary Cameron to Colonel Leo Smith, 6 January 1958, Ibid.

⁴⁴ Smith to Cameron, 3 February 1958, Ibid.

⁴⁵ “At present we have nothing tangible to offer the public which would be of much help to them. My personal view is that if, as we do, talk shelter, we must provide some answer which has the highest authority behind it, and also that further delay mitigates against civil defence and its objective.” Summerville to Hatton, 29 August 1958, Ibid.

advertising. The first in a series of posters published by ISD in 1958 looked at “Refuge” and featured a fallout shelter. The ISD published the poster, which was displayed in post offices across the country, without consulting their colleagues in Civil Defence.⁴⁶ The shelter depicted in the poster angered Stephen White who remarked that, in addition to being a “monstrous” violation of policy, it depicted a blast shelter design developed in 1949, which would have been unable to withstand the greater blast and heat waves created by thermonuclear weapons. White recommended the posters’ immediate recall and destruction.⁴⁷

The federal government’s uncertainty about shelter policy reflected its diminishing confidence in the overall structure of Canada’s civil defence organization. During Major-General Howard Graham’s national survey in the summer and fall of 1958, commissioned by Health Minister J.W. Monteith to reassess Canada’s CD policy and structure, shelter studies were put on hold along with other CD programs. Civil defence planners were forced to struggle with the most important questions about shelter policy, such as who should build shelters, and what financial incentives would be offered to the public so that they could afford to do so, at the exact moment when higher direction on many essential aspects of the CD program was pending. These questions were given additional urgency by increasing international tension over Berlin, but CD and EMO officials could do little to hasten government decision-making.⁴⁸ For example, in

⁴⁶ Resume – Civil Defence Informational Activities – 1957-1958, nd, LAC RG 29 Vol 102 File 180-8-1.

⁴⁷ It is unclear whether any action was taken on the issue.

⁴⁸ During Graham’s survey, Canadian political scientist James Eayrs lamented the confusion over who should be responsible for the construction of fallout shelters, and he published an open letter to Graham in the *Canadian Forum*: “What is needed is a combination of carrot and stick, the carrot perhaps in the form of financial reimbursements for expenses reasonably incurred in making preparations for civil defence, the stick perhaps in the form of fines for making no provision. Compelling adherence to shelter specifications in the construction of new residential housing and public buildings is a minimum measure long overdue.”

September 1958, the interdepartmental Civil Defence Policy Committee reviewed the most recent civil defence planning assumptions to draft its recommendations to the Cabinet Committee on Emergency Plans (CCEP). They concluded that Canada's evacuation policy would not work, and that the country urgently needed a new shelter strategy.⁴⁹ The committee decided not to forward their recommendations to the CCEP, and instead shelved the shelter question until Graham completed his study.⁵⁰ Firm policy direction about fallout shelters was again delayed in the early months of 1959, as the federal government considered how to implement Graham's findings. On 2 April 1959, White was once again forced to explain to a correspondent that the government had no shelter policy, two years after he expiated on the grave consequences of neglect.⁵¹

During the confusion over the precise nature of shelter policy in Canada, the United States continued to be the sole official source of information for the Canadian public. In Canada, most policy discussions took place in Cabinet Committees or Defence Research Board meeting rooms. In the United States, Congressional Committees summoned experts to testify publicly about their findings. The most important public forum on defence issues in the United States in these years was the Military Operations Subcommittee, or Holifield Committee, named after its outspoken chairman, Congressman Chet Holifield. The committee reported annually on its investigations. In

Eayrs, "Survival and Civility," in *Northern Approaches: Canada and the Search for Peace*. (Toronto: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 47-48.

⁴⁹ The Policy Committee predicted shorter warning times and higher fatalities resulting from advances in missile technology and the likely distribution of fallout across North America. Report to the Joint Planning Committee by the Joint Planning Staff: Civil Defence Planning Assumptions, 27 August 1958, LAC RG 25 Vol 5944 File 50217-40 pt 6.2.

⁵⁰ Minutes of the 11th Civil Defence Policy Meeting, 29 September 1958, Ibid.

⁵¹ White to Adelard Fontaine, Judge of Sessions of the Peace, 2 April 1959, LAC RG 29 Vol 678 File 108-4-3 pt 4.

1956, Holifield launched a two-year review of the U.S. civil defence plan.⁵² As a result of his investigations, Holifield submitted a bill to Congress for a national shelter construction program. The FCDA followed suit, and requested \$32 billion to start building shelters.⁵³

The Holifield Committee leaked its findings to the media, convinced that complacency over shelters and nuclear deterrence had undermined U.S. national security. Its recommendations for shelter construction rapidly became public knowledge both in the United States and in Canada.⁵⁴ On 7 May 1958, the Eisenhower administration adopted a shelter policy that focused on surveying existing structures for fallout protection, and educating the public about the need to build private shelters. The U.S. government did not wish to pay the bill, and made clear in their press releases that private enterprise would direct the shelter effort.⁵⁵ The American government, after all, had to finance missile research and construction to catch up to the Soviet Union and maintain a credible nuclear deterrent.⁵⁶

⁵² B. Wayne Blanchard, *American Civil Defense 1945-1984: The Evolution of Programs and Policies* (Maryland: Federal Emergency Management Agency, 1985), pp. 5-6.

⁵³ Ibid. p. 6. Eisenhower created a shelter study committee in response, which also recommended the construction of shelters nationwide, at a cost of \$25 billion dollars. Eisenhower's civilian advisory committees, including the influential Science Advisory Committee, headed by RAND scientist H. Rowan Gaither similarly recommended the construction of fallout shelters as the best available option for passive continental defence, noting that their utility would not be affected by reduced warning times from missile attacks. Historian David Immerman asserts that the Gaither Committee was composed entirely of 'alarmist critics' of Eisenhower's policies, *Deterrence and Survival in the Nuclear Age*, 7 November 1957.

OSANSP, NSC Series, Policy Papers Subseries, Box 22, NSC5724(2), accessed at *George Washington University National Security Archive*, accessed 8 October 2007,

<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB139/nitze02.pdf>. See also Valerie Adams, *Eisenhower's Fine Group of Fellows*. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006), p. 173.

⁵⁴ Ralph E. Lapp, "Civil Defense Shelters: An Interview with Congressman Chet Holifield," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* (1957), pp. 130-132.

⁵⁵ Federal Civil Defense Administration News Release SR 571, 7 May 1958, LAC RG 29 Vol 678 File 108-4-3 pt 4.

⁵⁶ American spending on research and maintenance of nuclear weapons stockpiles spiked in the early 1950s to an all-time high, during the production of the hydrogen bomb, but hit another peak in 1960, as missile research accelerated. Stephen Schwartz, "Overview of Project Findings," *Atomic Audit: The Costs and*

In Canada, the first family fallout shelter was not built by the federal government, but by a private company. In January 1959, the Consolidated Building Corporation neared completion of Regency Acres, a subdivision of residential homes in Aurora, Ontario. The subdivision was built to accommodate workers moving north for Aurora's new pharmaceutical plant. Their first open house for their four-bedroom bungalow model home featured a fully-stocked basement fallout shelter. Jack Fienburg, the corporation's president, asserted that "a fallout shelter is a prime necessity in the home of tomorrow... and the home of tomorrow is being built today."⁵⁷ The shelter was a "luxury" item offered for an additional price of \$1500, slightly more than 10% of the total purchase price of the model home. Fienburg disclosed that the shelter was built without advice from Canadian civil defence agencies; the architect relied instead on American and Swedish information.⁵⁸ Federal CD was not invited to the opening ceremony, but Etobicoke Reeve and Metropolitan Toronto Civil Defence Committee's erratic and frustrated chairman, H.O. Waffle, attended. After an apparent conflict with Toronto Mayor Nathan Phillips at the ceremony, Waffle left Regency Acres angrily. Perhaps he had intended to speak about the defence shelters offered against fallout, but in his absence, no one at the demonstration addressed the subject in their remarks. Perhaps the subject was too grim. Instead, Fienburg and Phillips directed press attention to the shelter's peacetime application as a storage room for jam or pickles.⁵⁹

Consequences of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Since 1940 (Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 1998), accessed 6 February 2009, <http://www.brookings.edu/projects/archive/nucweapons/schwartz.aspx>.

⁵⁷ "Build Shelter for Fallout into New Home," *Toronto Telegram*, 16 January 1959.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ "Reeve Waffle Ruffled," *Toronto Star*, 17 January 1959. Their sales pitch reflected those of other "shelter salesmen in the United States, who appended the jam preserve or root cellar function to the list of a fallout shelter's other uses. See *CBC Radio: Assignment*, 6 November 1958. *CBC Digital Archives*, accessed 6 June 2009, http://archives.cbc.ca/IDC-1-71-274-1462/conflict_war/cold_war/clip3.

The Regency Acres project reflected renewed public discussion about fallout shelters inspired by developments in the United States. The Canadian press was particularly critical of the Canadian government's delay in releasing its own policy. The *Financial Post*, in the first of a series of scathing editorials about civil defence, demanded solutions to questions left unanswered or vaguely addressed since 1957:

The Canadian public has arrived at the opinion that plans [for evacuation] are so absurd as to be farcical. ... If carried out on the outbreak of a war, they would bring the nation's life and war effort to a halt. The government should let the people know whether evacuation plans are still theoretically in force, and, if not, what it thinks of the shelter plans that have been seriously discussed in the United States.⁶⁰

Other newspapers echoed this line of questioning, especially following the publication of the Civil Defence Order in March 1959, which delegated responsibility for civil defence to the Emergency Measures Organization, other government departments, and the Canadian Army. It did not, however, clarify what the government proposed to do about sheltering the population from radioactive fallout.⁶¹

In April 1959, the Defence Research Board completed its "lengthy and somewhat disturbing" appreciation of Canadian military and civilian defences, and recommended substantial increases to civil defence funding. The DRB's report noted that civilian losses in a nuclear war would be enormous, but could be reduced if Canadians had some recourse to family or community fallout shelters.⁶² The Cabinet Committee on Emergency Plans subsequently met to determine the best shelter policy for Canada. It concluded from the evidence amassed in the United States and by the DRB that Canada's civil defence policy could no longer operate based solely on an evacuation strategy. The

⁶⁰ "What Civil Defence Plans?" *Financial Post*, 7 February 1959, p. 6.

⁶¹ "New Look in Civil Defense," *Globe and Mail* 25 March 1959, p. 6.

⁶² Defence Liaison Division to Doug Lapan, 10 April 1959, LAC RG 25 Vol 5944 File 50217-40 pt 6.2.

Cabinet ministers decided that the measure that would save the most lives in Canada was widespread construction of blast shelters. Answers to most of the important questions about these costly shelters' vulnerability to fire and radiation, the government's greatest concerns, did not exist in the available research. Fallout shelters had been subjected to more study, and, more importantly, were considered more readily affordable to the average Canadian family. The CCEP therefore forwarded to Cabinet an urgent recommendation to launch an appeal to every Canadian to begin construction of fallout shelters.⁶³ They favoured plans for family fallout shelters with an estimated cost of 200-300 dollars, and did not propose the construction of community shelters built to house groups larger than the average family household. This would prove the most controversial and unpopular aspect of the Canadian shelter policy, because most Canadians immediately concluded that protection depended on the individual's ability to pay.

In Cabinet, ministers noted that the Diefenbaker government had promised quick action on the civil defence portfolio when they launched the Graham survey. They agreed with the CCEP's decision that the public required more information about shelters. Ministers balanced this need against the possibility of frightening Canadians, or possibly upsetting the balance of international diplomacy by making visible preparations for war.⁶⁴ Cabinet decided that shelter policy would remain secret until it was approved by the provinces. It was a poorly-kept secret, however. In advance of the October 1959 Dominion-Provincial Civil Defence conference, defence minister George Pearkes leaked

⁶³ Proposed Shelter Policy, ND, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 4 File 13.

⁶⁴ Cabinet Conclusions, 28 September 1959, LAC RG 2 Series A-5-a Vol 2745.

to the press some details about his intention to discuss cheap fallout structures that “Any man who’s handy with a saw and hammer can build in his basement or backyard.”⁶⁵

Pearkes issued an official statement of Canadian shelter policy to the press on 3 October 1959, a full seven months after the federal government restructured Canadian civil defence. He informed every “prudent” householder to construct a shelter below ground, in which they could wait for 48 hours until authorities determined the likely fallout patterns.⁶⁶ In November 1959, the prime minister released a press statement to expand on Pearkes’ appeal, advising homeowners who required financial assistance to apply to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation for home improvement loans under the National Housing Act. At the centre of the shelter policy was the family fallout shelter. The survival of the country would depend on the initiative, judgment, and enthusiasm of the average citizen, not government action.

It appeared that shelter builders were the first to take notice of the policy. Jack Fienberg, who had yet to sell one of his shelter-ready model homes in Regency Acres, wrote to his contacts in the Ontario government to find out more about the policy, worried that it represented competition for his commercial interests.⁶⁷

Conclusion

Shelter construction was not an important component of Canada’s CD policy until 1959, despite the fact that shelters had featured prominently in CD publicity for the preceding decade. What Canadians did learn about shelters in these manuals was usually copied directly from American sources. For Canadian civil defence planners, reliance on

⁶⁵ “May Use Housing Act In Building Shelters For Civil Defense,” *Globe and Mail*, 30 September 1959, p. 17.

⁶⁶ “Pearkes Advises All Canadians Build Basement Fallout Shelters – No Use Driving Away if Bomb is Dropped,” *Globe and Mail*, 3 October 1959.

⁶⁷ Fienberg to Leslie Frost, 6 October 1959, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 55 File 87-1 pt 1.

American input for shelter research was both convenient and necessary. Canada and the United States had shared vulnerabilities, and worked closely in other aspects of defence research and policy. The United States was the only power with access to nuclear technology that could afford to carry out extensive testing, even though its secrecy laws prevented effective information sharing with its allies. Canadian civil defence planners, always struggling to accomplish much with a small budget, would have wasted resources in reproducing American research.

Canada was slow to develop a strategy to shelter the public from radioactive fallout, too, because of the dizzying advances in nuclear weapons technology. Canada and the United States grappled with the full implications of a war fought with thermonuclear weapons that could kill the population of entire cities, with or without shelter, and whose radioactive ghost posed the threat of killing survivors far downwind. Shelters were effectively embraced as the last line of defence.

Civil Defence officials confused the issue by relying overmuch on shelters in their publicity throughout the 1950s. CD organizations did not pursue shelter displays exclusively. Often public evacuation exercises or fire-fighting and rescue demonstrations took their place, but shelter displays were the most consistently popular sites for the public curious about life after the bomb. Civil Defence appropriated displays mounted by private citizens, the press, and corporations to reach a wider public, even if the construction of those shelters was at odds with their evacuation policy. Even when shelters were identified as the best means to ensure the safety of the greatest number of Canadians in a war, those in the public genuinely interested in shelter construction were left guessing and directionless as government debated its policy for over two years. After

1959, the federal government's decision to urge individuals to go underground was followed with a vigorous and sustained campaign by spokesmen for the Emergency Measures Organization, including the prime minister.

Chapter 8

Canadians Respond to the Shelter Program

The greatest number of family fallout shelters were built from 1959 to 1961, coinciding with Canada's military preparations for war with the Soviet Union over Berlin. This was no doubt in part because of a vigorous government publicity campaign to convince citizens to invest in whatever protection a fallout shelter could provide them if international diplomacy failed. National television and radio broadcasts carried an endorsement of shelters by the Prime Minister, following Exercise TOCSIN, a 30-minute simulation of Armageddon. Yet, in the end, only several thousand Canadians chose to build a family fallout shelter.

Three factors informed Canadians' decision to reject the fallout shelter program. The first challenge to shelter advocates emerged from the international disarmament movement, which gained momentum in the late 1950s as a consequence of public health concerns over the long-term effects of radiation. Canadian disarmament and peace activists, like their allies in the United Kingdom and the United States, believed that shelters were a disingenuous government program designed to lull the public into a false sense of security while the great powers pursued the arms race. International experts, domestic politicians, and community activists all took part in the campaign to stop nuclear testing and promote disarmament. Peace and disarmament organization, and their supporters, effectively campaigned against the construction of shelters, much to the frustration of Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) officials.

Even if not convinced by disarmament activists, the public often raised doubts about fallout shelters, their affordability, effectiveness, and practicality. Disputes among

Canada's different levels of government over the right to tax shelters as home improvements drove up the cost to the individual homeowners. Renters and citizens without the ability to pay for their own survival turned on the government's policy. Those in the public who found the family shelter policy odious and impractical demanded that government should provide leadership and construct large communal shelters so that rich and poor Canadians could survive a war. American efforts to locate, mark, and stock communal shelters in public buildings, and the Canadian government's decision to build heavy blast shelters to ensure the safety of its officials, gave additional weight to the arguments of shelter critics.

The final and most difficult factor to measure, though perhaps the easiest to understand, was psychological. Most EMO officials concluded that Canadians did not build shelters because they did not want to think about nuclear war or CD measures. Caught up in a Cold War fought out mostly "over there" in Europe and Asia, many hoped that nuclear war simply could not or would not happen. The alternative both horrified Canadians and strained their imagination. The majority of Canadians subscribed to the widespread belief that the world would end as soon as the first bombs fell.¹ Any survivors struggling to rebuild a destroyed civilization, they reasoned, would surely envy the dead. The government never developed effective arguments to counter this perception, which was fuelled by popular discussion, science fiction, and satire. As early as 1962, the failure of the shelter-building campaign caused the government and EMO to reassess the shelter policy, and their approach to national survival as a whole.

¹ Nearly half of the Canadians surveyed for a Peace Research institute study in 1963 believed that if a single five megaton bomb was dropped on Toronto, either half the population of Canada would die (11 per cent believed this), or everyone in Ontario would die (32 per cent), in either case a gross overestimation of the power and lethality of the weapon. John Paul and Jerome Laulicht, *In Your Opinion: Leaders' and Voters' attitudes on defence and disarmament*. (Clarkson: Canadian Peace Research Institute, 1963), p. 41.

