

CIVIL DEFENCE IN NEW ZEALAND

A SHORT HISTORY

FOREWORD

1990 has been a year for all New Zealanders to look back and study the events of previous decades as they prepare themselves for the last decade of the century and the years ahead. Civil Defence has steadily grown in strength since its tentative beginnings before and during the Second World War, but until now little effort has been made to record its history.

This publication explains the early attempts to persuade local government that public safety was - or should be - its concern, the gradual evolution of a partnership between central and local government, the spirited debate on the nuclear issue, and the subsequent decision to concentrate on natural hazards. It records the names, and where possible the photographs, of the Ministers, Secretaries, Directors and Commissioners who have collectively steered the Ministry along a path of increasing efficiency since its inception.

This is a Ministry history. It makes little or no mention of the many personalities at regional and local level who have supported the system through difficult times and frequently through declared emergencies. This omission was made necessary by time and financial constraints, but I look forward to a second stage wherein each zone builds on this initial publication by compiling a history of its own regions and emergencies. In this context, I applaud the work already commenced in Central Zone and the current proposal in Southern Zone to create an oral and pictorial history of the 1929 Murchison earthquake.

This book ends in mid 1990, but our history will move onwards as we continue to prepare measures for public safety. As Minister of Civil Defence, I welcome this short history and commend the Ministry on its production.

Hon Graeme Lee
Minister of Civil Defence

CIVIL DEFENCE IN NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand has always been vulnerable to devastation by natural forces. The effects of events such as the 1886 Tarawera eruption, the 1931 Napier earthquake, the 1968 *Whahine* storm, and Cyclone Bola in 1998 have been widely felt. New Zealand's civil defence organisation, which in its earliest form dates back to the 1930s, has had the task of responding to this kind of emergency. It was not until 1959, however, that the establishment of the Ministry of Civil Defence formalised earlier ad hoc attempts to deal with natural disasters. The development of the ministry and the evolution of its role over the years illustrates changes in both the public perception of the threat posed by natural emergencies and the way they have been dealt with. Since New Zealand's early civil defence organization and legislation were based on overseas, particularly British, models, it is useful to begin with an examination of these influences.

THE ORIGINS OF CIVIL DEFENCE: BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES

The development of a civil defence organisation in Britain can be traced not to natural disaster, but to the introduction of aerial bombing during the First World War. In 1924 an Air Raid Precautions (ARP) subcommittee of the Committee of Imperial Defence was set up to study how to safeguard the civilian population from such bombing. The committee and other such bodies continued to explore the matter until the increasingly threatening international situation in the mid 1930s made urgent the implementation of an air raid protection and civil defence plan. The birth of organized civil defence in Britain came in 1935, with a Cabinet vote of £100,000 for ARP equipment.

In the same year, an ARP department was set up in the Home Office to co-ordinate the efforts of all the government departments involved with defence against air raids. In 1935 the government also asked local authorities to assist in establishing local ARP organisations, and in 1938 Cabinet Minister Sir John Anderson was given responsibility for the ARP department. Regional Commissioners who stood between local authorities and the central administration in London were appointed. As was to happen later in New Zealand, many retired military men were recruited to fill these positions. The term 'civil defence' emerged to denote most of the measures to be undertaken in war time by civil departments.

Developments in the United States came later than those in Britain, but they were also related to international crises. Until 1949 the United States did not possess a permanent national civil defence organisation. It was believed that civil defence was a state and local responsibility. However, in 1949 the Soviet Union exploded its first atomic device, and in 1950 North Korea invaded the South. As the cold war turned hot, concern grew that the conflict in Korea was intended to divert US forces, and that attacks in Europe or even the United States itself were possible. It was in this atmosphere of impending crisis that the first action at the federal level was taken. President Truman established the Federal Civil Defence Administration (FCDA) in December 1949. In the following year Congress passed the Federal Civil Defence Act, which gave the FCDA statutory authority, and the Defence production Act, which set out guidelines for the industrial response to war. However the major crisis had passed by the time. Congress allocated funds for the new FCDA, and its budget was slashed from a proposed \$US730 million to \$US31.75 million.

NEW ZEALAND BEGINNINGS

Major earthquakes in 1929 and 1931 underlined New Zealand's vulnerability to natural disaster. As the epicenter of the first earthquake was located in the sparsely populated Murchison area, only 17 people died despite widespread devastation. In Hawke's Bay two years later, however, the cities of Napier and Hastings were both severely damaged, 260 people died and large numbers left homeless. Central government quickly provided various forms of assistance, but coping with the disaster was seen as largely the responsibility of local agencies, which were completely unprepared for this task. Citizens' committees were formed immediately to co-ordinate rescue and relief operations, but their lack of authority and support led to difficulties.