Exercise TOCSIN and Shelter Publicity

The federal EMO information plan for the fiscal year 1961-2 proposed an ambitious mix of tried publicity tools and new means to reach the public. Traditional CD publicity such as instruction manuals and pamphlets figured heavily in the information campaign, as did scale model shelters circulated to each province for use in exhibitions and televised public demonstrations. The EMO made greater use of television and radio broadcasts to publicize the government's policy than they had in the past. EMO's information officer liaised with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to recommend programs or features on topics dealing with national survival, but liaisons with regional networks were left to the discretion of provincial or municipal officials. Officials produced a half-hour programme for Canadian radio stations, as well as a short motion picture dealing with survival and 20 to 60 second film clips for television and in movie theatres. Short radio clips were produced for play over CBC and regional radio stations.²

The publicity program was designed to present the public with information about the Soviet threat and nuclear weapons effects, and familiarize Canadians with the rationale for emergency measures and existing government plans. Its aim was to help families prepare a plan for their survival in a nuclear war. The government wished to impress on the public that individuals had a twofold responsibility to the state: to ensure their own personal survival, and to assist the government's reconstruction efforts after the war.³

² J.F. Wallace to Emergency Measures Organization to Regional Officers (EMO RO) 28, 13 February 1961, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 3 File 3-1.

³ Ibid.

The EMO's publicity campaign centred around the family fallout shelter, which had to be constructed by individual citizens. Yet the family fallout shelter figured only lightly in national emergency measures exercises held in 1961: TOCSIN and TOCSIN B. The TOCSIN exercises, their codename referring to an alarm bell, were launched to test the federal and provincial government's Continuity of Government (COG) program at protected sites across Canada. The exercises attracted more attention than any other publicity developed for CD previously because they were broadcast nationally over television and radio as they were carried out, and were introduced and personally endorsed by the Prime Minister.

Canada's COG did involve the construction of blast and fallout-protected shelters, but these were meant to protect government officials, not the public. The Canadian Army and Defence Construction Limited started construction on three major shelter systems across the country from 1958 to 1963. These systems would house and protect a skeleton staff of military and government officials, who would direct the national survival effort from underground. The first, RUSTIC, was an interim fallout protected shelter for 250 people established in older training and administration buildings at the Canadian Army base in Petawawa, Ontario, some 150 kilometers outside Ottawa. RUSTIC acted as an interim headquarters, to be occupied by federal officials who would fan out from Ottawa to RUSTIC and smaller fallout-protected sites in wartime, decentralizing government activity to ensure that the country would not be left without leadership if the Soviets carried out a decapitation strike against Ottawa.⁴

⁴ For a summary of all three programs, see Sean Maloney's "Dr. Strangelove Visits Canada: Projects RUSTIC, EASE, BRIDGE, 1958-1963," *Canadian Military History* 6 (Spring 1997), p. 42-56

The federal government could not direct the survival effort from isolated RUSTIC sites alone. A series of underground and aboveground sites, designed to house the Canadian Army's National Survival Attack Warning System (NSAWS), was approved in 1959, codenamed BRIDGE sites. From West to East, the shelters were located in Nanaimo, Penhold, Regina, Shilo, Borden, Valcartier, Gagetown, Debert, Charlottetown, and Holyrood. Of these sites, Nanaimo, Penhold, Borden, and Valcartier were located near predicted blast areas and were built underground. The BRIDGE sites were equipped with military communications equipment to connect affected municipalities with federal authorities coordinating nation-wide rescue efforts. They also contained CBC studios for the production of emergency broadcasts of public information.⁵ Each BRIDGE site housed over 275 people, including military personnel and an even blend of federal and provincial officials. Unlike RUSTIC, the BRIDGE sites were not considered a state secret. Officials encouraged publicity about the BRIDGE sites to provide the public with concrete evidence of government preparations for nuclear war.⁶

The government's most closely guarded secret was the construction of an "Experimental Army Signals Establishment" (EASE) in a former gravel pit in Carp, Ontario, located 25 kilometers outside Ottawa. The EASE project was a four-story underground blast bunker built to house 575 people. At full complement, it would have included several hundred military personnel, mainly signalers, and the Prime Minister, essential Cabinet ministers, and staff. The bunker could not accommodate families. Each occupant, including the Prime Minister, was required to develop family survival plans on his or her own, just like any other Canadian. Construction of the bunker was completed in

⁵ Ibid., p. 51

⁶ Ibid., pp. 50-51. "Nuclear War Bunker Plan Now Ready," *Globe and Mail*, 20 January 1961; "Watch for Big War Citadels Contract Soon," *Financial Post*, 21 January 1961.

early 1962, and soon after the Canadian Army Signal System moved in from its previous accommodation at the RUSTIC site in Petawawa. News of the bunker's existence broke nationally even before construction finished. The *Toronto Telegram*'s Ottawa reporter, George Brimmell, hired a private plane to fly over the site. From overhead, Brimmell determined the building was a nuclear blast bunker by the nature of its construction and the equipment awaiting installation. His report and aerial photographs of the site were published in the *Telegram* on 11 September 1961, under the blaring headline: "This is the Diefenbunker!"⁷ EMO officials were irritated by Brimmell's disregard for the site's security, and Diefenbaker was sufficiently embarrassed by the coverage that he had a private shelter built for his family, and never entered the bunker.⁸

The TOCSIN exercises were the first test of the communications system that linked RUSTIC, EASE, and BRIDGE sites under conditions of simulated attack. The Prime Minister's Office provided the official rationale for the May 1961 TOCSIN exercise in a press release:

The aim of this series of exercises is to practice those emergency measures necessary for national survival and the continuity of government; to test those measures for which preparations have been made and to direct attention to whatever gaps in planning and preparation may still exist.⁹

The first 1961 TOCSIN exercise unfolded nation-wide from 4-6 May, and involved the ten provincial sites, the Canadian Army, the federal cabinet, staff of the EMO, and hundreds of municipal civil defence and emergency measures staff. The Department of National Defence and the EMO worked together to give as much access as possible to the press to maximize public interest in emergency measures and broadcasts by federal and

⁷ "This is the Diefenbunker!" *Toronto Telegram*, 11 September 1961.

⁸ Maloney, p. 49.

⁹ LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 56 File 87-5 pt 2.1.

provincial officials. The press was permitted entry at every emergency government site, although journalists were forbidden from reporting anything they learned about fallout protection at each site, numbers and type of staff housed, and specific information about the communication and encryption systems.¹⁰

Press coverage of the exercise was extensive across Canada. A public information report prepared by the EMO revealed that Canadian newspapers published 842 stories on TOCSIN 1961 over two months. According to the report, TOCSIN's radio broadcast of the exercise was heard in 49 per cent of Canadian homes. This cannot necessarily be attributed to the public's interest in the exercise. A broad audience was already tuned in to the radio to learn about the successful flight of USN Commander Alan Shepard, the first American astronaut launched into orbit, when the exercise began.¹¹ Partway through the news broadcast, the Canadian Board of Broadcast Governors ordered all Canadian radio stations to replace their regular broadcasting with the TOCSIN program.¹² The program was broadcast at noon, 5 May 1961, and carried national messages from Diefenbaker, R.B. Curry, the director of the Emergency Measures Organization, and provincial and local representatives.

While much of the program revolved around the government and the armed forces' response to a simulated bomber attack, many of the officials' messages were directed at the individual householder. Curry, in his scripted performance, reflected mainly on the various emergency duties of federal government departments. He ended

¹⁰ The only restrictions related to the level of fallout protection afforded at the site, details about manning and specifics about the communication system. The rest was considered public knowledge and unclassified. Security Guide for Exercise TOCSIN 1961, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 56 File 87-5 pt. 1.2

¹¹ The Canadian public was deeply interested in Shepard's flight not just for his achievement, but because it followed so closely on the heels of Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's flight.

¹² "Defence Test Cuts Space Shot Off Air" *Toronto Daily Star*, 5 May 1961.

with a somber reminder: "Please remember if, in spite of all efforts, nuclear war should occur, your own life and the life of this nation will depend very largely on the preparations you make.... If the time should come when the sirens have to sound in earnest and we are attacked, let us be prepared."¹³ Tommy Douglas, Premier of Saskatchewan, ended his contribution with an appeal for the aid of the public in any future emergency, but, conscious of his supporters on the left, affirmed "these preparations to meet extreme emergency conditions that might arise from the use of nuclear weapons are not designed to persuade you to join in the numb fatalism of apathetic acceptance of catastrophe."¹⁴ For its part, the federal government hoped that listeners would take the lessons of TOCSIN to heart and begin immediate preparations for nuclear war. The radio broadcast was followed with a series of television specials, including a 14-minute report on the exercise on CJOH TV and two feature interviews with EMO officials on CBC.¹⁵

Built into the TOCSIN 1961 schedule was the publication of *11 Steps to Survival*, an addition to the EMO's *Blueprint for Survival* series. This step-by-step instruction booklet was the most comprehensive guide to emergency measures issued by the Diefenbaker government, and subsequent editions remained in circulation more or less unaltered until the 1980s.¹⁶ Diefenbaker's introduction to the booklet set out the government's approach to the nuclear problem and its proposed international and domestic solutions:

¹³ Script – Tocsin 1961, LAC RG 57 1983-84/212 Box 17 File 2550-61 pt 2.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ EMO RO82, 9 June 1961, Ibid.

¹⁶ There was one major distinction between the 1961 edition and the 1980 edition. The former had a yellow cover, whereas the latter bore a red cover.

Recognizing that nuclear war would be a catastrophe for all nations the Government has pursued a course of action designed to reduce world tensions, to bring about agreement providing for a settlement by peaceful means of international disputes, and to achieve disarmament with such controls as are necessary to preserve the security of all nations. Notwithstanding what has been and is being done, nuclear war is possible either by the intended actions of evil madmen or by miscalculation. Should such a tragedy happen, hundreds of thousands of Canadians might be killed or injured and many cities and towns might be destroyed. On the other hand, many hundreds of thousands of Canadians who would otherwise perish could survive a nuclear war if preparations were made.¹⁷

Nowhere in the pages that followed did the Canadian government or its officials guarantee survival in the event of a nuclear attack. Readers were simply informed in a matter-of-fact tone that, if they followed the advice in the booklet, they could increase their chances for survival.

The fourth step to survival, "Have a Shelter," was given the most attention in the booklet. The reader was advised to build a fallout shelter, mainly to protect against radiation. But who should build, and where? The authors offered no definite solution to the problem: "The type of shelter required depends on the distance from the explosion. And unfortunately it is not possible to know this in advance. That is why each individual must make his own decision when selecting the type of shelter he wishes to have."¹⁸ The booklet did not contain affordable designs for fallout shelters, but promised future pamphlets about blast and backyard shelters.¹⁹ The authors did, however, include brief guidelines for the construction of improvised fallout and blast structures in existing facilities. The government advised those who did not wish to leave potential target areas to build simple anti-blast shelters: for example, "you could ... dig yourself a trench in the

¹⁷ *11 Steps to Survival*, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

yard.” This advice was accompanied by an unfortunately conceived drawing of a man apparently digging his own grave.²⁰

The remainder of the booklet contained information about how the homeowner should stock the shelter and see to its maintenance and sanitary facilities. Father and husband played a dual role as family planner and guarantor of safety. Drawings accompanying the text portrayed an adult man maintaining the shelter much as he might a garage or home workshop, and supervising other family members as they stocked the shelter with 14 days’ worth of supplies. The booklet subtly hinted that providing a shelter was a father’s responsibility, just as he was expected to provide his family with an income and security in peacetime.²¹ After ensuring survival for himself and for his family, the conscientious shelter-builder was also responsible for contributing to national survival as a whole.

The booklet’s insistence that each householder should purchase a battery-operated radio was inherently practical. The radio was as central to the country’s survival as the shelter because it would provide a link between isolated surviving families and the rest of the country. Radio was the only likely means of mass communication after an attack.²² The responsible citizen would receive instructions about when it was safe to emerge from the shelter, and where help was needed in local rescue and reconstruction efforts. Planners underlined the importance of this link between the state and the sheltered citizen in the booklet: “It will be the only sure way that you know what is expected of you. ...

²⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

²¹ The language is subtle but clear: “If you have not provided your family with a fallout shelter...”. When the authors identify the reader as “you”, they referred exclusively to the male head of the household. Ibid., p. 36.

²² Most of the major civilian telephone exchanges were situated in Canadian target cities, and these would in all likelihood be destroyed in the first attacks, or consumed in fires afterwards.

Follow whatever instructions are given implicitly. Your life will depend on your action.”²³ The shelter policy, as described in *11 Steps to Survival*, was meant to appeal to the public as an insurance policy; as a means to provide for the family in wartime; and as a way to serve the country as a whole.

The Emergency Measures Organization printed tens of thousands of the booklets, many of which were distributed to the provincial authorities, but many more were sent directly to the public. Interested Canadians mailed requests for the booklet and fallout shelter instructions to a specially-established EMO post office box in Ottawa in the summer and fall of 1961. The spike in interest in shelter construction was directly related to the brewing crisis between the United States and the Soviet Union over access rights to Berlin.²⁴ The erection of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 dampened the international crisis, but the aftershocks of the Soviet’s aggressive diplomacy and intimidation were felt well into the winter. The Diefenbaker government authorized a substantial rearmament and national survival training program in August 1961, which was completed the following spring.

American interest in shelter construction also peaked in the summer and fall of 1961. In September, Canadians could read a special edition of *Life* magazine dedicated to fallout shelters, accompanied by a letter from U.S. President John F. Kennedy. The issue, headlined “How *You* Can Survive Fallout,” falsely claimed that 97 per cent of Americans could be saved by building fallout shelters. The article, whose mistaken assertion was

²³ Ibid., p. 38.

²⁴ Berlin, divided between the democratic west and communist east, was the sole point of exit for disaffected skilled workers working in onerous conditions and for poor wages in the German Democratic Republic. From 1958 to 1961, hundreds of thousands of these workers and their families fled the socialist state for a better life in West Germany, with tacit support. Khrushchev’s brinkmanship was meant to resolve the problem by forcing western powers to either withdraw from Berlin or agree to give substantial concessions to the East German government.

corrected in a later issue, set off what many observers at the time referred to as a “shelter mania” in the United States, as concerned families looked about for plans, and private builders sought to capitalize on the war scare. Kennedy had not intended to spark a national debate over the issue. The experience led Kennedy and his Office of Civil Defence Mobilization to be more circumspect about the national survival program.²⁵ “Shelter mania” reached over the border briefly, but was never as powerfully present in Canada as it was in the United States.

Khrushchev had backed down from his promise to resolve the Berlin crisis by force, but decided to open the 22nd Party Congress in Moscow with a bang. On 30 October 1961, a Soviet bomber dropped a 50 megaton *Tsar Bomba*, “King of all Bombs,” producing a 40-mile high mushroom cloud and immense devastation over the test area. The power of the bomb, which was actually too large ever to pose a credible threat as a weapon of war, was such that a person standing exposed to the blast 100 kilometres away would have received serious flash burns. Fallout from this blast crossed over the Arctic, and was detected in the atmosphere over Canadian cities by the Defence Research Board. News of the mega-bomb and the resulting fallout caused considerable anxiety in Canada.²⁶

In this context, the Canadian government resolved to carry on with its second national emergency measures exercise of the year, TOCSIN B 1961. Reacting to an announcement about the exercise, the Russian news agency accused the Canadian government of using the Berlin crisis as a pretext to stir up a war psychosis, “obviously

²⁵ B. Wayne Blanchard, *American Civil Defense 1945-1984: The Evolutions of Programs and Policies*. (Emmitsburg: Federal Emergency Measures Agency, 1985), p. 9.

²⁶ “Warns of Danger of Fallout ‘Panic,’” *Toronto Star*, 26 October 1961; “Fallout Danger Slight in Canada, States Scientist,” *Globe and Mail*, 26 October 1961.

influenced by the militarist quarters of the United States.”²⁷ Yet Canadian planners were very conscious of the need not to alarm the public unnecessarily with an exercise that was designed to refine procedures for emergency communications and fallout reporting.²⁸ The EMO had initially proposed that an expansion of the second TOCSIN exercise in 1961 could involve a mass public shelter drill of the type carried out in the United States. Chief of the General Staff Major-General S.F. Clark opposed this proposal, since group shelters had not been built, nor was the public prepared to participate in such a drill. The Canadian government had never organized a mass shelter drill in over a decade of civil defence planning. Clark instead suggested using the exercise to publicize the desirability of surveying existing buildings for fallout protection and to promote the construction of private shelters in the home.²⁹

In the end, the public was not asked to participate in shelter or evacuation drills for the TOCSIN B exercise, but the media coverage of the event was much greater than for the previous exercise. The intention of TOCSIN B 1961 was not just to test the emergency government dispersion and communication procedures, but also to exercise the National Survival Attack Warning System, which included every air raid siren in every community in the country. An intensive publicity drive preceded the exercise, but TOCSIN B 1961 was unique in that planners relied to a far greater extent on television to spread their message. In the first week of November 1961, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation carried three half-hour television specials about emergency measures and

²⁷ Canadian Press clipping, 25 September 1961, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 55 File 87-0 pt 3.2.

²⁸ Much of the point of these exercises was to develop proper communications procedures in order to ascertain, quickly, what parts of the country had been hit, what resources survived to serve the survival effort, and to do so with the least risk of miscommunication.

²⁹ S.F. Clark to Bryce, Harkness, 11 September 1961, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 55 File 87-0 Pt. 4.1.

civil defence, focusing on shelters, nuclear weapons, radiation effects, and the national warning system. The CBC's English program *Target YOU* featured a twenty-minute interview with R.B. Curry. It is not known how many Canadians watched the program, which aired at 10:30 pm. The EMO issued warnings to the public in early November 1961, to emphasize that the broadcast was merely an exercise. The planners urged the public who heard the air raid sirens not "become overly excited and rush to their telephones, as this would tie up phone lines, thereby possibly delaying fire or real emergency calls."³⁰

At 8:00 pm on 9 November 1961, as Canadians settled in for an evening in front of the television, a 14-minute national address by the Prime Minister interrupted regular programming on all radio and television stations. The purpose of his address was to familiarize listeners and viewers with the rationale for the exercise, and to reassure them that the government was not preparing for an imminent attack. Diefenbaker stressed that the simulated attacks were necessary to prepare the government and the population for the worst. He reminded listeners that "in a nuclear war Canada ... would be a part of the battleground. In any case, Canadians will be exposed to the peril of radioactive fallout from the United States."³¹ He argued that Canadians, if properly informed and prepared, could survive the attacks, but they bore a substantial personal responsibility to increase their own chances for survival. The address also provided a rationale for the evacuation of government officials to blast and fallout shelters nation-wide, since "only governments prepared and ready to act promptly throughout the nation can meet [survival] needs and

³⁰ "It's Only Mock Alert Not 'Welles' Doomsday," *Toronto Star*, 1 November 1961.

³¹ Address on National Survival Exercise Program for Television, 9 November 1961, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG26 M Vol 177 File "Shelters."

maintain law and order.”³² Diefenbaker did not ask for the public to participate in the exercise, but merely to consider their own plans for their family and determine whether building a shelter would aid in their own individual preparations for nuclear war.³³

At noon on 13 November 1961, the federal and provincial governments, along with 300 municipalities, held the exercise. It involved over 2600 federal, provincial, and municipal officials.³⁴ The scripted attack on the country followed. Douglas Harkness, Minister of National Defence, received first notice of the impending crisis from the Canadian Army Chiefs of Staff Committee. Harkness alerted the Prime Minister, who ordered Cabinet Secretary R.B. Bryce (Curry’s superior) to advise continuity of government teams to prepare for evacuation to safe locations. An advance party of 60 such officials left for the RUSTIC site at Petawawa, Ontario, two hours later. At 6:30 pm, the Chief of General Staff advised the Prime Minister to sound a national alert.

A half-hour later, through the National Survival Attack Warning System, hundreds of air raid sirens blared throughout Canadian cities. In Edmonton, the army’s warning system failed to start, and the city had to leap in with its less powerful sirens, a third of which failed to sound.³⁵ At this point, the Emergency Public Information Service, a simulation of the government’s planned wartime information agency operating from Petawawa, began a pre-recorded 90-minute nationally televised Canadian Broadcasting Corporation program, *Camera Canada*, which issued survival instructions to Canadians who tuned in to listen to Armageddon.³⁶ The attack itself lasted a short three hours, and

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ D.J. Burke, Regional Officer Saskatchewan to R.B. Curry, 17 November 1961, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 56 File 87-5.

³⁵ “The Tocsin that Failed,” *Edmonton Journal*, 15 November 1961.

³⁶ National Report: Exercise TOCSIN B 1961, LAC Harkness Fonds MG32 B19 Vol 56 File 87-5 pt 2.2.

was carried out by a wave of bombers and missiles that leveled several major cities. John Diefenbaker and his family were also reported killed in the blast, while in their private family fallout shelter constructed for \$907 dollars at the Prime Minister's residence. Diefenbaker had had the shelter built to protect his family, but more to deflect criticism once news broke about the construction of the "Diefenbunker," which made it appear that he was prepared to run away from danger. The Prime Minister's fictional demise puzzled most of the EMO and DND planners, who wondered why Diefenbaker would deliberately choose not to enter the multi-million dollar Continuity of Government shelter, built for the express purpose of preserving the country's leadership. The public paid little attention to Diefenbaker's "death," because 3,000,000 other Canadians were also killed in the simulated attack.

Media coverage of the May and November TOCSIN exercises, intended to raise awareness about survival strategies, the value of fallout shelter, and the need for individuals to prepare, invoked an apparently furious response from many Canadians. In the media and public responses to Diefenbaker's emergency measures programs, we can see the reasons for the failure of the Canadian shelter policy and, by extension, the failure of civil defence as a whole.

Disarmament Activism Against Shelters

National and local peace and disarmament organizations, whose membership comprised religious progressives, Canadian nationalists, Communist party activists, and many private citizens, constituted the most outspoken critics of the shelter policy. The groups were opposed to the shelter policy on ideological and moral grounds, and condemned the shelter exercises as an attempt to deceive Canadians and to prepare them

for the inevitability of war. They believed that civil defence was an extension of the arms race, its “myth of protection” intended to numb the public to the actual horrors of thermonuclear war.³⁷ Though disarmament activists represented a minority of the population, their arguments drew strength from the international nuclear disarmament movement that grew in popularity in Canada in the late 1950s and early 1960s.³⁸

The drive against shelters and national survival preparations was led by national organizations in the Canadian peace movement, including the established Canadian Peace Congress (CPC) and newer organizations such as the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards (CCCRH), the Voice of Women (VOW). These groups, with chapters in most major cities, included members from many different local protest groups, such as the Toronto Committee for Disarmament. In the post-McCarthy atmosphere of the early 1960s, these movements began to flex their political muscle by tapping into growing public support for international disarmament talks. In their petitions, public addresses, and correspondence, the Canadian peace groups subtly borrowed ideas and arguments from the most successful international disarmament and “Ban-the-Bomb” groups, such as the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and the American National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE). SANE in particular was very active during 1960-1961 in advertising the effects of fallout from nuclear testing in major national newspapers, such as the *New York Times*.³⁹ The movements were buoyed by popular support for international control over atomic

³⁷ Norman Alcock, “Necessity for peace research institutes,” *Our Generation Against Nuclear War* 1:1 (Autumn 1961), pp. 4-8

³⁸ Joseph Levitt, *Pearson and Canada's Role in Nuclear Disarmament and Arms Control Negotiations, 1945-1957*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), pp. 229-230.

³⁹ See Milton Katz, *Ban the Bomb: A History of Sane, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, 1957-1985*. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986).

weapons, a proposal both the Soviet Union and the United States had soundly rejected in the early years of the Cold War, and for the outright ban of nuclear weapons testing. In a January 1961 Gallup Poll, 38 per cent of Canadians wanted to ban nuclear weapons manufacture, and a further 52 per cent wished to see international control and oversight of the weapons.⁴⁰ By August 1961, 80 per cent of those polled answered that the United States should stop testing nuclear weapons.⁴¹

These movements also received support from the Diefenbaker government's position on disarmament. At the United Nations and in many speaking engagements from 1960-1961, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs Howard Green became a prominent advocate for international disarmament. Green's statements, informed by his nationalist outlook and a judicious sprinkling of anti-Americanism, reinforced the popular impression that he was advocating neutrality for Canada, which had "only friends and no enemies."⁴² This statement, like others, went against the logic that had seen the Canadian government enter into collective security arrangements under NATO in 1949 and the North American Air Defence Agreement signed with the United States in 1957-1958. Green's views divided the Cabinet, especially over the contemporaneous issue of whether to acquire nuclear warheads for Canada's Bomarc surface-to-air missile

⁴⁰ The way the question was put to them shaped the poll's results, however, and so Canadians may not have been as stalwartly anti-bomb as the poll suggests: "Some people think that the making of the atom bomb should be forbidden by international law. Others believe that the manufacture of the A-Bomb should be permitted – but should be controlled and inspected by an international body. Which of these do you favour?" Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, "Increase among those who say 'Ban the Bomb,'" 7 January 1961.

⁴¹ Here too, the question is important to understanding the poll's results: "If all other nations including Russia agree to stop making any more tests with nuclear weapons and H-Bombs should the US agree to stop or not?" Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, "The vast majority want nuclear tests stopped," 23 August 1961.

⁴² Howard Green, *Debates*, 11 September 1961, p. 8169-8174.

squadrons.⁴³ Many of the peace activists who petitioned or corresponded with Diefenbaker or Harkness during this period held up Green as an example of a sane statesman who shared their views about the necessity of disarmament. Green often returned their compliments, and congratulated activists for their efforts to disseminate information about the effects of nuclear testing: "It is a great satisfaction to see our Peace workers, with whom I have the honour of being associated in a small way through the years, now beginning to be accorded the respect which is long overdue them."⁴⁴

These groups, and Canadians who sympathized with their aims, publicly discussed two leading objections to the government's shelter policy. The first was that the government was conditioning the public to fight a war they could not survive.

Disarmament groups found a particularly fertile audience in Canadian target cities, where survival was least likely. A televised panel discussion held in the Montreal suburb of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (NDG) caught the immediate attention of the EMO. The Chairman of the NDG Community Council wrote to Defence Minister Harkness to inform him that "The citizens find it controversial ... that the government's civil defence role to date is to tell the nation to 'build Shelters.' But NDG and eight miles away will be total destruction and uninhabitable. Therefore, is 'Civil Defense fact or unintentional fraud.'"⁴⁵ J.W.

Bailey, a civil defence training officer who argued for shelters on the panel, reported back to EMO that a Montreal woman, M St. Germain, appeared to have the most influence over the argument. A peace advocate, St. Germain "compared the federal government to the Nazis, alleging that the Canadian people are being deceived and misled in the way the

⁴³ Jamie Glazov, *Canadian Policy Toward Khrushchev's Soviet Union*. (Montreal : McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), p. 91.

⁴⁴ Howard Green, as quoted by E. Symons to Diefenbaker, 12 December 1961, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 177 File D-70-8.

⁴⁵ Patrick Farrell to Harkness, 20 October 1961, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 55 File 87-0 pt. 1.

Jews were in Germany.”⁴⁶ The speaker appealed to mothers to forsake the shelter, and spare their children the hardship of living underground while awaiting a slow death by radiation poisoning. Her speech touched on similar appeals to mothers made in publicity used by the Voice of Women and other women’s disarmament groups. Concluding his report, Bailey noted that though their supporters appeared to consist mainly of “students, beatniks and pinks,” the shelter policy’s opponents in Montreal were nonetheless “well organized.” He predicted that the greatest strength of the peace advocates’ opposition was that their arguments relied on emotional appeals to average Canadians, rather than the “factual,” less passionate arguments mounted by government spokespersons in favour of shelter construction.⁴⁷

Disarmament activists also had powerful allies. One example was Abraham Feinberg, a public speaker and former radio entertainer, and since 1943 rabbi of Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, the largest Reform Jewish synagogue. Feinberg was a dedicated progressive, and provided local leadership for disarmament activism in Toronto.⁴⁸ As a prominent member of the Toronto Committee for Disarmament, Feinberg travelled to Moscow in the summer of 1961 to attend disarmament rallies, returning to agitate fiercely in Canada. At special events at the First Unitarian Church in Toronto, Feinberg told congregations that, unless the government intended to build large group

⁴⁶ J.W. Bailey to J.F. Wallace, 29 November 1961, LAC RG 57 1984-85/658 Box 3 File 155-1.

⁴⁷ Ibid. The report fell short of calling anyone in the group a Communist, though many of the positions cited by shelter critics there echoed those of the Communist Party of Canada. Given the widespread nature of the ideological criticism of the shelter policy, it is more likely that the marginal, if not totally insignificant CPC attempted to attract supporters by attacking the issue as well, rather than inspiring or directing other movements. Peter Oiders to Diefenbaker, 27 June 1961, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 177 File D-70-8.

⁴⁸ “Introduction to the Abraham L. Feinberg Manuscript Collection,” *American Jewish Archives*, accessed 12 February 2009, <http://www.americanjewisharchives.org/aja/FindingAids/Feinberg.htm>, see also Sharon Drache, “Feinberg, Abraham,” in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, accessed 14 February 2009, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0002754>.

shelters, individuals should not build their own, “for they build up a war psychology.”⁴⁹

A petition circulated after the first TOCSIN test in May 1960 expressed alarm that the government advocated shelter construction. Echoing the Soviet press’s allegations that the Canadian government was stirring up “war hysteria” to sell shelters, the petition asserted that shelters would only bring a false sense of security.⁵⁰ In the Canadian Peace Congress’ petitions circulated in 1961, shortly after the TOCSIN B tests, the eye-catching slogan along the footers read “Disarmament is the only shelter that guarantees Survival! Sign against Atomic Death!”⁵¹

Many newspapers received hundreds of letters to the editor which seemed to support the peace groups’ charges that the TOCSIN exercise and the shelter policy were a cruel hoax. In the *Toronto Daily Star*, correspondents wrote to condemn the exercise and the shelter policy alike as “the sickest civil defence joke of all ... calculated to prepare the public to accept a war nobody can win. The policy is a cruel deception of the Canadian people and should be exposed as such.”⁵² The *Toronto Star* published many such letters because of its own editorial board’s support for disarmament. After the first TOCSIN test, the paper’s editors urged readers to sign a petition circulated by the Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards to demand an end to nuclear testing.⁵³

⁴⁹ “Fallout Shelter Promoters Peddlers of Fear – Feinberg,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 6 November 1961, p. 25.

⁵⁰ Petition to the Members of Parliament July 1960 LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 177 File D-70-8

⁵¹ Unsigned Petition found in file, Ibid.

⁵² “Only Means of Survival is Positive Policy For Peace,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 17 November 1961.

⁵³ “Petition against Nuclear Arms,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 11 May 1961. See also Hugh L. Keenleyside, *The Memoirs of Hugh L. Keenleyside*, Volume 2. (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1981), p. 550. In 1963, American political scientist Bernard Cohen, commenting on the media’s influence on public affairs, posited that the news “may not be successful in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling people what to think about.” The agenda-setting theory of the media that follows from this proposition does threaten to simplify the agency of the audience to mere reaction to media content, but the

Peace groups' criticism of the Canadian Continuity of Government (COG) plans also tapped into public outrage over the government's plans to construct shelters for itself and not for the citizenry at large. To shelter critics and their supporters, the government's decision to build continuity of government shelters, like the Diefenbunker, constituted a failure of moral and international leadership. In a public meeting in Ottawa, representatives from VOW took the floor to condemn the COG policy, asserting that heads of government should be denied shelters and exposed to the attack as a penalty for failing to preserve the peace.⁵⁴ In Diefenbaker's general correspondence files, one letter best summarizes the desire to deny shelters to government leaders:

Since a war would prove the bad guessing, the incompetence, and negligence of the government, should not the leaders of government at least stand bare-headed on Capitol Hill to die with the people they have led to destruction? Should not the release of the first bombers, missiles, poison gas or bubonic plague germs constitute the automatic and immediate impeachment of the government? What justification is there for spending the country's money on saving the lives, in the event of a war, of those people responsible for that war? Would not the replacement of the leaders that made the ultimate mistake by anybody have to be an improvement, even if the new leaders were chosen by lot?!⁵⁵

The government's decision, it was argued, indicated that it was prepared to spend millions of taxpayer dollars to ensure that Canada's leaders and civil service mandarins would survive a war. Average Canadians had no such guarantee, unless they were willing to pay for a family fallout shelter. Citizens wrote letters of protest to officials and media outlets to highlight the hypocrisy within the government's national survival policy. The EMO foresaw this genre of criticism during preparations for the TOCSIN exercises. In

central point remains that the media is effective in keeping issues it wishes to speak about in the public eye until such time as governments or individuals take action. Rowland Lorimer, et al. *Mass Communication in Canada*, 6th Edition. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 121-122.

⁵⁴ Charles Lynch, "Exercise Tocsin Tells Who's Who in Bunkers," *Hamilton Spectator*, 22 April 1961.

⁵⁵ Henry G. Kwasniak to Diefenbaker, EMO, Vancouver CD, nd. LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 177 File D-70-8.

the exercise press kit, officials attempted to explain why governments were provided for first: "In the Government's view the best chance for the populace to survive is if they are given leadership and guidance. ... The preservation of a nucleus of government is basic to the welfare and survival of the people."⁵⁶

In dozens of letters to the Emergency Measures Organization, the Prime Minister, the defence minister, and others, Canadians expressed their disdain for the government's efforts at self-preservation. The most trenchant letter to the Prime Minister in this period was also sent to the *Vancouver Sun*, from Stephen and Mary Leskard, a young couple in Vancouver. It synthesizes the distaste many Canadians felt both for the COG policy and for the national survival exercises as a whole:

We are one of those families which died this morning during that "National Emergency Rehearsal" so aptly called "Operation Tocsin". In our dying moments we comforted ourselves with the thought that the people in the areas where the bombs were not falling perhaps had a chance to survive, and that in our own devastated city there may be enough Civil Defence and Civil Service people left to count the corpses and proclaim to the world that all is well and that Canada has saved its Government and its Land. We are so pleased that only three million Canadians died with us this morning, and that no more than possibly six million will die from the fallout. We sincerely hope that neither you nor any Civil Servants with access to Government shelters will be found dead, trampled in the rush to the entrance to the shelters, when those who got there first emerge in two weeks to mourn and bury the rest of us.⁵⁷

Letters like those written by the Leskards moved some municipal councilors to eschew participation in civil defence and national survival exercises, much to the consternation of local CD volunteers, who called for their removal for "disloyalty."⁵⁸ R.B. Bryce, like

⁵⁶ Possible Questions from the Press at Exercise Tocsin 61 LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 56 File 87-5 pt 2.

⁵⁷ Stephen and Mary Leskard to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, 5 May 1961 LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 48 File 140.

⁵⁸ M.C. Kaye to Diefenbaker, 11 November 1961, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 49 File 141.

Diefenbaker, responded to criticism by building a fallout shelter at his Ottawa home at personal expense.

Disarmament activists exposed the hypocrisy of the government's COG policies and its private fallout shelter campaign, but they cannot be credited for dismantling the government's shelter policy on their own. Their greatest contribution was in placing the long-term health effects of radiation from bomb testing on the public agenda; in doing so, they highlighted the dangers of fallout far more effectively than EMO, a government agency, had been able to do. In 1961, at least, disarmament activists were still in the minority in a deeply conservative Canadian political environment. Their campaigns managed to convince most Canadians about the dangers of nuclear testing, but persuaded only a tiny minority to support unilateral disarmament.⁵⁹ While disarmament groups attacked the shelter strategy as a symbol of acquiescence to the arms race, it was never their goal to halt shelters from being built.

Private Shelters or Group Shelters?

Disarmament groups' criticism to the government's shelter policy fed into the public's doubts about both the effectiveness and affordability of fallout shelters. Even Canadians who could afford to construct a shelter readily identified flaws in the government's suggested designs, and had serious concerns about whether the shelter strategy could ensure their survival when, in the aftermath of a war, supplies were bound to be scarce and possibly irradiated.

The government's failure to deliver fallout shelter designs in a timely fashion impeded progress on construction and created a number of practical obstacles to

⁵⁹ 88 per cent of Canadians opposed unilateral disarmament, but most wanted an end to nuclear testing. Paul and Laulich, p. 24.

homeowners interested in building a shelter. Those who had sought to build one in October 1959, following defence minister George R. Pearkes' first appeal to the public to start digging, ran into problems immediately.⁶⁰ A *Toronto Star* reporter, Pat McNenly, took up Pearkes's challenge and built a shelter in his Etobicoke home based on an example he had seen at a federal press conference. On completion, McNenly reported "my wife Helen and I proved an average couple can build the shelter ... but we also learned none of the building departments in the Toronto area want to have anything to do with the shelter under its present design." A building inspector was quoted as claiming that the shelter would have to be demolished before anyone was permitted in the house. The headline, "Inspectors Won't Pass A-Shelter," laid out in large type across eight columns, was an early defeat for the shelter construction campaign. The building inspector had been misquoted, but the damage was done.⁶¹

This episode revealed that conflict between municipal and federal levels of government over policy implementation continued to shape civil defence in Canada. Federal demands on homeowners to build shelters cost the government nothing, but municipal governments across the country gathered taxes and conducted property assessments according to the size of homes and their amenities. A shelter counted towards a home improvement, leading to higher taxes. With such a limited tax base, municipalities were reluctant to make any changes to their own tax laws, a fact that had not been taken into account by planners who devised the policy. The issue of municipal

⁶⁰ John Pratt to Monteith, 25 May 1959, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 48 File 141.