The passage of the Public Safety Conservation Act in 1932 was in part a response to such problems. The initiative for the introduction of the legislation came from a concern about civil disorder which had been fuelled by Depression-induced rioting in Auckland and elsewhere. But the Act's provisions empowered the government to proclaim a state of emergency anywhere in the Dominion at any time when 'the public safety or public order is or is likely to be imperiled'. Until central control could be established, the senior police officer in the locality was to assume responsibility for the issuing of any instructions necessary for 'the preservation of life, the protection of property, and the maintenance of order'.¹ The Act made no provision for organisations, either central or local, to plan for disasters. Thus the few local authorities which did take note of Hawke's Bay experience and prepared to meet similar crises did so on their own initiative. In so doing, they provided the basis for wartime civil defence.

THE EMERGENCY PRECAUTIONS SCHEME

In the mid 1930s, with the threat of war increasing, an Emergency Precautions Committee of the New Zealand section of the Committee of Imperial Defence was formed, with representatives from the departments of Internal Affairs, Police and Defence. By July 1936 it had identified its three major concerns as earthquakes, air raids and poison gas attacks.

In 1937 the committee's membership was widened to include representatives of the Air, Census and Statistics and Labour departments. Anti-gas preparations were initiated, utilizing army instructors and 1,000 cheap respirators. The Emergency Precautions Scheme was to be controlled by the Department of Internal Affairs, and had a vote of £1,000 per annum. Two handbooks, one for rural and one for urban authorities, were issued in 1939. The scheme they described was designed to meet emergency conditions arising from enemy attack, epidemics, earthquakes and other natural disasters, although obviously at this time the first of these was the main concern.

The EPS adopted from Britain the principal that community safety was largely a local responsibility, and was staffed initially on a voluntary basis. Many local authorities undertook enlistment drives urging women, and men not liable to military call-up, to become involved. As in Britain, the country was divided into regions corresponding to military districts, each headed by a Regional Commissioner who was responsible for co-ordinating the activities of the EPS organisations and the armed forces within his region. The three regions were in turn subdivided into 16 districts, each under a controller; within these, committees of councilors were responsible for EPS organisation in each local body.

The minister in charge of the EPS was at first in 1938 the Minister of Internal Affairs, and then from August 1940 the Minister of National Service, R.G. Semple. For a few months after June 1942 there was a Minister of Civil Defence in the war administration, before the responsibility returned to the Minister of National Service. EPS sections were also set up within individual departments, both at head offices in Wellington and at district level throughout New Zealand.

Activities for EPS volunteers included elementary drill, fire fighting and first aid. A warden system, whereby individuals with a detailed knowledge of their own area acted as leaders in time of disaster, was established. Wardens co-ordinated local rescue efforts and passed on information to the fire fighting and works sections. Like many voluntary organisations, however, the EPS suffered from apathy. Although on paper the scheme had developed to sizable proportions, there were shortages of personnel, equipment and funds. In some parts of the country people organized efficiently and creatively, while in others boredom or internal scuffles predominated and tasks were undertaken by a few willing enthusiasts.

The 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbour changed the picture, with thousands of new volunteers joining EPS ranks. In addition, an expanded fire-watching scheme and the Emergency Shelter Regulations, providing for the construction of public and industrial shelters, forced government action on the issue. In January 1942 enrolment in the Emergency Defence Corps (of which the Emergency Precautions Scheme, the Emergency Fire Service and the Home Guard were branches) became compulsory for all able-bodied males aged between 18 and 65 who were not serving in the armed forces. Women were also asked to volunteer, and once enrolled could not resign at will. In the following months many posts were reallocated as greater numbers of men were called up. In Auckland, for example, many of the wardens were women.

The increase in activity proved to be relatively short-lived. As the Japanese threat to New Zealand receded during the latter part of 1942, shelter construction was halted and EPS operations were gradually scaled down. The scheme was revised in the new year. The EPS changed its name to Civil Defence, and training schools were established in Wellington to put groups of instructors through an intensive three-week-program. Armed with up-to-date information on such topics as first aid, fire-fighting, stretcher bearing and crowd dispersal, they were then sent home to pass on their skills. A new policy announced shortly afterwards created fixed civil defence establishments in specified centres, along with a number of mobile squads. All other EPS members were in effect, retired.

In 1944 the responsibility for civil defence was handed back to the Department of Internal Affairs, and at the end of the war most local EPS units were disbanded. New Zealand's EPS personnel never had to respond to enemy action, but twice during the war they were confronted by natural disasters. In June and August 1942, Wellington and the Wairarapa suffered severe earthquakes. Fortunately there was little loss of life, and the EPS organisations in both areas worked effectively, co-operating with the armed forces to clear rubble and carry out necessary demolitions.

THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES EMERGENCY POWERS ACT 1953

The Second World War had provided the impetus for the organisation of a well-co-ordinated civil defence scheme, but the state of preparedness did not continue once the Japanese threat disappeared. When there was again interest in civil defence matters, in the early 1950s, the wartime lessons seemed to have been forgotten.

This renewed interest appears to have been bought about by a perceived danger of nuclear attack. In both Britain and in the United States such perceptions had led to civil defence legislation, and in 1953 New Zealand followed suit. Although the Local Authorities Emergency Powers Act did contain provisions designed to deal with natural disasters, the nuclear threat was its primary concern.

Under the Act, local authorities were given powers ‘at any time (whether during a period of emergency or otherwise)’ to set up committees or emergency posts, and to arrange for the rescue of the injured, the removal of debris and the satisfaction of accommodation and welfare needs.² Apart from loans which might be provided by the Local Authorities Loans Board, there was to be no financial assistance from the central government.

The legislation contained other weaknesses. There was no requirement for local authorities to set up civil defence organisations, unless during an emergency the Minister of Internal Affairs issued written instructions. Further, there was no legal provision for the requisitioning of essential supplies, there were no sanctions to enforce compliance with local authority directives, and no mention was made of compensation for death or injury suffered while carrying out emergency work.

The Act’s focus on the local authority response to disaster was in contrast to the co-ordinating role played by central government in the Emergency Precautions Scheme. The Opposition had argued in Parliament that giving overall responsibility to local authorities in an emergency was also in conflict with the Public Safety Conservation Act, which delegated authority to the police. But the bill was enacted with these issues unresolved.

Although Local Authorities Emergency Powers Act gave local bodies the primary responsibility for community safety, the government did draw up its own plan, *Government Action in a Major Emergency* (GAME). Approved by cabinet in April 1954, GAME comprised instructions to be followed in an emergency by various government departments.

Under this plan it was the Post Office’s responsibility to inform the government of a disaster. A Cabinet subcommittee and an operational centre would then be set up, and if it was necessary to inspect the scene of the disaster, the Prime Minister or his Nominee would visit the site with a field committee which would include the commissioner of Police the Chief of General Staff and the Chief of Air Staff. Once on the scene, the field committee would contact the Cabinet subcommittee to organize government recourses. If Wellington suffered a disaster, an Auckland-based emergency committee of district officers would mobilise help for the Capital.

The Local Authorities Emergency Powers Act and GAME remained the basis of civil defence in New Zealand for some years, although few people knew of the existence of GAME and local bodies’ responses to the Act were later described by the Ministry of Civil Defence as ‘at best sporadic’.³ The Local Authorities Emergency Powers Act was repealed by the Civil Defence Act 1962, but there was no new government plan until *Government Action in a Major Disaster* was approved in 1966.

Between 1953 and 1958, interest in civil defence appears to have declined even further. There was only one mention of it in the Department of Internal Affairs’ annual reports, and there were no debates on the subject in Parliament.

THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL DEFENCE IS BORN - APRIL 1959

The question of civil defence did not emerge again in public discussion until 1958, when the Government's White Paper, *Review of Defence*, argued that 'planning of civil defence should have a high priority', and proposed the establishment of a Ministry of Civil Defence. Civil defence was needed because:

The safeguarding and educating of the civil population against the nuclear must, for the first time, become an essential part of national defence plans. The geographical position no longer affords the country security from the worst impact of a global conflict...Radioactivity knows neither frontiers nor distance and the contamination of nuclear weapons could assume world wide proportions.⁴

Technological change provided the context for this attitude. Both superpowers had launched intercontinental ballistic missiles in 1957, and the Soviet Union had sent the 'sputnik' satellite into orbit. The United States was known to be building submarines which were capable of firing missiles.

Although the 1958 Defence Review denied that a nuclear threat to New Zealand was imminent, its underlying assumption was that a direct attack by nuclear missiles was possible, and adequate measures to protect the civilian population should be taken.

Major public interest in the 1958 White Paper was focused on the suggested abolition of compulsory military service, and the civil defence proposals attracted little attention. In March 1959, however, the annual report of the Department of Internal Affairs noted:

The Government also decided that the time had come for some positive steps in the direction of greater preparedness against the possibility of nuclear attack on New Zealand...Means of implementing these plans are under consideration by the Government.⁵

J.K (later Sir Jack) Hunn, appointed as temporary head of the Internal Affairs Department for six months in 1959, later described reading of the announcement by Prime Minister Walter Nash on 6 April 1959 that a Ministry of Civil Defence would be established within the department of Internal Affairs.