⁶¹ Army officials later followed up with the building inspector quoted in the paper, Ray Millard, who complained that he had been misquoted. His comment was related to the fact that the McNenlys had not obtained a permit to build in the house, not that the shelter was sub-standard. Millard opined that most municipalities would have granted the permit and make concessions, since the plans met most local by-laws. Etobicoke, it seemed, was an exception, since it did not permit masonry to be supported by a wood frame. Note appended by Brigadier H.L. Meuser to "Inspectors Won't Pass A-Shelter," *The Montreal Gazette*, 10 November 1959, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 55 File 87-1

taxation forced homeowners to weigh the benefits of building a shelter against the cost of having to pay increased property taxes. In August 1959, Squadron Leader Clarence Good wrote to his local civil defence organization in Victoria to proclaim his refusal to build a basement shelter if it resulted in additional property taxes. He also demanded federal intervention to stop “local authorities making money out of what is an urgent need.”⁶²

Officials from EMO and Finance, fearing a public backlash, proposed a federal income tax exemption for homeowners building shelters. However, R.B. Curry, EMO’s director, recognized that the federal government would not be able to influence municipalities to reduce their own income, nor could they offer correspondents any guarantee against taxation for home fallout shelters.⁶³ Some city councils, as a result of public pressure, voluntarily excluded shelters from additional property tax assessments, but an early 1961 CBC poll revealed that of only 5 of 30 cities with over 30,000 population excluded shelters from taxation.⁶⁴ The same poll’s researchers determined that the average homeowner who installed a shelter would have to pay an extra \$144 dollars a year in property taxes, a persuasive argument *against* taking on the cost.⁶⁵ Though the National Housing Act loans offered by the government were meant to offset the costs of shelter construction, municipal taxes could equal or exceed the loan’s value, reducing the NHA loans’ utility as a financial incentive.

During a period of economic recession and rising unemployment, the government’s insistence on privately built and financed shelters appeared to many

⁶² S/L Clarence Good to George Pearkes, 17 August 1959, *Ibid*.

⁶³ Marcel Lambert to Diefenbaker, 19 May 1961, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 48 File 140; R.B. Curry to Richard Roberts, 25 August 1959, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 55 File 87-1

⁶⁴ G.S. Doherty, City Clerk of Edmonton, to Diefenbaker, 4 December 1961, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 48 File 141; “More Bomb Shelters Seen as Best,” *Hamilton Spectator*, 23 September 1961.

⁶⁵ Ross McLean et al, *CBC Close-Up: Three Feet of Earth*. 1 videocassette (60 min.) videorecording. (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation – Television, 31 January 1961).

correspondents as callous, unfeeling, and immoral to those who lacked the means to purchase their own protection.⁶⁶ Public criticism of private, costly shelters became more pointed in letters to government officials and the press as the Berlin crisis drew on. The aggrieved parties included mess hall staff at the Canadian Army's Camp Borden, who could not afford to build shelters on their hourly wage of 89 cents; an unemployed man who wrote Diefenbaker to request a personal gift of \$500; and an impoverished Quebec woman who lived in a rented house with no basement, whose complaint to EMO was answered by a mailed pamphlet with instructions to build a basement shelter.⁶⁷ A Toronto resident who had survived the Blitz lamented that the government's policy would ensure the survival of the richest.⁶⁸ Another writer protested "that money will be the deciding factor in whether one gets a chance to survive."⁶⁹

Civil defence experts also criticized the government's position. Frank Worthington was interviewed four years after he retired as the federal government's CD coordinator in a January 1961 broadcast of the CBC television program *Close Up*. Worthington generally approved of the Diefenbaker's reallocation of civil defence responsibilities within the federal government, but he criticized the government's failure to provide shelter in the 80,000 homes owned by the government and lived in by servicemen and their families at military bases across Canada.⁷⁰ He also blasted

⁶⁶ Mrs. W. Davidson to Diefenbaker, 10 September 1961, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 48 File 141.

⁶⁷ Camp Borden Mess Hall Staffs to Pearkes, 3 October 1959, Ibid.; Valerie Grenier to Harkness, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 55 File 87-1 pt 1.

⁶⁸ Dorothy Harrop to Diefenbaker, 12 August 1960. A year later, another British-Canadian raised the same point to the Prime Minister. M.C. Kaye to Diefenbaker, 11 November 1961, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 49 File 141.

⁶⁹ Kathleen Tremblay to Diefenbaker, 10 November 1961. Ibid.

⁷⁰ EMO, DND, and the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation had attempted for years to resolve this embarrassing shortfall in the government-owned Permanent Married Quarters built across Canada. The EMO had asked DND to start construction of fallout shelters in rented quarters "to provide a measure of

municipalities for taxing family fallout shelters. Major-General Arthur Wrinch, appearing on the program as the Director of the Canadian Army's National Survival program, offered a weak defence of the government's policy. When the interviewer put these criticisms to R.B. Bryce, he merely shrugged nervously. Clearly ill at ease with the question and visibly uncomfortable on camera, Bryce revealed that he had a fallout shelter. Wrinch had not, and indeed could not build a shelter. Like many Canadians, he lived in rented premises.⁷¹

Those who could build a shelter were not always successful. The experience of Arthur DeBrincat, a homeowner from Burnaby is illustrative. DeBrincat and his wife set out to construct a shelter at his home in Burnaby, British Columbia, in 1961. Two years passed since the government had announced its shelter policy, yet his local CD office did not have access to affordable and livable shelter designs. A letter to federal officials did not produce helpful information. DeBrincat found American designs and pamphlets, but was told by municipal authorities that he could obtain a building permit if a private engineer approved the plans beforehand. DeBrincat's bank manager told him that National Housing Act loans were only available for basement shelters. Backyard shelters did not qualify. DeBrincat was eventually disqualified for the loan because he maintained a healthy savings account. After several months of research, the man gave up. In a letter to the Prime Minister, he pleaded: "Considering the present threatening situation, how

protection for DND personnel and their dependents, and would also serve to set an example to other landlords and to private homeowners to do likewise." C.F. Johns to Joint Services Accommodation Committee, 30 November 1960. DND considered suggestions to build shelters in the PMQ basements for families, amortizing the cost over several decades and recovering it through increased rent, but ultimately rejected this solution because service personnel moved frequently, and would likely object strenuously to involuntary hikes in rents. Much to the frustration of EMO, the issue was left to wither on the vine without resolution by 1962. See LAC RG 24 1983/84-167 Box 7053 File C-2-533-15 for the interdepartmental dialogue.

⁷¹ *CBC Close-Up: Three Feet of Earth.*

long must we wait for help?"⁷² By January 1961, the CMHC extended only two National Housing Act loans to Canadians for the purposes of building a family basement shelter.⁷³

Despite the heated letters sent to Diefenbaker and EMO officials, the majority of Canadians were not opposed to shelters. Studies at the time indicated that most preferred the idea of *public* shelters paid for through taxation to private shelters built by individuals. Most appeared to agree with the long-held argument of several provinces, that expenditure of public funds on civil defence was a federal responsibility, given that shelters could be considered an investment in national defence. Political scientist James Eayrs summarized the public's attitude: "When civil defence becomes a central component of national security policy ... there can be no justification for thrusting responsibility for fall-out shelters upon the individual home-maker, as if it were a form of insurance policy or an extra coat of paint for the shingles."⁷⁴ Criticism of the family fallout shelter policy came from Canadians of all ages. Thirty-two teenagers at Tweedsmuir High School in London were commended by local press for writing essays about the shelter debate for their civics assignment. The majority endorsed shelters as a precaution, but only a few accepted that individuals should bear the cost, the *London Free Press* editorialized: "Survival, the pupils agreed with total logic, should not be related to income or the ownership of homes."⁷⁵ A nine-year-old girl, writing to the Emergency Measures Organization, requested that the government protect her.⁷⁶

⁷² Arthur DeBrincat to Diefenbaker, 24 September 1961, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 49 File 141.

⁷³ *CBC Close-Up: Three Feet of Earth*.

⁷⁴ James Eayrs, "Survival and Civility," *Northern Approaches*. (Toronto: MacMillan, 1961), p. 47.

⁷⁵ "Pupils Decry Shelter Need," *London Free Press*, 25 November 1961.

⁷⁶ Not every reply from the EMO was callous or unresponsive: "You are asking a very serious question, so serious in fact that the discussions should be left to grownups while children like yourself should continue to be concerned with their studies and with the process of growing up and enjoying life, its games and the

Correspondence from adults tended to be more biting: "In a democracy individuals need not act independently in everything. If this were the case we would not need a Prime Minister. ... Surely it is your responsibility to arrange a more adequate plan for our protection than tell us to build our own hole in the ground."⁷⁷

Canadians avoided taking individual responsibility for their survival by insisting on a collective solution. A review of Canadian opinion conducted in December 1962 indicated that 70 per cent of individuals believed preparations were necessary, but the same number believed it was the obligation of the federal government to provide group shelters to those who could not afford it.⁷⁸ These findings were consistent with attitudes in the United States. In 1964 University of Pittsburgh sociologist Jiri Nehnevasja disclosed the results of his research into public attitudes about civil defence, based on 300 surveys over 19 years. According to Nehnevasja, only four per cent of the population believed that civil defence was entirely unnecessary. Seventy-five per cent of the population believed that shelters would make war *less likely*, but 16 per cent thought that shelters encouraged militarism. Most Americans responded positively to federal spending on public shelters, but were much less interested in loans to build their own private shelter.⁷⁹

pleasures of discovering the world about you." EMO to Ellen Davis, Downsview, Ontario, 11 November 1962, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 49 File 141.

⁷⁷ Joyce M Griffiths to Diefenbaker, 14 November 1961, *Ibid*.

⁷⁸ EMO RO 348: Survey of Newspapers and Television Programme TELEPOL, 7 December 1962, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 3 File 3-4.

⁷⁹ To these impressive numbers we should note an important caveat presented by Nehnevasja to the civil defence officials in the audience: "The public tends to grossly exaggerate, or shockingly underestimate, the behaviour of nuclear weapons. Our public is entirely unsure as to what a nuclear war might mean – a year after its termination, a few years thereafter, or a decade or more following it. I think therefore that yours is the awesome burden to lead our public, neither to an easy optimism, nor to undue pessimism, but to the realities of the troublesome, and perhaps frightening, years to come." "Public Acceptance of Civil Defence," *EMO National Digest*, (February 1965), p. 17-19.

Canadian officials noted the trend with great concern at the end of 1961, as international tensions reached an uneasy calm. In a note to Bryce, Curry observed that “if people have not been moved to action under the attention given this subject ... during the period of the Berlin crisis, they are not apt to be moved in the months ahead when public interest in such questions may flag.” He proposed extensive municipal surveys to locate shelter spaces in existing buildings, a solution that provided an answer for those seeking to determine how best to plan for a shelter if their family was not home at the time of the blast.⁸⁰ The government’s response was that families spent most of their time at home, except during business or school hours.⁸¹ The military suspected that the Soviets would likely attack at night, a time when most Canadian families would be under their own roof.

In 1959, the government had initiated surveys of federal buildings to locate fallout protected areas suitable for use as public shelters, but these shelter surveys were costly and took years to complete. For example, the fallout shelter survey for the city of Kingston was not completed until 1965.⁸² Justice Minister Davie Fulton proposed to meet the shortfall by using inmates in federal penitentiaries to construct cheap backyard shelters for the public. After a brief review by EMO and Department of National Defence staff, defence minister Harkness politely declined his colleague’s offer. In the meantime, experts and laypersons raised pressing and difficult questions about the shelter program that had little to do with their affordability.

Doubts about the affordability of shelters were compounded by profound questions about whether Canadian society and values could survive a nuclear war and the

⁸⁰ Proposal for a revised shelter policy, 29 December 1961, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 4 File 4-13.

⁸¹ R.B. Curry to Mrs. Philip A.C. Chaplin, 11 October 1961, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 48 File 141.

⁸² “The Kingston-Frontenac Shelter Survey,” *EMO National Digest*, (February 1965).

two-week shelter period. Official civil defence literature released to the public mainly pertained to the construction and stocking of shelters for 14 days' supply. Those who gave the matter some thought observed that this portrayal "implies that at the end of two weeks [the shelter occupant] just comes up and goes shopping for next week's supply," apparently ignoring the serious issue of the accumulation of radioactive isotopes in livestock, water, and crops following an attack.⁸³ It also ignored the probable disruption of Canadian supply and transportation systems. Conservative MP Stuart Fleming, who suffered through imprisonment and forced marches in German POW camps during the Second World War, observed that the disruption of the food supply would result in serious obstacles to the restoration of order and morale to the country after an attack. In fact, the vast array of resources required to sustain life in cities, including electricity, refrigeration, water treatment, clothing, feeding, and transportation, would be severely disrupted in the event of an attack, either through physical destruction or denial of large areas due to radioactivity. While the government's Emergency Supply Planning Branch estimated that the productive capacity of Canada would deliver sufficient food stockpiles before an attack to sustain the population, it had no reply to the criticism made by provincial observers during the CBC TOCSIN program that most distribution facilities were based in major target areas, except to say that the subject was under "very careful study."⁸⁴

The government's solution to food production and distribution, found in the pamphlet *Fallout on the Farm*, provoked bitter attacks from farming communities for its naive optimism. Farmers were instructed to provide additional fallout protection and

⁸³ Dr. A Russell to Diefenbaker, 20 November 1961, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 49, File 141.

⁸⁴ Stuart Fleming to R.B. Curry, 20 July 1960, and reply, J.C. Morrison, Director ESPB, 2 August 1960, *Ibid.*

covered food and water sources for their livestock in barns, but they demanded to know who was to pay for the substantial costs. The pamphlet's authors also suggested that radioactive fallout on fields could be eliminated if farmers plowed the radioactive earth under with tractors. It was a simple solution that made no practical sense; farmers were depicted in the pamphlet driving tractors without fallout protection, shifting vast quantities of radioactive earth. Criticism of *Fallout on the Farm* was sufficiently intense in his home base of Saskatchewan that Diefenbaker was forced to defend its authors, during his introduction to the TOCSIN exercise: "The attitude of most critics of the booklet has been that the people who wrote it are stupid. In actual fact, of course, the scientists who wrote the booklet recognize the difficulties in some of the recommendations. They make them because there is no alternative to offer."⁸⁵

The *Fallout on the Farm* controversy highlights one of the elements of the public debate about the practicality of the fallout shelter policy. In Canada and the United States, the most respected critics were the experts, typically scientists, medical doctors, or university professors, who had more public credibility than the civil servants and volunteers promoting protective measures.⁸⁶ In their publications and public speaking, specialists highlighted flaws in the government's survival strategy and undermined public confidence in CD plans.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Script – Tocsin 1961, LAC RG 57 1983-84/212 Box 17 File 2550-61 pt 2.

⁸⁶ See Michael Egan, *Barry Commoner and the Science of Survival: The Remaking of American Environmentalism*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), pp. 47-79; Catherine Carstairs, Rachel Elder, "Expertise, Health, and Popular Opinion: Debating Water Fluoridation, 1945-1980," *Canadian Historical Review* 89 (September 2008), pp. 345-346.

⁸⁷ On 11 November 1961, Dr. Joseph Sternberg, a doctor of nuclear medicine at the University of Montreal, argued in *Weekend Magazine* that the Canadian government had not given sufficient thought to the duration of radioactivity's lethal effects nor its pervasiveness. In his criticism, Sternberg borrowed heavily from his American colleagues, and echoed the complaint of disarmament activists that civil defence measures appeared to be designed to "make people believe that a nuclear war would not be so bad after all." Joseph Sternberg, "Fall-out Shelters are not the Answer," *Weekend Magazine* 11, 11 November 1961.

Civil defence planners in the provinces were frustrated by the public's respect for scientific opinion over the advice offered in EMO publications. At a conference of provincial civil defence officials and army commanders in April 1961, A.C. Halmrast, Provincial Civil Defence Co-ordinator (PCDC) for Alberta, denounced "learned professors who are dealing with our young people putting up the idea that we should not be doing anything about this as it is all useless."⁸⁸ The opprobrium of the public scientist extended beyond the ranks of civil defence planners and volunteers. J.E. Keyston, the Vice Chairman of the DRB, decried the tendency of Canadian scientists to voice their opinions about nuclear war and the long-term effects of fallout, when so few had access to classified information:

The scientist who in practice does add emotional conclusions or implications to the scientific facts he imparts to the public is likely to maintain that he is not only a scientist but an educated, thinking citizen as well, as is entirely at liberty to speak his mind on any and every kind of inference, conclusion, moral, judgment, guess or hope he draws from his scientific knowledge. It is not for the scientist to take any part in garnishing his public educational pronouncements ... ask a scientist for his facts, and instead be given his feelings – that's the effect the nuclear environment seems to be having on most public-speaking scientists today....⁸⁹

Scientific opposition to civil defence policies, furthermore, emboldened non-specialist critics to denounce shelter programs in public, citing "reports of qualified and unbiased scientists."⁹⁰

Scientific opinion was divided on the shelter question, but the trend increasingly placed civil defence advocates and organizers on the defensive in public forums, on television, and on the radio. W.D. Black, PCDC for British Columbia, summarized the

⁸⁸ Proceedings of the Provincial Ministers and Commanders Conference, 17-18 April 1961, DHist 73/1114

⁸⁹ Nuclear Weapons, Public Opinion and the Scientist, 12-14 August 1960, LAC MG Wallace Fonds 30 E211 Vol 6 File 6-11.

⁹⁰ Noreen Lyon to Diefenbaker, 22 July 1959, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 48 File 141.

problem thus: "Some crack-pot in the community XYZ gets up and he gets all the headlines. What about our story? It is not being told."⁹¹

Fear, Shelters, and Society

Underlying many of the public's doubts about shelter policy were psychological factors that were unmistakably a product of the nuclear age. The very vocabulary created by Cold War rhetoric, such as "massive retaliation" and "mutually assured destruction", fed into impressions that nuclear war would be the end of the world. The spectre of fallout, an invisible, lingering death, contributed to the public's perception of the nuclear weapon as a doomsday device. As scientists, public figures, and government officials debated casualty estimates and shelter effectiveness, nuclear war fiction and satire imagined a life after the bomb that seemed frighteningly real to many. The most important of these was Nevil Shute's *On the Beach*, originally published in 1957, serialized in newspapers and magazines, and later converted into a widely-watched film in 1959.⁹²

Shute depicted life in Australia several years after a war in the Middle East (presumably over the Suez canal) which had spiraled out of control, with China and Russia employing highly radioactive cobalt bombs.⁹³ As a doomsday weapon, the cobalt bomb was a *diabolus ex machina*, a convenient rhetorical device for Shute and other

⁹¹ DHH 74/1114. The situation was summarized only marginally more kindly by B. Bruce-Briggs in his diatribe about North American strategic defence: "Any professor, any professor's wife, any student in some jerkwater university knew better than these dolts." Bruce-Briggs, *The Shield of Faith*. (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1988), p. 204.