The fear of nuclear war gripped the world and created a bomb-shelter mentality. Walter Nash resists demands for more spending on military defence and sought to divert attention by voting something for civil defence instead. Thus the Secretary of Internal Affairs was, ex officio, the first Director of Civil Defence. The decision seemed to have been made 'off the cuff'. The Department had never been consulted or asked, as was usual, to submit a paper for discussion in Cabinet. Consequently, we had no guidelines or anything but the foggiest idea of what was intended.⁶

The new ministry's location in Internal Affairs seems to have come about because of that department's responsibility for local government, and its administration of earlier civil defence schemes. The new ministry was responsible to a Minister of Defence, W.T. Anderton. The Secretary for Internal Affairs became also the Director of Civil Defence, and an assistant Secretary became Deputy Director. There was a single Civil Defence Officer, C.A. Sharp, who had been the lone Civil Emergencies Officer in the Department of Internal Affairs since 1952. Sharp traveled to Australia in 1959 to attend a course at the Australian Civil Defence School at Macedon in Victoria, where he held discussions with civil defence authorities. In consultation with J.K. Hunn, he then prepared a broad organizational plan, the essentials of which were published earlier in 1960 in the pamphlet *Civil Defence in New Zealand*.

Although this pamphlet stated that Civil Defence was to be an all-purpose organisation able to deal with emergencies in both peace and war, its text indicated strongly that the threat of nuclear attack was the primary concern. Difficulties in resolving the competing priorities of natural disaster and military (including nuclear) incursion were to plague the new ministry for several years.

Civil Defence in New Zealand was a statement of intent rather than a set of detailed proposals. It can be assumed that those who took the trouble to read it must have been at least puzzled by some of the content. Its discussion of warning periods and evacuations, particularly in the case of nuclear attack, lacked credibility, as nothing was said about how warnings were to be transmitted, or how the complex task of evacuation was to be carried out.

An early decision of the ministry was to advertise for Regional Commissioners. This was to have a strong influence on the eventual structure of civil defence. The original intention had been to have four commissioners, two for each island, but only three were named, apparently because of an inability to recruit a suitable fourth appointee. Commodore P. Bourke, a retired naval officer, was appointed for the northern half of the North Island, Sir Geoffrey Peren, a retired academic, took over the southern half of the North Island, and Brigadier J. T. Burrows, a retired army officer, accepted appointment for both South Island regions. From September 1959 their Director (the Secretary for Internal Affairs) was J. V. Meech.

As well as supervising civil defence within their own regions, the Regional Commissioners were expected to play a major role within the ministry. Every two or three months they met in conference in Wellington, chaired usually by the Deputy Director of Civil Defence (the Assistant Secretary of Internal Affairs). Sometimes the Director or even the minister would attend.

But Civil Defence's priorities remained confused, and parliamentary statements failed to resolve them. In October 1959 the Minister of Finance A. H. Nordmeyer, expressed the hope that civil defence 'could operate not only in the event of war but also in the event of an earthquake or other major disaster'. However, when Parliament had a full debate on the subject in July 1960, the Minister of Defence, Philip Connolly, stressed exclusively the nuclear aspects of disaster preparation.

There were also difficulties with respect to the funding of civil defence. The Municipal and Counties Associations put forward a number of remits on this subject in the early 1960s, many of them requesting financial assistance from central government. The President of the Municipal Association made the point succinctly to that body's annual conference in 1960:

It would appear that the Government is looking to local authorities to meet the costs involved. This matter has been taken up with the Minister of Civil Defence since it is considered that it is a national matter upon which the Government should give some definite lead insofar as costs are concerned.

After consultation between the Regional Commissioners and local bodies, it was apparent that both a systematic commitment by central government and further legislation would be needed before Civil Defence could function effectively.

The Director had informed the Regional Commissioners in June 1960 that the ministry had no statutory powers of direction. The first idea was to revive the deficient Local Authorities Emergency Powers Act, but the need for a fresh start was soon appreciated. A Civil Defence Act, which 'gave legislative definition to an organisation designed to command and co-ordinate resources in case of hostile attack or natural disaster', was the outcome.

THE CIVIL DEFENCE ACT 1962

The Civil Defence Bill was introduced to Parliament by the new Minister of Civil Defence, F. L. Gotz, on 10 November 1961. Drafted with some speed by officers of the Department of Internal Affairs, it was a sizeable piece of legislation, comprising when enacted 59 clauses grouped in five parts: Administration, Civil Defence Regions, Declaration of National Emergency or of Major Disaster, Duties and Powers of Local Authorities, and Miscellaneous.

The first part of the bill detailed the Director's role in advising and assisting the minister and local authorities, and co-ordinating personnel, material and services during a major disaster or national emergency. A revised draft of the bill also made provision for a National Civil Defence Committee comprising the heads of a number of government departments and agencies, and planning committees which would prepare and review plans for specified sectors, such as communications, transport, medical services and law and order.

The second part of the bill set out the regional basis of civil defence, and defined the administrative and operational functions of the Regional Commissioners. Regional civil defence committees were also established. These, like their national counterpart, drew members from different government departments and organisations.