⁹² To date, it is estimated that *On the Beach* has sold over four million copies.

⁹³ Shute's fictional weapon was actually the subject of serious study and debate since 1950 when it was first proposed by Leo Szilard, atomic scientist and Manhattan Project alumnus. Szilard predicted that an atomic weapon whose casing was salted with cobalt-60, an intensely radioactive isotope with an extremely long half-life, could theoretically kill far greater numbers by radiation poisoning over long distances than could be killed by blast, shock and fire. His theory was discussed repeatedly over the 1950s, especially after the *Lucky Dragon* radiation poisoning incident in 1954. Peter D. Smith, *Doomsday Men: The Real Dr. Strangelove and the Dream of the Superweapon*. (New York: Allen Lane, 2007), p. 380.

authors to describe how a nuclear war ended all life.⁹⁴ Shute's work presented readers with his protagonists' horrible choice: die slowly and painfully from radiation poisoning or use government-issued suicide pills to preserve themselves and their newborn from such a fate? The film version of *On the Beach*, less nuanced than the book, was an unambiguous anti-war and pro-disarmament, and its chilling end ensured that it remained in the public mind even after it departed theatres. A woman in Gowanstown, Ontario, evoked Shute's narrative when reacting to the TOCSIN exercises. She told the *Toronto Star* that the government should issue suicide pills to Canadians in the event of a war, to "ensure a painless, quiet and dignified death at a time when any delay would only mean days or weeks of a living hell in agony and beyond all human help."⁹⁵

Apocalyptic depictions of postwar life were widespread in Canadian science fiction. Short stories published in *Saturday Night* magazine recounted an alien expedition that discovered humanity's treasures preserved in a mountain shelter. The aliens were unable to discern what race had created the magnificent artworks stored in the mountain, because radiation had exterminated all life on Earth. Arthur Hailey's political thriller *In High Places*, serialized in *Macleans* magazine in 1962, imagined a future Prime Minister of Canada, faced with an inevitable nuclear war, who was forced to consider moving the entire population of Canada to the North. The fictional leader was pressured by the United States to cede sovereignty over its air defence: southern Canada was to be used as

⁹⁴ Philip Wylie's novel *Tomorrow*, published in 1954, also features a cobalt bomb, as does the 1970 film *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*.

⁹⁵ "Will Ottawa Provide Suicide Pills for Children?" *Toronto Daily Star*, 17 November 1961.

a defensive buffer zone where they could launch surface-to-air nuclear weapons at Soviet bombers.⁹⁶

Civil defence officials had self-imposed limits on what sort of scenarios they could publicize, never wishing to panic the public. Science fiction authors entertained no such restrictions, and were able to explore the horrors of nuclear war far more eloquently and imaginatively than the wooden, scripted narratives developed for civil defence exercises. However exaggerated and escapist these doomsday scenarios may have been, they enjoyed a much greater reach and audience than any Canadian civil defence manual, public lecture, or exercise. This was especially so when individuals in most cities in the country had the mistaken belief that their home was the likely target for a direct attack whenever the subject was discussed. Blair Fraser, a trusted political analyst for *Macleans* hired by the CBC to host and narrate its national TOCSIN B television special, dryly noted in his (mostly bemused) commentary, "Thinking your town is bomb-worthy is a real mark of civic pride."⁹⁷

Most Canadian planners believed the targets of a Soviet first strike would be American strategic bomber bases, cities, and missile silos, with only a few locations in Canada intentionally targeted. However, Canadians appear to have envisioned a post-detonation environment of nuclear ruin with few cities or towns left. This public pessimism is reflected in correspondence from the public to officials, and between civil defence planners. K.H. Watts, a civil defence volunteer for the Victoria Target Area organization, lamented the "what's the use-ism" engendered by doomsday predictions in

⁹⁶ Arthur Hailey, "In High Places," *Macleans*, 6 January 1962. In the story, the U.S. government agreed to transfer resources to Alaska to assist the Canadian government in building a new national home in the North.

⁹⁷ Thom Benson and Blair Fraser, *Camera Canada – TOCSIN*. 1 videocassette (60 min.) videorecording. (Toronto : Canadian Broadcasting Corporation – Television, 1961).

On the Beach and in other novels based on “quite phony premise of an all-pervasive everlasting radiation fallout, along with panic and social disintegration.”⁹⁸

Satirists also found shelters a rich source of material. Max Ferguson, host of *Rawhide*, CBC Radio’s hit political comedy of the day, carried a number of features that ridiculed shelters, their proponents, and their builders over 1960-1961. In one episode, Ferguson presented “The Three Little Fallout Shelters,” where CBC Radio employees, following Ottawa’s orders, gamely built shelters on the lawn of the CBC building in Toronto. The character most influenced by the shelter pamphlets lamented to Ferguson’s interviewer:

If we can only get these lackadaisical Canadians, God love them, they’re a voting people but they’re lackadaisical, lathered up into a frenzy the way we got em down there [in the United States], get them thinking positively about nuclear war with a fallout shelter in every basement... then the government in Ottawa has to get aggressive with Russia, just to justify building all these shelters [otherwise] it takes the fun out of things!⁹⁹

In another episode the following year, Ferguson impersonated a Metro Toronto Civil Defence Official. When asked what the individual who may not be able to afford a shelter could do to survive, the functionary mumbled: “that’s a good question... go under the kitchen chair, why, you could jump into bed, pull the covers over your head, go into the garden with your family, sit down, hold hands and sing a song?”¹⁰⁰ In his brilliant satirical broadcasts, Ferguson depicted shelters as simultaneously impractical and costly, casting further suspicion on their purpose.

⁹⁸ K.H. Watts to A De B. McPhillips, 22 January 1961, LAC MG 26 N2 Vol 3 File 140.

⁹⁹ Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Radio, “The Three Little Fallout Shelters,” *Rawhide*, originally broadcast on 22 July 1960. CBC Digital Archives, accessed 5 February 2009, http://archives.cbc.ca/war_conflict/cold_war/topics/274.

¹⁰⁰ Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Radio, “Nuclear Warfare can be Fun,” *Rawhide*, originally broadcast on 9 November 1961. CBC Digital Archives, accessed 5 February 2009, http://archives.cbc.ca/war_conflict/cold_war/topics/274.

Survival in an unimaginable war was just the first step. The public feared even more the political and social chaos that might follow an attack. In letters to newspaper editors or to public officials, Canadians likened the survivors of a nuclear exchange to the Morlocks, a cannibalistic subterranean race described in H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*.¹⁰¹ In the CBC television program *Close-Up*'s examination of the issue in January 1961, the program began and concluded with Norman Cousins, the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy's Chairman, and his impassioned cry that he would rather die than poke around radioactive ash like a savage. Alan Munn, a Canadian dissenter, was also asked his opinion about the shelter policy. He replied that if a thousand "John Smiths" went into shelters, civilization would fall around them and "they would no longer be John Smith but Ugg Ugg of a thousand years ago." Most of the Canadians interviewed on the street in Aurora, Ontario, home of the first built-in family fallout shelter, dismissed the entire idea of shelters, since they were all going to "get it" in any event.¹⁰² The program's narrator agreed, ending the show with Albert Einstein's prediction that the fourth world war would be fought with sticks and arrows.

A key element of the shelter debate in the United States was the question of "shelter morality." American theologians -- L.C. McHugh, Paul Ramsey, and others -- wondered what would happen if humanity returned to a state of nature once the government retreated into nuclear bunkers or perished with the rest of civilized society.¹⁰³ McHugh concluded that the survivors with shelters would be faced with angry and armed survivors outside, intent on gaining entry, and would thus be forced to "Gun thy

¹⁰¹ W.W. Rose to the Editor, *Weekend Magazine*, 15 January 1962, LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B 19 Vol 55 File 87-1

¹⁰² Except for one Canadian who, puzzlingly, told the interviewer "I'm in the Militia, so I'm taken care of". *CBC Close-Up: Three Feet of Earth*.

¹⁰³ L.C. McHugh, "Ethics at the Shelter Doorway," *America* (30 September 1961).

neighbour.” In the United States, some shelter owners appeared to take such warnings to heart, and declared to the press their intention to mount machine guns and defensive positions outside their shelter to protect their family’s chance for survival.

Some elements of the American debate entered Canadian discourse. In a lengthy, satirical letter to the editor, a man living in Don Mills proposed that “we must learn how to defend the shelters – not against the Russians, but against our friends and neighbours, the true enemy.” The writer suggested that the government offer practice dummies to interested families.¹⁰⁴ In *Macleans*, a sidebar about shelter construction in Canada pondered who was building shelters and where, and deplored the lack of accurate information. The magazine speculated that those who were building shelters may have been hiding their efforts to prevent additional taxation, and that some Canadians hired contractors to work secretly, at night, to prevent neighbours from learning about shelters under construction. *Macleans* interviewed two men who had built shelters in Ontario. The first had built a dummy shelter in his shed for his unprepared neighbours. Meanwhile, he planned to survive in the real shelter concealed beneath the shed. Unlike his neighbours in the dummy shelter, he would have had actual protection from fallout. The second, a retired policeman, was similarly unconcerned about his neighbours’ welfare, and confided to the magazine that he had taught his wife how to shoot.¹⁰⁵

The public feared not only the effects of nuclear weapons, but what they perceived to be an inevitable breakdown of public order and civility. Citizens suspected that the bonds that drew communities together in peace could not endure war.

¹⁰⁴ John Seeley, “We Must Learn How to Kill Our Friends and Neighbours,” *Toronto Daily Star*, 22 November 1962.

¹⁰⁵ “Who’s building shelters and where?” *Macleans*, 2 December 1961. This theme recurred in other Maclean’s examinations of the shelter issue, “Guns to repel the neighbours,” 18 November 1961, p. 73.

Disarmament activists had claimed that CD was a means of deceiving the public into accepting the consequences of a war. However, the family fallout shelter did not calm the public's fears of an apocalyptic societal collapse; in some cases shelter publicity made things worse. Fear, long-lasting and deeply entrenched, had a permanent impact on how North Americans viewed their chances for their own personal survival.¹⁰⁶

Retreat from the Shelter Policy, 1962

The EMO and its provincial counterparts were greatly concerned about the confluence of political, psychological, and practical objections to shelter construction. In particular, they sought to combat a perceived "common-sense" consensus that the individual had little chance of survival. The fallout shelter remained the only means of protection that the government could advise, and Canadians had rejected this advice, for better or for worse. The majority of those who did support shelter construction did not believe that individual Canadians should be obligated to take on the building and supply costs. It was the government's responsibility, they argued, to provide for the protection of its citizens. The public demanded government-funded communal shelters. As Bryce explained to Diefenbaker in notes about the shelter policy, the predicted cost to protect 12 million Canadians in public shelters would be over \$500 million. Whether through private investment or public taxation, Bryce concluded, "Canadians one way or another must pay."¹⁰⁷

Within EMO, planners openly expressed their doubts that if the public had not been moved to act by the protracted sense of crisis over Berlin from 1958 to 1961, they were not likely to do so once the immediate emergency passed. Jack Wallace, assistant

¹⁰⁶ Fully a third of Americans surveyed by Nehnevasja were firmly convinced that society *would* fall apart after the first atomic bomb fell. Nehnevasja, op. cit.

¹⁰⁷ Points for PM in discussion with RBB, nd. LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E 211 Vol 4 File 4-13.

director of the EMO, revised the government's shelter policy in the winter of 1961, in which he described the government's existing plans as "a failure in spite of all the efforts made and all the attention given the subject." The public had failed to build shelters, and their cumulative inaction threatened national survival.

The Americans had greater success, Wallace reasoned, but even they had begun to shift their attentions to providing shelter for their citizens in banks, courthouses, and other public buildings with reasonable fallout protection.¹⁰⁸ Public demand and the action of Canada's allies all pointed to public, not private, shelters as the future course of action. Wallace proposed a robust program to prepare the country for the worst by subsidizing shelters in federally-owned buildings across the country. The program could be financed in part through the rent collected from the occupants of the over 30,000 military quarters and government-owned housing, where private shelters could be built. Congregate shelters could be installed in 4,000 large federal buildings. By December 1961, a survey of government-owned buildings was already underway, but Wallace requested an immediate infusion of \$100 million to hasten this slow, deliberate process. Civil Defence had never received such financial support, but Wallace indicated that \$100 million was only six percent of the current defence budget, and that shelter construction could be justified as part of the deterrent to war.¹⁰⁹ Bryce, in handwritten comments on the proposed policy document, only expressed the view that to call the shelter policy a failure was "unfair," and to repeat that shelters in government buildings alone could not protect the public.¹¹⁰ Wallace shelved his policy and did not revisit it.

¹⁰⁸ The yellow and black "Fallout Shelter" signs posted on these buildings remain in place today, not out of nostalgia, but because these buildings still serve the same function.

¹⁰⁹ J.F. Wallace to R.B. Bryce, 29 December 1961, LAC Wallace Fonds MG30 E 211 Vol 4 File 4-13.

¹¹⁰ Handwritten comments, *Ibid.*

The Emergency Measures Organization did, however, take several lessons from the shelter debates of 1961. It conceded that the organization had not provided satisfactory information to citizens living in targeted areas of the country, and was sensitive to criticism that government publications were unrealistic. EMO's information services attempted to address both issues in its 1962 publication *Survival in Likely Target Areas*. This pamphlet informed city-dwellers of the grim choice facing them under the government's "stay-put" policy. The government and its military planners believed that not all Canadian target areas would be attacked with thermonuclear weapons in the opening stages of a nuclear war, since the Soviet Union would reserve its weaponry for its main adversary south of the border. Regardless of what parts of the country were attacked, the survivors of the first wave would still require fallout protection. Canadians in target cities therefore had to make their own individual choice after the air raid sirens started wailing: try to find shelter in basements, or evacuate, with no guarantee of finding shelter from fallout in the countryside?

EMO informed readers that the government would not be able to say with certainty how much time Canadians had before the first attack. If city-dwellers chose to leave the city for the countryside, they had to have a plan to survive once they arrived. If they chose to remain, however, they should build a shelter. To help them make their choice, *Survival in Likely Target Areas* offered a more detailed explanation of the effects of nuclear weapons than had been provided in *11 Steps to Survival*. Each section of the new manual was accompanied with graphic imagery. The angular, impressionistic graphics of earlier publications were replaced with sketches that depicted humans suffering pain, fear, and shock. Live Canadian civil defence exercises frequently

employed volunteers who were made up to simulate casualties, complete with broken bones, burns, and blood, but *Survival in Likely Target Areas* was the first Canadian government publication to depict nuclear war in such stark terms. The underlying message of the pamphlet, however, was no different than any other Civil Defence publication. If Canadians survived, EMO expected them to volunteer their assistance in the immediate aftermath of the attack to save lives and put out fires. It was still the individual's responsibility to determine what plans (if any) his or her local government had drafted for an emergency, and they were still obligated to assist with those plans.¹¹¹

Notwithstanding the new look of EMO publications, the mainstay of Canadian civil defence remained that adequate preparations carried out by individual citizens would mitigate damage to both cities and society, creating conditions in which the Canadian way of life could (and would) survive.¹¹² This had always been based on the government's prescriptive vision of a reciprocal, obligation-based citizenship developed to implement civil defence and other policies. In civil defence exercises, publications, and, more recently, the drive to build shelters, federal EMO and provincial CD agencies attempted to ensure the individual's cooperation by describing compliance with CD as one of the obligations of citizenship in Canada's civic order. Over the years following the shelter debate, however, the expectation that individuals would willingly contribute began to fade away, a consequence of the mainly psychological arguments developed against civil defence during the shelter debate. Two films proposed by the National Film Board for the Emergency Measures Organization demonstrate how civil defence publicity

¹¹¹ *Blueprint for Survival No. 5: Survival in Likely Target Areas*. (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E 211 Vol 2 File 2-32.

¹¹² Some Questions and Answers about Nuclear War and Related Subjects, LAC Penhale Fonds MG 31 G21 Vol 10.

was adapted to meet the challenge posed by Canadians' fatalistic attitude toward nuclear war, deemed detrimental to the overall national survival effort.

The first script, "You Survive," was written for the EMO in 1962, but the film was never produced. The text offered two proposals to counter negative publicity surrounding the shelter issue: that despite Canadians' apparently earnest hopes to die in the first wave of an attack, they might survive anyway. The authors insisted that civilization could not collapse because of Canadians' sense of civic responsibility. The script opened on a man sitting dazed in a culvert on the outskirts of a city immediately after the detonation of a bomb, slowly emerging with the realization that what he had lived through was no exercise, and his thoughts turning to his family not far away. The narrator posed the question: "You're supposed to vanish in a puff of smoke, you're not supposed to care. But you're alive, and you're family's waiting, what are you going to do next?" The authors claimed that most Canadians would survive the immediate aftermath of an attack by virtue of being far enough away from ground zero to escape immolation, explaining "mathematically, you couldn't count on not being around to face the consequences."¹¹³

The script then explored existing civil defence plans, and planned to use footage of the Civil Defence College in Arnprior, Ontario, and the thousands of volunteers who trained there annually. These volunteers were used to demonstrate the traditional rationale for participation in civil defence as part of the obligations of citizenship. The volunteers were "Citizens who accept the possibility [of destruction], who know that one man alone can do nothing, but that organized society will survive." The Army and civilians were shown working together to save lives, and the filmmakers included a

¹¹³ George Halverson, "You Survive" screenplay, found in file LAC RG 29 Vol 1009 File 115-1-4 pt 1.

psychologist in the film to explain that civilization could not collapse into savagery because natural leaders would emerge in crisis situations to direct community efforts. The film was never produced because the Emergency Measures Organization argued that the screenwriter placed too much emphasis on Army operations, when the film was supposed to convince civilians to share the burden in national survival.¹¹⁴

Time to Live was written shortly after the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and screened for the first time in early 1964. The producers of *Time to Live* explored several of the same themes as those found in *You Survive*, but with more subtlety, nuance, and emphasis on the individual. Civil defence films to 1964 had based their approach on the assumption that viewers were either already civil defence volunteers or shared the organization's values. *Time to Live* was a significant departure from this approach. Its protagonists, the Macdonald family, assumed the role of everyday Canadians. The protagonists of *Time to Live* threw away every survival pamphlet they received, and never planned for a disaster. In the film, the Macdonalds were visibly agitated, irritated with each other and their neighbours, and prone to making poor choices, such as bringing the household pet into the shelter. The Macdonalds, like most Canadians, had no shelter, but did have a basement, where they decided to make their stand. To show that Canadian values would not disappear during an attack, filmmakers had the family take in their neighbour who was in desperate need of help.