The provisions for the declaration of national emergency or state of major disaster referred to both actual (or imminent) attack and natural disaster. Regional Commissioners and the civil defence controllers of local authorities were given authority to declare states of major disaster within their respective jurisdictions.

Every local authority was required to prepare a local civil defence plan acceptable to the Regional Commissioner. Provision was made for compensation for civil defence personnel injured during a state of emergency or disaster and for Local Authorities Loans Board finance to be made available to local bodies which wished to borrow for civil defence purposes.

Among the provisions in the Miscellaneous section of the bill were the protections of civil defence personnel from liability for any damage they might cause, and the granting to local authorities of legal powers to requisition materials and evacuate buildings. In any state of national emergency or major disaster, the Governor-General might make regulations in the public interest. The bill necessitated amendments to the Public Safety Conservation Act, and the repeal of the Local Authorities Emergency Powers Act.

The bill set out a three-tiered organizational structure reminiscent of that of the Emergency Precautions Scheme. Local bodies, the institutions most directly responsible for public safety, would be assisted by co-ordinated support from the government. But in the event no detailed plan of government action was to be prepared until 1965.

One issue raised by the Opposition during the bill's passage was to have long-term consequences. Michael Connolly, the Labour member for Riccarton, asked why the Broadcasting Corporation would be represented on the National Civil Defence Committee when the press would not. The Minister of Civil Defence declared that there was no 'place for the press in national planning', and that in any case 'the dissemination of news in a time of emergency must be carried out at much greater speed than the press can achieve, with the slowness of printing and delivery of newspapers'. This statement was not well received by the New Zealand press, which responded with many editorials arguing the case for the role of newspapers in the dissemination of news. A more serious consequence was that civil defence was to receive much negative press coverage in the years to come.

The Civil Defence Act, passed in December 1962, designated armed attack and natural disaster as the two types of emergency with which the civil defence organisation was designed to cope. But within

the ministry, emphasis continued to be placed on the nuclear threat. During the early 1960s the Regional Commissioners focused consistently on the dangers of nuclear attack, while the minister increasingly emphasized natural disasters.

During the debate on the Civil Defence Bill the minister warned of the risks from natural phenomena, while commenting on the nuclear threat in terms strikingly different to some of his previous statements. He remarked that :

In the European countries, of course, the fear is largely of nuclear war. We in New Zealand are fortunate in that we do not think there is such a danger, but still, in planning for civil defence, we cannot disregard the risk.....

For a minister who in the past had stressed the ‘duty to ... guard against potential dangers which can come from the skies’,¹² this was a significant change of emphasis. Although Götz had not entirely dismissed the threat of nuclear attack, such danger was now seen as hypothetical.

However, it appeared that clear ministerial direction was lacking, for a document produced by the Minister for Civil Defence for local bodies in July 1963 reiterated the emphasis on the nuclear danger. The introduction stated that:

Planning for civil defence must be based on the appreciation on the major threat which faces New Zealand. The major threat to any country must be global warfare. The direct or indirect threat to this country is very difficult to assess. It can be assumed, however, that a potential enemy is capable of delivering a nuclear attack anywhere in the world.¹³

The Regional Commissioners supported this emphasis on the nuclear threat because they viewed it as ‘the only common theme which would prompt people throughout the country to join or support civil defence.’¹⁴ Commissioner Sir Geoffrey Peren considered that ‘people had become accustomed to earthquakes and felt they could be dealt with off the cuff.’¹⁵ In their opinion, an emphasis on the frightening prospect of a nuclear attack would more likely to ensure public support than one on natural disasters.

This view was not shared by the new Minister of Civil Defence, D.C. Seath. Early in 1964 he told the first meeting of the National Civil Defence Committee:

I am not suggesting that planning against the consequences of nuclear disaster should be ignored, but first let us bend our energies to preparing against the known forms of natural disaster....¹⁶

This speech marked a decisive point in the conflict between the two ideals. The diminished importance placed upon the nuclear threat now percolated through all levels of civil defence organisation. When the national Civil Defence Committee established a subcommittee which was required as part of its terms of reference to define the purpose of civil defence, it decided that New Zealand would not suffer nuclear attack. This conclusion ‘was based on the view that “a limited tactical use” of nuclear weapons could probably occur “without world-wide disaster implications”, but “an all-out atomic attack could well mean destruction of the world”. The committee “considered that no nation would be prepared to take the risk”.’¹⁷

The policy change can be seen as part of a world-wide decline in the fear of nuclear war. The 1963 nuclear tests ban treaty resulted in decreased concern about the prospect of nuclear conflict. By default, natural disaster now became the main priority.

J.V. MEECH'S DIRECTORSHIP

J.V. Meech's term as Director of Civil Defence (and Secretary for Internal Affairs), from 1959 to 1965, saw some establishment of the new civil defence organisation. The setting up of the ministry and the appointment of Regional Commissioners had been achieved by mid-1960, by which time also local authorities had been made aware of their responsibilities. Annual reports for the next five years record the passage into law of the Civil Defence Bill, and staff training at the Australian Civil Defence School and at courses within New Zealand. The reports also mention purchases of first aid, telecommunications, catering and radiation-measuring equipment, and the publication of several handbooks and planning guides.

All was not well, however. Many administrative tasks devolved of necessity onto the Regional Commissioners, since there was no full-time directorate. Delays in decision-making were the inevitable consequence. There was also an urgent need to draft a new central government plan. In the meantime, the obsolete *Government Action in a major Emergency* remained in operation.

Regional Commissioner Burke noted on July 1963 that GAME was still the only written instruction available to public servants. The Director replied that 'the terms and requirements of civil defence (as they affected Government departments) would have to be established by the N.C.D.C. (National Civil Defence Committee)',¹⁸ A Health Department representative drew the logical conclusion from this in December 1963, when he stated that his department refused to become involved with civil defence emergencies 'until a policy had been decided, approved, and the money set aside for the purpose.'¹⁹

The Regional Commissioners, however, made no direct request for a meeting of the NCDC in 1963. Public concern began to manifest itself, and during that year 'several citizens expressed misgivings (to the Ombudsman) about the administration of the Civil Defence Act.'²⁰ As a result of these criticisms, and also of those expressed in the press, the Ombudsman undertook an investigation of the administration of Civil Defence in September 1963.

THE OMBUDSMAN'S INQUIRY

The Ombudsman set out the reasons for his inquiry in a letter to the Director of Civil Defence in September 1963. He advised him of

complaints that the administration was being less active than it should be in pressing for the preparation and approval of national civil defence plans and of local civil defence plans; and there was too much secrecy surrounding civil defence so that the public as a whole were unaware of what their immediate responsibilities were.²¹

The Ombudsman observed that both the Director and the Deputy Director of Civil Defence were busy with other responsibilities, and therefore not able to devote a large amount of time to the national organisation of civil defence. Nevertheless, he asked for specific explanation of why the National Civil Defence Committee had not yet been summoned nor the planning committees appointed and advance plans prepared as contemplated by sections 10-13 of the Act.²²

In reply the Director explained that

in his judgement it was desirable that the local civil defence schemes should first be advanced to a stage where there was an organisation in existence before the National Civil Defence Committee should be summoned.²³

Meech also commented that various major committees had already been set up, and he felt that these should be allowed to develop their work to the point that it could be presented to the National Committee. In terms of publicity, the Director claimed that 'every possible opportunity was being taken to use press and radio facilities', and noted that 'civil defence could proceed only as far and as fast as the availability of staff and finance permitted, and in the ultimate must depend wholly on the interest which the public itself takes in it at the local level'.²⁴ He suggested that the National Civil Defence Committee should meet early in 1964.

The Ombudsman again contacted the Director in January 1964, referring to further criticism which had appeared in the press. He recorded that at that point:

I felt that the answers to my questions had become progressively less valid as time went on.... I realized the difficulty of a reluctant public, and yet Government and Parliament had been sufficiently aware of the needs of the situation to pass the comprehensive Act, and I felt that it was indeed the duty of the responsible Department to administer the Act effectually.²⁵

It was a serious accusation. The ministry had not done what it was required by law to do. The office of Ombudsman was still a novelty, and the case attracted considerable attention, particularly as it was so unusual for criticism of a department head to be so forthright. Such publicity did little to restore the already declining image of civil defence. The matter was eventually dealt with by the establishment of various planning committees, the first meeting of the National Civil Defence Committee in February 1964, and renewed attempts to implement relevant sections of the Act. This flurry of activity, however, was achieved at cost to the public perception of civil defence which would take some years to redress.

BRIGADIER R.C. QUEREE BECOMES DIRECTOR

Late in 1964 the Government accepted a recommendation from the Regional Commissioners that a permanent full-time Director of Civil Defence be appointed. Together with the Ombudsman's inquiry and the choice of D.C. Seath as Minister of Civil Defence, this was the third factor which stimulated more rapid development from 1964.

The new Director, Brigadier R.C. Queree, who took up his post in January 1965, came to Civil Defence after a distinguished army career. He had served with the Second New Zealand Division in North Africa and Europe, and had risen to the position of Vice Chief of Staff in New Zealand after the Second World War. His appointment allowed more emphasis to be placed on operational planning and organisation. Particularly notable events of Brigadier Queree's five and a half years as Director included the publication of the revised government emergency plan *Government Action in a Major Disaster*, the *Wahine* storm and the Inangahua earthquake.