Time to Live recognized that individuals were unlikely to build a shelter on their own. Given the declining role of the Canadian Army in rescue operations, the rescue and re-entry columns promised in TOCSIN B publicity were not mentioned in the film. However, the producers developed three substantial points to challenge the anti-shelter

¹¹⁴ Handwritten comments on "You Survive," Ibid.

consensus: that Canadians outside of target areas would survive the attack and immediate aftermath, that Canadians would wish to stay alive and help their community to survive, and that even meager preparations for nuclear war might help individual families survive nuclear war. In the words of the producers, "The Macdonalds make it, but only just."¹¹⁵ However, the film's producers also accepted that most Canadians were irresponsible citizens, uninterested in preparations in peacetime, and portrayed the protagonists as such, rather than the idealized, responsible civil defence volunteer or family shelter builder.

Conclusion

From 1959 to 1962, the Diefenbaker government pursued a robust CD campaign that was unprecedented in the history of Canadian civil defence. The government recommended private shelter construction by individual Canadian families, while pursuing its own Continuity of Government (COG) programs to insure that Canadians would emerge from their shelter to an environment in which reconstruction was directed by a central authority. In this, the Canadian government was following in the footsteps of the American government, which had launched a similar program during the first Berlin Crisis in 1958.

The shelter issue did not have as much visibility in Canada as in the United States. Thousands of public buildings, banks, and schools in the United States were surveyed and marked as nuclear fallout shelters, and substantial monies were dispensed to stock them with supplies to feed the public. In Canada, officials carried out similar surveys, but the buildings were not marked outside of municipal planning rooms, and few funds were

¹¹⁵ Walter Hewitson and George Salverson, *Time to Live*. 1 videocassette (28 min.) videorecording, (Ottawa: National Film Board of Canada, 1964).

made available to stock them. Canadian publicity emphasized the importance of private shelter construction, through pamphlets, posters, lectures, and national television broadcasts. A handful of Canadian officials built their own backyard shelters to stimulate public interest, and to deflect public criticism over the government's COG blast shelters that had been built at public expense. The best estimates of the Emergency Measures Organization held that approximately 2,000 shelters were built in Canada by the end of 1962. The numbers may have been greater; Canadians who wished to avoid a property tax hike, or feared fending off their neighbours in the event of a disaster, may have built shelters in basements or backyards without informing municipal, federal, or provincial authorities. Governments were decidedly uneven in their surveying and reporting shelter construction in Canada.

In letters to public officials, magazines, and newspapers, in calls to radio stations, and in public discourse, Canadians expressed their objections to going underground. These ranged from suspicions that the shelter program was a hoax designed to prolong the arms race or subdue public concern over fallout and nuclear weapons testing, to private doubts about the likelihood of survival in a \$500 shelter and convictions that a world filled with radiation, possible starvation, and genetic mutations was not worth living in. The government, in turn, attempted to calm what they considered irrational fears and rebut the accusations of disarmament activists.

The most pressing and persistent obstacle to shelter construction was the problem that had faced civil defence organizers since the late 1940s. During the Berlin crises, most Canadians appear to have been convinced that war either would not take place, or if it did, they would not live to face the consequences. While this realization led some to

protest vigorously for disarmament and negotiation, the vast majority saw no reason to take special measures, or to expend substantial amounts of their own money to build a private shelter of dubious value.¹¹⁶ When the crisis passed, so too did the public's call for government-funded mass shelters. Individuals who may have considered building a shelter to avert the worst no longer had motivation to do so. Civil defence, national survival, rescue and re-entry, and basement shelters faded into the recesses of the public's consciousness, just as civil defence voluntarism and public interest had faded after the end of the Korean War. The public did not reject the government's prolonged campaign for shelter construction as much as ignore it.

¹¹⁶ In his 1958 essay, Eayrs commented on the public's attitude: "A greater obstacle than ignorance of the facts is the inability to look them in the face.... Caught up in a wave of prosperity, preoccupied by forecasts of a still more gilded future, the Canadian citizen (in 1958) had little inclination to dwell upon the thought that the twentieth century, which Laurier with such apparent prescience predicted would belong to him, might end with there being no one at all for it to belong to." James Eayrs, p. 51.

Chapter 9

Confusion and Retreat: The Cuban Missile Crisis and Civil Defence

On 17 October 1962, U.S. aerial photoreconnaissance revealed the existence of 28 intermediate missile launch pads on the island of Cuba, thought to be operational within six weeks.¹ The U.S. considered the missiles an unacceptable threat to the security of North America. On 21 October, U.S. President John F. Kennedy authorized an immediate naval quarantine of Cuba to prevent more warheads, missiles and launch equipment from reaching the island. The following day, Kennedy appeared on television to warn the public about the threat facing North America and to present the ultimatum he had delivered to the Soviets. Kennedy stated that the missiles were “capable of striking most of the major cities in the Western Hemisphere, ranging as far north as Hudson’s Bay, Canada, and as far south as Lima, Peru.”² During the 13 days that followed the first discovery of Soviet arms shipments to Cuba, global leaders frantically worked through diplomatic channels to resolve the crisis, intelligence experts assessed likely outcomes of military action short of a nuclear strike on Cuba, and the United States mobilized its military forces to prepare for a third world war.³

¹ “Major Consequences on Certain US Course of Action on Cuba, 20 October 1962” *George Washington University National Security Archive* (hereafter NSA), accessed on 20 July 2008, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/19621020cia.pdf.

² “Radio-TV Address of the President to the Nation from the Whitehouse, 22 October 1962,” NSA, accessed 20 July 2008, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/621022%20Radio-TV%20Address%20of%20President.pdf.

³ During their deliberations on the crisis, Canadian cabinet ministers considered that an actual invasion of the island would be less likely to provoke war than a naval blockade, however, a directive from R. Malinkovsky, Soviet Minister of Defence, to the Soviet commander on Cuba on 8 September 1962 authorized that commander to use the Luna missile launchers, IL-28 jet bombers and other nuclear assets as “instruments of local warfare for the destruction of the enemy on land and along the coast in order to achieve the complete destruction of the invaders on the Cuban territory and to defend the Republic of Cuba.” An amended note arrived on 27 October indicating that any nuclear weapons use was to be prohibited without permission from Moscow. NSA, accessed 20 July 2008, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/nsa/cuba_mis_cri/620908%20Memorandum%20from%20Malinovsky.pdf.

The Canadian government officially balked on this last point. Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, deeply suspicious of the U.S. president's leadership and his pride wounded by not having been consulted by Kennedy until shortly before the television address, initially refused to bring Canadian air and naval defence preparedness in line with the American Defence Condition (DEFCON) levels. To the intense frustration of officials in Washington, Diefenbaker insisted on pursuing a multilateral solution to the crisis through NATO and the United Nations.⁴ The issue nearly split his Cabinet, with defence minister Douglas Harkness independently and covertly authorizing partial mobilization of the Canadian Armed Forces in line with Canada's obligations under the North American Defence agreement (NORAD). For the Liberal Party in opposition, Diefenbaker's leadership, or lack of it, during the crisis dovetailed with the continuing debate over whether Canada should accept US nuclear warheads for the BOMARC missile system purchased to replace the Avro Arrow. The question of Canada's contribution to the defence of North America ultimately brought down the Diefenbaker government in 1963.

The Canadian government had based its planning for civil defence on the assumption that the country would have some strategic warning, defined by a prolonged period of international tension that would foreseeably precede a war. This warning period would provide sufficient time to mobilize and implement civil defence government programs, and would allow the government to persuade individuals to make last-minute preparations for their own personal survival. The Berlin crisis had impelled the Diefenbaker government to hasten its Continuity of Government (COG) program, train nearly 100,000 civilians in militia rescue tasks, and encourage Canadians

⁴ Norman Hillmer and J.L. Granatstein, *For Better or For Worse: Canada and the United States into the Twenty-First Century*. (Toronto: Thomson-Nelson, 2007), p. 204.

(unsuccessfully) to start building fallout shelters. The government, the Emergency Measures Organization (EMO), and the public were not prepared for a flashpoint like the one that emerged over Cuba in the fall of 1962.

Even under ideal circumstances, Canadian defence planners had long acknowledged that well over half of Soviet bombers and every ballistic missile that did not malfunction would penetrate North America's defences, killing millions.⁵ These same planners recognized that Canadian-American radar lines and air defence forces could detect an attack, but did not possess sufficient numbers of aircraft to do more than provide an effective defence of North America's retaliatory nuclear arsenal. To continue to prosecute a nuclear war, civilian centres would have to be left unprotected, forced to attend to their own defence.⁶ This was the challenge that Civil Defence, and later the national survival program, had been designed to meet. It failed the test. During the Cuban crisis, the system of passive defences was partially mobilized, but its response across the country was decidedly uneven, and marked by confusion, ill-preparedness, and lack of co-ordination. Despite over a decade of civil defence publicity and exercises, in most cases the "responsible citizenry" had no conception of what they were supposed to do to escape immediate or lingering death from blast and radiation.

The country's civilian passive defences were not adequately prepared for nuclear war. There were simply not enough volunteers, full-time or part-time, to compensate for the massive damage to infrastructure and the enormous human losses that would

⁵ In 1959, the Canadian Operational Research Establishment predicted, "In the early 60s due to the relative lack of air defence over Canada it would be most profitable for the USSR to use accurate, high yield [thermonuclear] aircraft-delivered weapons against Canada. These would result in very high casualties in the area attacked." CAORE Memorandum 59/4, July 1959, National Defence Directorate of History (DHist) 81/256.

⁶ Andrew Richter, *Avoiding Armageddon: Canadian Military Strategy and Nuclear Weapons*. (Toronto: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), pp. 55-56.

accompany one nuclear blast. By October 1962, the Canadian Army and most federal and provincial departments had prepared a system of emergency government that could preserve the survival of the civilian leadership and, theoretically at least, direct the civilian and military survivors in their recovery efforts. The EMO's emphasis on planning for COG had, however, overlooked the plight of the governed. In the early Cold War, civil defence had been organized around the complementary principles of "self-help" and responsible citizenship. Cities were expected to provide for their own survival with the voluntary contribution of their residents. With the adoption of the COG and national fallout shelter programs after 1959, the survival of the country depended on the willingness of individual families to prepare their own defences. The instructions found in the government's survival instruction booklet *11 Steps to Survival* were explicit: have a plan. Few Canadians did.

What do we do?

Over the week following Kennedy's televised ultimatum to the Soviet Union, the press was rife with speculation about the severity of the threat, the appropriateness of the United States' response, and, to a lesser extent, what Canada should do.⁷ All observers immediately recognized the very real possibility of a nuclear war over Cuba.

Diefenbaker, in a public statement issued after Kennedy's address, asked Canadians not

⁷ Opinion was (and remains) disparate on the legality of Kennedy's imposition of a quarantine, with many recalling the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion. *La Presse*, consistently anti-American in its editorial comment, offered three reasons for the "quarantine": that Kennedy wanted to fabricate an "incident" to justify a short fight with Cuba to overthrow Castro, hardly impossible given the Bay of Pigs precedent; that the whole affair was merely sabre-rattling to win upcoming US elections; or that it was a gambit by Moscow to win sympathy among Third World countries at the United Nations. *La Presse*, "Kennedy masse des forces d'assaut face à Cuba," 22 October 1962. Of these reasons, the editorial board appeared to prefer the second. "Stupéfaction dans le monde"; "Ce n'est pas la guerre mais..." 23 October 1962. Diefenbaker's infamous caution during the crisis had more to do with his and others' doubts about the ability of Kennedy to face the challenge without starting a war, rather than "a pathological hatred of taking a hard decision," as Harkness supposed. LAC Harkness Fonds MG 32 B19 Vol 57 File "The Nuclear Arms Question," p. 11.

to panic: "This is a time for calmness. It is a time for a banishment of those things that separate us."⁸ The Cabinet was already deeply divided over how to respond to the crisis, although they had reached agreement that a general public alert was both premature and likely to provoke panic.

On 23 October, despite a debate over whether or not to raise Canada's status of military preparedness to match that of the Americans, Cabinet quietly alerted the Emergency Measures Organization to ensure that key civilian officials remained in or near Ottawa, available to coordinate the civilian side of the continuity government program. The Cabinet also ordered the Canadian Army secretly to staff Army command and federal and provincial emergency government headquarters on a 24-hour basis for the duration of the crisis.⁹ Corporal Eric Brown, a signalman who in 1962 had only recently been posted to the communications centre in the Diefenbunker, returned from leave in Halifax to news that he would be sealed inside the bunker for the foreseeable future. It was the first time that the bunker had been brought up to near its full capacity, complete with medical staff and members of the civil service taking up their posts.¹⁰

In the Canadian cities directly affected by the government's decision to increase preparedness, the activity at the provincial Regional Emergency Government Headquarters (REGHQs) was a poorly-kept secret. On 25 October, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported that the emergency headquarters at Camp Shilo and Portage-La-Prairie were staffed 24 hours a day by specially-trained signals officers "on temporary duty," and that Canadian Army members were given telephone "fan-out" cards with names and

⁸ "No time to panic, Diefenbaker warns," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 23 October 1962.

⁹ LAC RG 2 Series A-5-a Vol 6193, 1962/10/23, 2-4; Interview with Eric Brown, January 2009, Canadian War Museum George Metcalf Archival Collection, Oral History Program, 31D10 Brown.

¹⁰ Interview with Eric Brown, January 2009, Canadian War Museum George Metcalf Archival Collection, Oral History Program, 31D10 Brown.

numbers to call in event of a general alert.¹¹ On the same day, Diefenbaker provided the only public acknowledgement that civil emergency measures had been called to alert. In a toothless statement to the House of Commons, the Prime Minister explained the activity as federal government departments merely updating their relevant plans in case of emergency. Few Canadians who read his statement, issued at the height of the crisis, would have understood what the government could actually do for them in the event of a war.¹²

Finding no useful answers from their elected officials, Canadians turned to local, provincial, and federal emergency measures officials to ask what to do if an attack came without warning. The busiest people during the Cuban missile crisis were telephone switchboard operators and post office workers. Early on, Bell Telephone switchboard operators in Montreal reported hundreds of calls from residents seeking information about the municipal civil defence organization.¹³ Public demands for information about emergency measures surged. Municipal civil defence officials received up to 1,000 enquiries by mail per day. In Toronto, CD phones rang every ten minutes. In Halifax, the volume of calls led E.J. Vickery, the local civil defence co-ordinator, to remind the public to stay off the telephones to avoid overwhelming switchboards needed in case of emergency.¹⁴ Some CD officials likened the public's anxiety to that they had witnessed the preceding year during the Berlin crisis, but on a much grander scale and with greater

¹¹ "Warning Centre Reinforced," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 25 October 1962.

¹² To wit: "Our civilian departments have been instructed as a matter of urgency to bring up to datye the measures which they would need to take in any emergency. They are doing so.... I do no think I should go any further into detail in dealing with the measures which we have taken or would be prepared to take, should circumstances require us to do so," LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 5 File 5-15.

¹³ "La psychose de la guerre se propose," *La Presse*, 24 October 1962.

¹⁴ "Civil Defence Busy Answering Calls," *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, 27 October 1962.

urgency.¹⁵ The most common question asked by the public was simple: What to do? Local, provincial, and federal civil defence and emergency measures offices responded by sending out 30,000 copies of *11 Steps to Survival* to inquiring parties in the first few days of the crisis. This too was a dramatic increase. Over April-September 1962, considered by EMO Regional Officers as a period of “increased interest” in civil preparedness, the ten provincial EMO post-office boxes together had received an average of only 1,000 requests per month.¹⁶ As a public service, several newspapers reprinted the pamphlet in full within their pages.

Step 10 of the Canadian government’s *11 Steps to Survival* informed readers to direct enquiries about emergency planning to their municipal organization. Either as a result of the advice provided in the official survival handbook, or of the general confusion about civil defence, residents of many communities turned to local officials to determine what course of action they should take. Yet the status of municipal civil defence programs was uneven; most had shelved their planning during the 1959 reorganization of civil defence and had not resumed activities in any promising way before October 1962.¹⁷ Only a handful of municipalities could offer any constructive answers other than contact information for their federal and provincial counterparts, or provide more than their rapidly diminishing stock of survival pamphlets. A federal post-crisis assessment commented that press scrutiny of municipal survival planning indicated “the sudden realization on the part of some municipal officials and elected representatives

¹⁵ EMO RO 348, 7 December 1962, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 3 File 3-7.

¹⁶ EMO RO 355 22 Nov 1962, Ibid.

¹⁷ In fact, half the text of the 10th step in the pamphlet appeared to be aimed at municipal officials. The page was replete with reminders about the existing responsibilities of municipalities both in and outside of target areas, and ended with what amounted to a disclaimer: “There are many things municipalities must do to develop comprehensive municipal emergency plans. The provincial officials provide advice and assistance as to how these plans should be developed.” Emergency Measures Organization, *Blueprint for Survival No. 4: 11 Steps to Survival*. (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1961), p. 32.

that in wartime they themselves would be responsible for the community's civil defence."¹⁸ Whether or not this was actually the case, the crisis forced some communities to respond to the public's demand for guidance by dusting off dormant CD plans.

Toronto's Metropolitan EMO announced that it aimed to establish a communication link between local staff and the national authorities, and demanded a \$100,000 infusion of federal funds to modify 100 schools in North York and Toronto into makeshift community fallout shelters.¹⁹ Andrew Currie, a Canadian Football League official who also directed Winnipeg's EMO organization, asked the federal government for \$10,000 to launch the city's police radio synchronization program and to begin construction of an alternative radio site that could replace the police headquarters' broadcast station if it were destroyed.²⁰ In Truro, Nova Scotia, officials at the Board of School Commissioners established a committee to define regulations governing the evacuation of schoolchildren, with the stated rationale that "some policy is better than no policy."²¹ Such programs would have taken months under ideal circumstances to implement. Launching the programs during the crisis revealed these cities' utter unpreparedness for a nuclear war.