GOVERNMENT ACTION IN A MAJOR DISASTER

As we have seen, the first meeting of the National Civil Defence Committee on 17 February 1964 marked a change of emphasis away from preparedness for nuclear attack. The substance of the policy shift was confirmed with the appearance in 1965 of the plan *Government Action in a Major Disaster* (GAMD), which emphasized the priority now being given to meeting potential natural disasters.

GAMD, drawn up by the National plans co-ordinating committee of the National Civil Defence Committee, was intended to cope with a 'major disaster' requiring central government control of civil defence operations. Although in fact some provision was made for the possible removal of the government to a field location, the plan assumed that a Cabinet subcommittee based in Wellington would have over all responsibility for civil defence. An operational group would direct the regional headquarters and local authorities, whose roles were set out in specific terms. An appendix dealt with the duties of government departments and other public agencies.

There was some criticism of the plan. Auckland's Regional Commissioner, Commodore P. Burke, believed that it still placed too much emphasis upon central control and did not leave enough scope for initiative of those on the scene. He also contended that the plan failed to outline in sufficient detail the support that other government agencies were to provide.

The structure of government were Wellington to be destroyed was another source of controversy. Captain T.D. Herrick, the new Regional Commissioner for the Central Region, considered that national control should pass to Palmerston North, but Commodore Bourke was adamant that headquarters should move to Auckland in these circumstances. Brigadier Queree was satisfied that GAMD met present needs. It should be seen 'as a directive rather than a hard and fast plan'.²⁶

In 1967 P.J. (later Sir Patrick) O'Dea was appointed Secretary for Civil Defence. By then the labours of the national planning committees had borne fruit in 10 plans. These, together with the *Civil Defence Planning Guide for Local Authorities* issued in 1963, provided the details of how local civil defence organisations were to be established under the terms of the Civil Defence Act.

Funding of civil defence activities at the local authority level, however, remained a contentious issue. During the first half on the 1960s the annual conferences of the Municipal Association and the Counties Association had frequently sought financial assistance from central government for civil defence purposes. The government had consistently rejected such remits. In 1965 the President of the Municipal Association asserted that:

Government has made abundantly clear that it regards the organisation of civil defence as a local body responsibility and so the executive has come to the conclusion that there is no point in further pressing this matter.²⁷

Though pressure from outside failed, the case was eventually won from within. In 1964 the Regional Commissioners asked the minister to provide local authority civil defence funding, and in October 1966 Cabinet approved subsidies on some civil defence items for local authorities which had civil defence plans. Subsequently it turned out that treasury had argued against these subsidies, and the Director then acknowledged that Civil Defence had received the best deal it could expect.

The subsidies represented only part of what local authorities wanted. In 1967 and 1968 local government conferences asked for reimbursement of the salaries of local civil defence officers. Although these demands were initially turned down for reasons of economy, events in 1968 led to a re-appraisal of the situation.

THE WAHINE STORM

In April 1968 New Zealand experienced some of the most severe weather conditions which had ever been recorded in the country. A storm which had originated as a tropical cyclone hit both the North and South Islands, damaging property and communications and causing several deaths from flying debris. The most tragic result, however, was at sea. Fifty one lives were lost when the inter-island ferry Wahine sank at the entrance of Wellington Harbor after being holed on Barrett's Reef at the height of the storm.

The Meteorological Service issued storm warnings from 6 April, and the national headquarters of civil defence alerted catchment authorities in the Auckland region. But the crisis was to come further south. The storm intensified unexpectedly in the early morning of 10 April, and arrived over the Wellington area. The recorded wind gusts reached 146 knots, and there was severe damage to housing in exposed suburbs. Local civil defence organisations were not prepared for the storm, and a state of local disaster was declared only in Upper Hutt, 20 miles north of Wellington. Sir Francis Kitts, the mayor of Wellington, feared that a local declaration in the city would lead to the evacuation of workplaces, with consequent danger to people forced on to the streets.

When the storm struck Christchurch during the night of 10-11 April, the main worry was that heavy rain would coincide with a high tide and flood the suburbs of New Brighton and Sumner. In the event this did not happen, though some exposed houses were damaged. There was declaration of disaster, since the police, helped by army units, had the situation under control. There was more heavy rain further south, and when the Matura River rose to its highest level for 55 years and threatened to flood houses, a disaster was declared in the Gore-Matura area on 14 April. The police and civil defence authorities evacuated 700 people from the flooded town of Wyndham.