Some municipal officials, unable or unwilling to respond to the public's concern, simply wanted the whole crisis to go away, and took measures to proscribe public

¹⁸ EMO RO 348, 7 December 1962, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 3 File 3-7.

¹⁹ "La Psychose de la guerre se propage," *La Presse*, 24 October 1962

²⁰ Uniquely among municipal civil defence organization, Winnipeg's had incorporated over a dozen neighbouring communities that had been considered "reception areas" in the atomic age. In the thermonuclear age, they had become part of the target area. Municipal civil defence council meetings during the 1950s, however, had become a forum for regional rivalry and recriminations over delay, leading to frustration and inactivity. Police radio projects had been proposed in the early 1950s but abandoned for just these reasons, with the result that only four of Winnipeg's adjoining municipalities shared a radio band with the metropolitan police force. The other five had refused the expenditure. "Police Radio Tie-up?" *Winnipeg Free Press*, 26 October 1962

²¹ "No Civil Defence Alert," *Halifax Chronicle-Herald*, 26 October 1962.

anxiety. At a meeting between Metro Winnipeg's EMO officials and representatives from adjoining rural municipalities, the mayor of St. James tabled a motion to silence police and ambulance sirens for the duration of the crisis. The mayor of St. Boniface accused emergency workers of abusing their vehicle sirens while on duty in residential neighbourhoods; sirens during the night had "startled or provoked" residents, who called the city in panic to ask if the war had begun.²² The motion, which was unsuccessful, illustrated the anxiety of the public and their municipal authorities, and suggested that the public did not know the sound or meaning of the air raid signals. In a real emergency, citizens who picked up their phones would in all likelihood have jammed switchboards needed to coordinate essential services and municipal CD.

CD and EMO organizations had little to offer the public but direct and honest advice as the crisis deepened. On 27 October, when nuclear war appeared imminent as Soviet vessels bearing IRBMs closed with the US naval cordon around Cuba, Winnipeg officials admitted that they had not prepared an evacuation plan for the city, nor did they have the resources to feed refugees if other cities were hit. Andrew Currie cautioned the public that they still had time to make a plan, warning "for the first few days or weeks it will be every family for itself – go to the cottage, make plans to visit friends outside the city, make plans to share food... Go at least 30 miles away, but no further than you can without gas.... Finally, don't adopt an attitude that all is lost once war is declared."²³

Though many families considered leaving the cities for "early vacations" in rural areas

²² "May muzzle sirens," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 26 October 1962.

²³ "CD Advises: Be Intelligent," *Winnipeg Free Press*, 27 October 1962. Editorials reflecting this advice were published across the country, many of which emphasizing the lack of government direction of post-war survival efforts; a sampling of titles: "Plans for Emergency Still Needed, People Want to Know What to do, No Panic Here, Every Man for Himself, Direction from the Top Needed..."

during the crisis, it is unclear how many Canadians, anticipating an attack, voluntarily evacuated from urban targets, or how many just prepared to die.

Where was Civil Defence?

The last-minute settlement between the United States and the Soviet Union on 28 October 1962 was the result of furious backroom diplomacy and aggressive naval strategy. It was a watershed moment of the Cold War. As Soviet vessels bearing additional missiles reversed course from Cuba, the world stepped back from the brink of disaster. The American and Soviet leadership cooperated to install a direct line of communication to ensure that the crisis would not repeat itself.²⁴ So began a period of cautious rapprochement, leading to the policy of *détente*. In Canada, the emphasis of public enquiry quickly shifted from the question “What to do?” to criticisms of Diefenbaker’s judgement and leadership during the crisis, and to the divisive subject of arming the Canadian military with nuclear weapons.

Yet, in the aftermath of the crisis, few demanded answers about the EMO’s lack of preparedness. Nor did the crisis result in public pressure for government-subsidized shelter construction programs. Many citizens had already concluded that such measures were hopeless in any case. The public, the last to awaken to the need for individual and family plans for survival before the crisis, was also the first to fall back to sleep after its peaceful resolution. In fact, the pattern of public interest in emergency measures appears consistent with those observed during the height of the Korean War and the Berlin crises of 1958 and 1961. Perhaps “forgetting” was a survival mechanism for the home front. In the absence of prolonged crisis, the nuclear arms debate in Canada surfaced, and

²⁴ The hotline “equipment”, as it was called, saw frequent use during the crises in the Middle East, providing a useful and often face-saving channel for the Soviets to conduct diplomacy when Arab allies demanded Soviet intervention against Israel in the 1967 war.

emergency measures fell to the back of minds and to-do lists, becoming once again someone else's problem. This appears to be consistent with the public's approach to the question of personal responsibility for ending the threat of nuclear war by peaceful means. In a 1963 study of public opinion commissioned by peace activist Norman Alcock's Canadian Peace Research Institute, the surveyors examined public attitudes toward the public's apparent apathy in the face of nuclear war. The results were somewhat inconclusive, leading the survey's authors to question "whether such feelings reflect realistic evaluation of the average individual's influence in complex modern society, or whether it is a convenient way to avoid one's responsibility." Forty-three per cent of those interviewed agreed with the statement: "There is nothing I can do. It is the government's responsibility since they have the power and information."²⁵

Federal and provincial emergency measures organizations were slower to let down their guard. For several weeks after the crisis, the Canadian Army continued to staff COG bunkers as the RCAF and RCN conducted aggressive anti-submarine patrols of Canadian coastal waters. The Cabinet did not immediately issue orders to reduce the level of readiness, such that existed, in federal government departments either. Diefenbaker and Harkness directed R.B. Bryce, Secretary to the Cabinet and head of EMO, to keep key staff in government departments available "notwithstanding the relaxation of tension over the Cuban situation. It will not be necessary to be so strict in keeping key persons ... in Ottawa as it was last week, but care should be exercised."²⁶ By the end of November these measures were gradually scaled back to peacetime conditions.

²⁵ A further 11 per cent believed that the individual bore some responsibility to work towards peace, but were happy to "let Joe do it." John Paul and Jerome Laulicht, *In Your Opinion*. (Clarkson: Canadian Peace Research Institute, 1963), p. 35.

²⁶ R.B. Bryce to E.A. Driedger, 2 November 1962, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 3 File 3-9.

Senior EMO officials, reflecting on the crisis, developed their own private assessments of the organization's response, and were disturbed by its lack of co-ordination and public presence.

Jack Wallace, assistant director of the EMO, issued the definitive criticism of his organization's progress. He outlined the agency's critical shortcomings during the crisis, not least the lack of established procedures to alert the public properly through the CBC. EMO did not have the authority to advise the provinces formally to increase their civil preparedness measures. Organizations across the country experienced shortages of printed materials and delays in obtaining republications of important pamphlets. Federal and municipal EMOs lacked coordination, resulting in public floundering and embarrassment in the press. Finally, the organization's inability to offer substantive advice to the public during the crisis undermined its credibility as an agency responsible for coordinating the country's survival strategy. Wallace concluded: "it goes without saying that of all the emergency preparations that have been made, the least has been done in the area of offering something substantial to the population, i.e., some type of shelter programme."²⁷

Wallace's post-mortem resembled others that emerged from the public during the crisis. Apart from the absence of shelters, the fundamental obstacle to national survival was a profound failure of communication between governmental EMOs, but also between the EMO and the public, despite years of publishing news releases, information pamphlets, and radio and television broadcasts. N.S. Jones, in one of many scathing letters sent to Diefenbaker after the crisis, concluded that "what civil defense

²⁷ J.F. Wallace to RB Curry, 21 November 1962, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 5 File 5-15.

organization we have seems to be a close-mouthed clique tucked away in some corner from where it must be sought if it exists at all in any effective form.”²⁸

What had happened to the over 279,000 Canadians that the federal government claimed to have registered as volunteers for civil defence?²⁹ The organization had already lost much of its volunteer support during the confusion that followed the 1959 restructuring of CD in Canada, when the role of the unpaid volunteer was called into question. Those who remained were unable to do more than answer the public’s questions during the crisis without federal direction. The federal government reserved strict control over the pre-attack alert system that governed when civilian emergency workers and supporting civil defence volunteers were to prepare reception centres, co-ordinate voluntary evacuation efforts, and implement whatever other municipal or provincial emergency plans to hand. Unless incapacitated, Diefenbaker alone reserved control over when and whether to issue the alert that would force the country’s meagre civil defence resources to go into action. He was advised by the Cabinet, the Canadian armed services,

²⁸ N.S. Jones to Diefenbaker, 2 November 1962, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 558.

²⁹ *Canada Year Book 1959* (Ottawa: Census and Statistics Office, 1959), p. 1176. A sizeable portion of the registered volunteers were actually full-time municipal employees. This included *all* the staff of municipal police and fire stations, all health workers, and every engineer with technical training, in some cases including contractors and equipment dealers. In 1956, full-time municipal employees, many of whom may never have known that they were considered “volunteers”, comprised 42 per cent of Canadian civil defence workers. Accurately tracking the personnel of any volunteer organization is tasking work, and civil defence was no exception. Most CD offices did not keep accurate data about who was actually serving in the organization at any given time. The numbers of citizens prepared to risk their lives to better the chances of national survival varied widely from place to place, often based on what officials considered a true volunteer.

The CD Co-ordinator for the Greater Vancouver Area counted 15,000 people trained in basic first aid by the St. John Ambulance as belonging to his organization. They had not been trained in civil defence first aid, but he considered them “available in an emergency.” St. John Ambulance was officially considered a part of the national Civil Defence Health Services by way of a 1951 agreement, but the local organizer’s definition of what constituted volunteering for civil defence stretched credulity. In a “conservative” estimate of civil defence strength in Manitoba in 1957, provincial officials acknowledged that “the majority of the volunteers shown have not formally enrolled in Civil Defence.” Counted among this number were citizens who had attended several civil defence courses, but had declined to sign an official enrolment form. McCarter to Hatton, 20 February 1959; M.W. Turner to Worthington, 17 September 1956; A.S. de Wilden to Worthington, 10 June 1957; A.E. Gagné to Hatton, 2 April 1959, LAC RG 29 Vol 676 File 108-2-3 pt 3.

and the Emergency Measures Organization. Civil defence's inaction, influenced by poor intergovernmental communications, limited resources, and public confusion, was also a by-product of Diefenbaker's characteristically cautious response to the Cuban missile crisis.

Diefenbaker could have authorized four states of government alert during the crisis, raising civilian levels of attack preparedness corresponding to those developed for the Canadian Army's National Survival Attack Warning System (NSAWS).³⁰ None of these alert states were yet official – they were a part of substantial, ongoing revisions of the incomplete Government War Book.³¹ During the crisis, Diefenbaker's cabinet authorized the STANDBY phase, which secretly increased staff and readiness at the federal EASE and provincial BRIDGE sites. These preparations were meant to be kept secret to prevent public hysteria and alerting the Soviets that the government was going to ground, a possible indication of a first strike.³² During the STANDBY phase, federal and provincial agencies carried out secret preparations, but advice to municipal civil defence organizations was not part of the secret alert. As these agencies waited for direction from above, their officials did what they could to answer the public's questions about civil defence. The crisis never reached the point where municipal agencies and

³⁰ The Alert States were themselves the subject of much discussion on the Interdepartmental Advisory Committee of Emergency Planning, which had finalized the general tasks accompanying each level of alert, but was still working with the military to harmonize their terminology with the Army and to better correspond with NORAD alert states. 3rd Meeting of the IACCEP, 17 July 1962, LAC RG 29 Vol 1014 File 115-3-4 pt 1.

³¹ IACCEP 8/62, 13 July 1962, Ibid.

³² Ibid. The final phase, EMERGENCY, issued during a period where attack was considered imminent, completed the transition of officials into emergency government sites, and began the national alarm system, alerting the public to the likelihood of attack.

their volunteers had to be called to action. The Canadian civil defence organization remained untested.³³

Wallace privately complained that the Prime Minister had not served Canadians well by refusing to discuss emergency measures immediately following Kennedy's televised address, and for remaining silent on the matter throughout the crisis.³⁴

Diefenbaker not only remained silent but went on the record requesting that others in the public realm do the same. The day after placing the Canadian government on STANDBY, Diefenbaker responded to a question about civil defence preparations in the House of Commons by asking members of parliament not to ask questions. He revealed his unwillingness to provoke public alarm to increase readiness: "I think that in these hours and days of international sensitivity all of us will endeavour to exercise a restraint in asking questions which under normal circumstances would be appropriate but at this time might be considered as provocative or fear-producing."³⁵ Perhaps Diefenbaker regarded a public alert, or even discussion of nuclear civil defence measures, as detrimental to his government's determination to see the crisis resolved through

³³ If a war had erupted over Cuba, Canada would have entered the EMERGENCY phase. EMO Regional Officers would advise provincial officials to begin their own emergency fan-out. Municipal civil defence organizations would be the last group alerted. Depending on the location, local groups could then begin its own telephone fan-out and begin the call-out for volunteers, if time permitted. One of the flaws in this plan was obvious; once a national alert was called, the very volunteers the Emergency Measures Organization depended on to assist existing emergency services would immediately be faced with a fight-or-flight option – to stay and carry out the work for which they had trained (assuming they had any training), or to see to their own affairs. It also gave municipal civil defence organizations extraordinarily little lead-time to begin coordination of services for the public. The public would make their own spontaneous decisions about what they would do as soon as the sirens started wailing, with the potential to create mass-panic.

³⁴ "Such a broadcast would not necessarily have to endorse all that was said but it is clearly important that the Prime Minister at least offer words of caution to the public. Following Mr. Kennedy's speech, a great deal was left unsaid." Wallace to Curry, 21 November 1962, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 5 File 5-15.

³⁵ John Diefenbaker, *Debates*, 24 October 1962, p. 884.

international negotiation.³⁶ His hope for a multilateral solution to the crisis formed part of the reason why the Prime Minister initially refused to raise Canada's military readiness to match those of the United States. Diefenbaker had also feared the implications of surrendering Canadian sovereignty over defence, a charge that had been levelled against him by opposition Liberals when he signed the North American Air Defence agreement in 1958.³⁷

Historians have almost universally condemned Diefenbaker's inaction during the crisis, but his stance on civil defence measures was both rational and responsible.³⁸ A national alert may have resulted in a spontaneous exodus of citizens from urban target areas. Canada's civil defence organizations and its incomplete emergency communications system were not prepared for such an alert, which could alarm the public and possibly deepen international tensions. Diefenbaker's restraint in this regard was mirrored by Kennedy. Both were faced with the dilemma that the Soviets could view ostentatious improvements to CD infrastructure or large public exercises as preparation for a first strike nuclear attack under the guise of public protection. Had the crisis worsened, Diefenbaker might have formally authorized a public alert, but we may assume from his caution during the stand-off that he would act only if the Americans first sounded the alarm.

³⁶ Patricia McMahon, in her 2009 work, clarified that Diefenbaker's insistence on a UN response was actually informed by Norman Robertson's advice, who believed "the introduction of an 'international element' might persuade the Soviets to withdraw or cease shipments to Cuba, thereby removing the need for the naval blockade deployed by the Americans." Diefenbaker was particularly concerned that world opinion alone would not sustain Kennedy's position. Patricia I. McMahon, *The Essence of Indecision: Diefenbaker's Nuclear Policy, 1957-1963*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), p. 149.

³⁷ Robert Bothwell, Ian Drummond and John English, *Canada Since 1945: Power, Politics, and Provincialism*, p. 246-247; Robert Bothwell, *Alliance and Illusion: Canada and the World, 1945-1984*, p. 168-169.

³⁸ McMahon, p. xii.

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Diefenbaker's stance during the Cuban missile crisis enjoyed some sympathy from the press and neutralist and pacifist sections of Canadian public opinion, but most were outraged that Canada appeared to be going against its longstanding commitment to cooperation with the United States in the defence of the continent.³⁹ Many Canadians believed that, when the West needed to present a united front to the Soviets, security was more important than sovereignty.⁴⁰ Little of the invective directed towards Diefenbaker in the crisis' aftermath, however, faulted him or the Emergency Measures Organization for not having a plan in place to help Canadians survive in a nuclear war. The question of Diefenbaker's leadership during the crisis was quickly eclipsed by his government's internal debate over the nuclear warheads issue. This issue virtually paralyzed government business. Diefenbaker had the authority to resolve the intractable internal dispute, but, as Bothwell suggests, he "sat determinedly in the middle, refusing to choose."⁴¹

The stalemate was broken by Liberal leader Lester B. Pearson's decision to reverse his party's stance against accepting nuclear weapons, and Harkness's resignation after a row in Cabinet. Defeated on a motion of non-confidence about the warheads in February 1963, Diefenbaker fought and lost the election posing as a defender of Canadian sovereignty. The first nuclear weapons arrived at the air base at North Bay under American guard on 31 December 1963. In the prelude to the election, EMO officials were

³⁹ Hillmer and Granatstein, p. 204-205.

⁴⁰ Canadians appeared to favour political rather than military support to this united front, however. John Paul and Jerome Laulicht, p. 26.

⁴¹ A sizeable element within Diefenbaker's Cabinet wanted to accept the American warheads without further delay, led by the hawkish Douglas Harkness. Foreign Affairs Minister Howard Green, publicly committed to the international disarmament movement for which many Canadians felt sympathy, ardently opposed accepting the warheads, seeking to keep Canada's international posture as a middle power, and possible force for peace, unsullied by nuclear arms. Robert Bothwell, p. 169.

disturbed to learn that, even after sending out hundreds of thousands of pamphlets, orchestrating two (publicly reviled) Canadian emergency measures exercises, and answering thousands more nervous enquiries, 55.1 per cent of Canadians indicated they simply had no idea what to do in the event of a war.⁴² Nor was there any indication that the crisis had made Canadians any more interested in learning about the correct course of action. The Emergency Measures Organization, in turn, took no measures after the crisis to address the public's lack of awareness.

With the nuclear arms debate underway in 1963, civil defence and emergency measures were low priorities on the new government's agenda, and into the back of Canadians' minds.⁴³ Shelter and evacuation pamphlets gathered dust on kitchen tables or, more likely, garbage bins. The majority of Canadians who wanted nuclear arms for their armed forces did so because they wished Canada to honour its defence commitments, but feeding the issue was also the much-discussed fact that, if the Cuban missile crisis had spiralled into war, Canada's conventional defences would have been useless against the large bomber forces that would have composed a sizeable part of the Soviet attack.⁴⁴ Nuclear weapons would not have stopped the attack, but at least they would plug an apparent and embarrassing gap in Canada's defences.⁴⁵ Canadians chose to augment their

⁴² EMO RO 348, 7 December 1962, LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 3 File 3-7.

⁴³ The Pearson government placed little importance on CD when compared to the major programs launched during the Diefenbaker years. Responsibility for EMO was accordingly passed down to the Department of Defence Production in 1963, and again to the Department of Industry in 1965. In these years public contact with the EMO decreased substantially, as emphasis in planning shifted gradually from nuclear preparedness to preparing for natural disasters. Much of this work could be handled within and between governments, and the requirement for volunteers diminished.

⁴⁴ On the nuclear weapons question, 50 per cent of Canadians interviewed for the CPRI's survey believed Canada should obtain nuclear warheads for their forces in Europe and North America immediately. Seventeen per cent believed that Canada should refuse nuclear warheads. John Paul and Jerome Laulich, p. 84.

⁴⁵ In fact, the successful resolution of the Cuban missile crisis by diplomacy proved that serious crises could be resolved by negotiation, and made nuclear weapons a less threatening option for Canadians. McMahon, p. 153.

active defences rather than address the sizeable problems and lack of preparedness in their passive defences. In the aftermath of the Cuban missile crisis, Canadians showed more faith in the deterrent of nuclear warheads than in their largely disorganized passive defences that they bore a share in maintaining.

Emergency Measures Organization officials at the federal level privately lamented the public's ignorance of civilian defence measures, but could do nothing to halt the government's and the public's slackening sense of urgency for emergency preparedness. Recommendations to improve public relations and promote the emergency measures and warning system ended up as a secondary consideration for emergency planners who, over 1963, delved into the invisible and unrewarding work of coordinating planning activities between disparate and disinterested government departments. East-West relations improved over the following years, and the nuclear arms issue having been "solved" by the acquisition of nuclear arms for Canadian units at home and overseas, and disarmament activists mollified and (ironically) neutralized by the signature of an American-Soviet Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963, the importance of Canada's nuclear preparations recessed into obscurity, a process managed by Diefenbaker's successors. Had Civil Defence failed the public, or had the public failed Civil Defence? In the year immediately following the crisis, the public put their confidence elsewhere, in diplomacy and defensive nuclear arms. Civil Defence continued its slow decline into obscurity.

Conclusion

For a brief moment in the fall of 1962, it appeared as though the uneasy nuclear balance with which Canadians had lived for so long would not hold. Civil Defence, and later the Emergency Measures Organization (EMO), had sought to prepare the public for just such a crisis. Yet when it happened, people did not know how to protect themselves, nor were they given the resources necessary to survive. The long-standing organizational problems brought to light during the Cuba crisis served to illustrate the extent to which Civil Defence had sputtered since its introduction in 1948. The failure of CD was linked to the organization's unsuccessful attempt to shape the changing relationship between state and citizen, the enormously complex task of government planning for nuclear war, and the civil-military tensions it provoked within Canada's defence structure and the wider public.

From 1948 to 1962, Civil Defence reached out to the public through its publicity, instructional pamphlets and exhibits, and public exercises. As a result of the structure of Canadian civil defence, based originally on that of the United Kingdom's during the Second World War, progress depended heavily on the voluntary participation of Canadians in their local community. The Canadian government sought to enlist the help of private citizens in preparing the defence of the country by equating support for CD with a civic responsibility owed to the state by each individual. This concept of CD as a core obligation of citizenship was present at every stage of CD development and was featured prominently in most of the organization's contacts with the public. Civil Defence was most often promoted as a means to defend the community against an atomic

attack, and as a public good that would protect the values and rights that Canadians enjoyed as citizens of a liberal democracy.

The government's appeal to responsible citizens was most successful when organizers targeted and cooperated with existing national and local voluntary associations such as the Canadian Legion or municipal volunteer boards. CD officials were concerned with gaining the support of these community elites, volunteers already active in the community whom officials believed could lend CD greater credibility and provide local leadership for the organization. Civil defence plans gave these volunteers a common purpose. Early CD policy envisioned local populations rushing to the scene of fires caused by nuclear explosions and pulling survivors out of the rubble; this effectively communitarian strategy permitted CD officials to illustrate how volunteers could demonstrate their usefulness to the community during a national crisis. Even as CD policy changed to evacuation thinking after 1954, volunteers kept their status as community leaders, who would marshal fellow citizens to safety areas. This program expanded CD appeals from Canada's major urban areas to the rural countryside, whose residents would be responsible for billeting, feeding, and caring for hundreds of thousands of nuclear refugees.

In 1959, the government articulated its national survival policy, which placed emphasis on the private construction of family fallout shelters to protect against the lethal radiation that planners believed would blanket most of the country following an attack. Unlike the "self-help" and evacuation strategies adopted earlier, the national survival policy could not tie the individual citizen's effort to the communal good because survival had become a matter of personal initiative to provide shelter for the family's defence, and

not the community. The role of existing volunteers within the organization was thrown into question. In the ICBM era, the proud certainty of earlier CD strategies had disappeared; the government could not predict what areas of the country would be hit and which areas would be at risk from fallout. The best advice the government could offer to Canadians was to have a plan, and to build a shelter. The shelter policy transformed support for civil defence from an effort directed at preserving the community to a series of decisions each individual would be forced to make to provide protection for the family before an attack took place. With plans focused so intensely on individual family planning, rather than a community effort, the role of the volunteer withered away, and gradually voluntary associations withdrew their support from the organization.

Yet the bond between the citizen and community defence did not entirely disappear once the government began encouraging Canadians to build shelters. Shelter occupants were not meant to remain underground forever, and were expected to keep an ear to the radio to learn what they were to do once they could rejoin the community. It was their responsibility to listen and respond through this radio link so that the country could rebuild after sheltered families received instructions to emerge. The connection between the individual volunteers and the survival of the country did, however, become increasingly tenuous as the nature and magnitude of the threat to Canada changed.

The professionalization of emergency measures planners also figured in the diminishing emphasis on civic voluntarism in CD publicity and planning after 1959. Apart from the shelter policy, government planning was directed at developing support systems that would remain standing during a war. This work did not so much require leaders able to communicate with their communities but rather a new class of public

servant whose work was mainly concerned with harmonizing the intergovernmental and interdepartmental standards and procedures that made up Continuity of Government plans. Community voluntary associations, once central to CD community organizations, lost their direction and importance as civil defence became just “another function of government.”¹ Increasingly, CD discussions were held in boardrooms, not city councils and church basements. The professionalization of civil defence planning, which intensified after 1963, helped the organization vanish from public view.²

The failure of civil defence should also be considered a failure of policy and planning. The organizational structure that the federal government decided to implement after 1948 created an emergency planning system where financial and administrative responsibility was divided over three levels of government. Under the terms of the Canadian constitution, the federal government could not compel its counterparts in provincial and municipal arenas to comply with the policies, advice, and guidance of the federal civil defence agencies. The decision whether to expend public monies to organize and maintain municipal civil defence was entirely voluntary. Most provinces and nearly every municipality objected to being saddled with the cost of these organizations.

Canada’s civil defence program, like many of the federal government’s postwar social programs, became entangled in a constitutional dispute over which level of government should bear the financial responsibility for emergency measures. The federal government likened the nature of peacetime civil defence planning to natural disaster

¹ Diefenbaker, *Debates*, 23 March 1959, pp. 2129-2130.

² Work continued at all levels of government after 1963. Federally, EMO was bounced between different government departments much as it had been during the early Cold War. By 1965, emphasis on the nuclear aspect of Canada’s emergency preparedness fell away as relations improved between East and West. By 1966, Charles Drury, Minister of Defence Production, then responsible for the EMO, wrote to inform his provincial counterparts that because of the remote possibility of attack without warning preparations for natural disaster would take precedence over war planning in future. Drury to Provincial Ministers of Civil Defence, 2 September 1966, LAC RG 57 Vol 60 File 2300-2.

contingencies, work best done using local resources directed provincially. The provinces and municipalities countered by pointing to the complexity of the tasks and the great costs of nuclear preparedness. Nuclear defence, they reasoned, was a matter of national defence, and therefore a federal responsibility. For most of the 1950s, two provinces, Ontario and Quebec, refused to contribute at all to civil defence. The situation led to ugly public disputes that undermined public confidence in civil defence and left Canadians without direction in times of crisis. The seriousness with which CD planners viewed the need to begin preparations is underlined by the fact that the federal government gradually retreated from its insistence that the provinces pay for CD. The federal government became more deeply involved in planning and financing local CD preparations over the course of the 1950s, through the Financial Assistance Program and other means.

The limitations of civil defence planning were further exposed by the organization's slow response to rapid advances in weapons technology during the early Cold War. The first thermonuclear weapon was detonated in the Pacific Ocean in 1952, yet nearly four years passed before the federal government officially changed CD policy to reflect this revolutionary advancement. Intergovernmental disputes accounted for part of this delay, as the federal government coaxed reluctant partners to test and adopt new strategies. Planners also faced impediments in receiving accurate information about the weapon they were responsible for developing a defence against, a result of restrictive secrecy laws in the United States. Nor could changes in civil defence strategy, at the best of times, keep up with the changing nature and extent of the threat to lives and infrastructure. Gradually, technological revolutions stripped away planners' confidence

that cities could be saved, that the cities alone would suffer, and finally, that the public would have sufficient warning to take action in the event of an attack.

The organization was also afflicted by the lack of sustained political support for CD efforts. Civil defence intruded on the government's postwar agenda, and found few political champions over the course of its existence. The St. Laurent government established the civil defence organization, but senior political officials unwilling to risk criticism or embarrassment were reluctant to offer public endorsements of CD. Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare and the minister in charge of civil defence from 1951-1957, noted in his memoirs that CD planning was necessary but distasteful work. J.W. Monteith, his successor, had even less desire to promote civil defence measures, and happily shifted responsibility for the organization out of his department at the first available opportunity. These ministers viewed CD as a diversion from what they imagined to be their department's real responsibilities.³

John Diefenbaker, who after 1959 assumed political responsibility for Canada's civil defence and emergency government, was the most active agent of national survival. During the Berlin crises, he oversaw a dramatic expansion in public spending on emergency measures and made repeated public appearances to explain the necessity of civil defence, fallout shelters, and national EMO exercises such as TOCSIN 1961. Civil Defence was an issue that, like Louis St. Laurent, Diefenbaker might have been able to ignore. Better CD measures would win few votes, and in view of the increasingly vocal

³ Paul Martin believed that rearmament and the civil defence effort extracted resources from his department that he wanted to direct towards his ambitious project to reform Canada's hospital insurance system. Paul Martin, *A Very Public Life: So Many Worlds*, (Ottawa: Deneau, 1985), pp. 146-147. Monteith's enthusiasm for sport led him to spearhead a national fitness and amateur sports program, but he found CD "particularly baffling and frustrating." J. Waldo Monteith to Diefenbaker, 9 May 1958, LAC Diefenbaker Fonds MG 26 M Vol 48 File 140, see also "Was in Diefenbaker Cabinet," *Globe and Mail*, 21 December 1981.

anti-nuclear movement, was potentially politically costly.⁴ Diefenbaker deserves credit for his leadership, however imperfect, on the civil defence file. In his memoirs, the Prime Minister expressed his regret that he was unable to explain this aspect of government planning to the public, and suffered deep personal embarrassment when the public and the media lashed out at projects like the Diefenbunker. Diefenbaker balanced his support for civil defence with caution, not wishing to provoke public anxiety that could further disturb his government's agenda. It was this caution that stilled Diefenbaker's tongue about CD during the Cuban missile crisis.

Diefenbaker's government accelerated organizational changes put in motion by St. Laurent's Cabinet to resolve the intractable intergovernmental divisions and the moribund planning process that plagued civil defence efforts. The Civil Defence Order (CDO) of 1959 made important concessions to the provinces about CD financing, and brought about a number of important changes to Canada's civil defence structure and policies. However, the transition from Civil Defence Canada to the Emergency Measures Organization left provincial and municipal CD agencies without central guidance or funding during a period of prolonged international crisis. The 1959 CDO also created severe problems for the Canadian military, which became responsible for large aspects of Canada's CD effort without the resources necessary to carry out its new and unwanted tasks adequately.

In 1948, Canada's civil defence planners had advocated a structure of passive defences that would prepare cities for nuclear war without the need for extensive military

⁴ Patricia McMahon has argued that Diefenbaker and his Cabinet "balanced defence priorities, on the one hand, with political popularity, on the other. Over time, the latter came to take priority...." *The Essence of Indecision: Diefenbaker's Nuclear Policy, 1957-1963*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), p. 29.

aid. Their rationale for this was twofold: the military was not large enough to handle the tasks associated with a nuclear civil defence on their own, and the armed forces themselves did not want to assume responsibility for what they viewed as a civilian responsibility. For most of the 1950s, the Canadian Army, trained to fight the Soviet Union in Western Europe, carefully guarded this capability against suggestions that their mobile force could be used to supplement or, if necessary, supplant Canada's CD volunteers.

After successive Cold War crises, the Canadian Chiefs of Staff gradually recognized that their forces would have to offer support to CD in order for the country to survive. The CDO formalized this arrangement, placing the Canadian Army in charge of blast and fallout detection, attack warning, and rescue. Rescue duties would require hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians to re-enter blasted cities to put out fires and extract injured Canadians trapped under debris. In the short term, neither Civil Defence nor the Army derived much benefit from their new relationship. Volunteers in local civil defence agencies trickled away, alienated, with the belief that they had been replaced with hired help, even as successive Cabinet ministers attempted to assure them that their services were still required. The Canadian Army Militia, the force tasked to create mobile rescue columns ringed potential nuclear targets, in turn deeply resented being deprived of its role as a reserve to Canada's NATO force. From 1959 to 1963, part-time soldiers gamely played along with rescue exercises that they derisively labelled "snakes and ladders," while membership in the Militia dropped precipitously.⁵

⁵ The 1964 Suttie Commission made survival operations just one more aspect of the Militia's war training. In order of importance, survival operations rated last behind support for the Army, its role as a training force, and an internal security capability. A frustrated Jack Wallace, learning of the cuts to the Militia, penned a sarcastic note to file: "DND should, therefore, be invited to explain exactly how they propose to

At the foundation of Canada's civil defence establishment was the expectation that the public would contribute to its own defence. Though many Canadians across the country responded to this appeal, most did not. Citizens were willing to assume some obligations required of them by the government, such as taxation, in exchange for rights and, increasingly after 1945, the services of the social welfare state. The public did not, however, accept responsibility for civil defence. Canadians never permitted personal responsibility for survival to be written into the contract between citizens and the state, despite repeated attempts by government officials to convince them of their civic duty to enlist for "self-help," train in evacuation, or dig their own shelters. The public response to civil defence reveals that Canadians rejected the organization for a range of practical, political, and psychological reasons.

The majority of Canadians objected to civil defence on practical grounds. From what they knew of Canada's CD planning, the public easily and often pointed to imperfect plans as an excuse not to participate. Firefighting and rescue made sense during a natural disaster, but these did not compare to the destruction of an atomic bomb. The public responded with incredulity to costly proposals to bomb-proof their cities.

Evacuation plans were met with similar scepticism, as citizens living in cities compared their lived experience in rush hour traffic jams with plans to evacuate the entire

continue with the same policy and responsibilities when they are reducing training potential and their manpower capability so significantly. I submit that this [National Survival] was not, contrary to the lip service which had been paid to it, as effective as we would wish." LAC Wallace Fonds MG 30 E211 Vol 4 File 4-6. Controversy over the role of the armed forces in emergency measures has proved to be enduring. In a 2008 review, the Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence found that communication between government departments was poor or nonexistent, financial arrangements were confusing, and suggested that the armed forces be asked to take on a more prominent role in civil emergency preparedness. In short, the senators reached similar conclusions as Major-General Howard Graham's survey of Canada's civil defence 50 years earlier. Senate of Canada, Standing Committee on National Security and Defence, *Emergency Preparedness in Canada*, Volume 1. (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, 2008), pp. 8-20.

population in under three hours. To many Canadians, these plans did not pass the litmus test of realism. The strongest evidence of the public's rejection of a CD policy on practical grounds was the failure of the government's fallout shelter program. Canadians asked to spend \$500 for their own protection pleaded poverty, a third pointed to their living situation in rented premises, and questioned, once they would emerge from their shelters, whether any food would be safe to eat.⁶

Disarmament activists and critics of the arms race capitalized on the public's doubts about the practicality of CD measures. Peace groups claimed at public gatherings and in petitions that civil defence was a hoax, meant to reassure the population that they could survive a nuclear exchange. Activists attacked the principle of preparing for nuclear war as evidence of the government's lack of commitment to work for general disarmament. The pressure brought by these groups led some local city councils to refuse participation in exercises, and embarrassed federal politicians about their role in the national survival program. Peace organizations promoted a campaign parallel to the EMO to convince the public that disarmament, not shelters, could ensure survival. These groups, with the assistance of a sympathetic press, placed the long-term health effects of nuclear fallout from weapons testing on the public agenda. Civil defence advocates could offer no advice about how Canadians were supposed to survive the residual radiation that would contaminate the environment for thousands of years after a war.

Yet the greatest obstacle to the public's participation in civil defence was psychological. Canadians looked to atomic and thermonuclear weapons with a mixture of terror, reverence, and anxiety. Canadians asked to think about civilian defence first

⁶ In 1961 federal statistics estimated that 66 per cent of Canadians owned private homes. Eugene Flichel, "Home Ownership in Canada Back on an Upward Curve," *Housing Finance International*. (May 1987), pp. 9-10.

imagined an Armageddon portrayed in a constant flow of press and science fiction since the end of the Second World War. The bomb was not something against which a credible defence could be mounted. The world would change irrevocably from the peaceful existence Canadians knew into a burnt and poisonous landscape. It was a future that most Canadians did not want, and could not imagine themselves surviving. What was the use in evacuating a city only to die from exposure or radiation? What, they asked, was the point of digging a shelter, when the world above it would be poisoned for generations?

Canadians only turned their attention to preparedness during the most pronounced periods of international crisis. Civil defence experienced a great expansion during the Korean War largely because of the public's concern that that conflict could spiral out of control, but interest in the organization contracted sharply after the war ended peacefully. This pattern repeated itself again following the launch of *Sputnik* in 1957, intensified during the Berlin crises in 1958 and 1961, and built to its peak when war appeared certain over Cuba. However scorned CD might have been by the media and ideological opponents, the public turned to it in emergencies to fill a need for information and direction. But the need was seldom felt.

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