The storm had the effect of stimulating debate about the quality of civil defence. Norman Kirk, the Leader of the Opposition, was in Christchurch during the storm, and his electorate included several of the flooded areas. The next day he argued that 'civil defence needs an urgent re-examination and a pretty sharp shake up if last night's sorry episode is not to be repeated'.²⁸ He commented further after a meeting of the Labour caucus. 'Civil defence should rid its pseudo-military background', he asserted, adding that in times of emergency the police should remain in control.²⁹

The Prime Minister was prepared to concede that 'in some places the civil defence organisations were not adequate to meet situations such as the gales of the past few days',³⁰ while the Minister of Civil Defence, in an apparent reference to the lack of warnings to local civil defence personnel from the ministry, acknowledged 'that the civil defence system had failed because there had not been a lead from the capital which could have been followed through on a national basis'.³¹

Such criticism led to a conference of ministry personnel which made a number of suggestions for the enhancement of civil defence organisation. The first of these was a recommendation that administrative links be improved, so that the Ministry of Civil Defence was notified immediately a disaster threatened. Any such warnings would be sent at once to the Regional Commissioners and the local authorities, who would inform important personnel in their organisations. Local bodies were advised to declare a state of disaster if the danger was acute.

The review also stated that both regional and national headquarters should become operational at once in the event of a disaster, and recommended improvements to the system for informing the public during such events. Finally, it was announced that the government was considering favourably the earlier requests to subsidize the salaries of local civil defence officers.

THE INANGAHUA EARTHQUAKE AND ITS AFTERMATH

A severe earthquake with its epicenter a few miles north of Inangahua hits the West Coast of the South Island at 5.24 am on 24 May 1968. There was major damage to buildings, roads, railways and telegraphic links in the area.

The earthquake completely isolated the township of Inangahua, where daylight revealed that most houses had been left uninhabitable. Roads were blocked, bridges were impassable, railway tracks twisted out of alignment, and the Inangahua electrical substation was badly damaged. Landslides also caused a great deal of damage along the length of the Buller Gorge, and at one point blocked the river. At Whitecliffs a slip destroyed a farmhouse, killing one occupant and seriously injuring two others (one of whom died as a result of the injuries). Damage was also sustained at Reefton, Westport, Merchison, Greymouth and Hokitika. To varying degrees water and gas supplies were disrupted, roads blocked by slips, and parapets and masonry toppled from buildings.

Although many of the key positions in the Inangahua civil defence organisation were vacant at the time of the earthquake, local social cohesion ensured the rapid recruitment of the necessary staff. Some 300 people were evacuated from the Inangahua disaster area, mostly by helicopter. At Reefton, 25 miles from Inangahua civil defence came into action almost immediately. Under county control, teams of men pulled down unsafe chimneys and repaired damaged roofs. A civil defence reception Centre was set up in a Forest Service hostel. Here evacuees were received and registered, and billets were arranged.

Communication between Reefton and the regional headquarters in Christchurch was not established until 11.30 on the morning of the earthquake. Once the decision to evacuate Inangahua had been taken, the regional Commissioner was asked to organize additional helicopters. Ministry of Works engineers were flown over the lake caused by the Buller River landslide. Three people were killed in a helicopter crash while checking transmission lines.

Both Reefton and Westport made many calls for material assistance, especially for food, water piping and electrical cables. Government departments came to their aid. The Ministry of Works supplied two plumbers and 300 feet of polythene pipe and fittings; the Railways department provided tarpaulins to patch up damaged houses; the Department of industries and the Commerce arranged for the supply of 5000lb of milk products.

News of the earthquake first reached National Civil Defence Headquarters at 9.15am on 24 May. It was decided to operate the communications Centre, where liaison officers from the Air Force, the Broadcasting Corporation and the tourist and Publicity Department joined the Director of Civil Defence.

National headquarters' first important task was to provide a water chlorination plant required in Westport. Headquarters also arranged the transport for a ministerial party to visit the affected region. The party surveyed the disaster area, and then met with representatives of the Ministry of Works and the Earthquake and War Damage Commission, and the civil defence controller, to draw up plans for the repair of damaged dwellings. Returning to Wellington on 27 May, the ministers reported to Cabinet, which set up an inter-departmental committee to ensure efficient use of the resources available. This committee formed subcommittees, one of which concentrated on providing social security payments for earthquake victims, while the other focused on restoration work.

If the *Wahine* storm had highlighted weaknesses in the organisation of civil defence, the aftermath of the Inangahua earthquake greatly improved its image, for in the latter emergency national and local resources had been co-ordinated effectively. This had been made easier by the fact that the earthquake affected a small rural population and inflicted few casualties. The policy of making local authorities responsible for the safety of their communities was vindicated by the time taken for external assistance to arrive; but on the other hand the staffing problems in Inangahua county emphasised how difficult it was to maintain local organisations in a constant state of readiness.

While civil defence operations during the Inangahua earthquake had been carried out successfully, this disaster added impetus to the pressure for legislative reform. Shortly after the termination of the emergency the Regional Commissioners conferred with the Director and the Secretary for Internal Affairs on this subject.

It was generally agreed that the reluctance of the local authorities to declare emergencies during the April storm had resulted from a lack of knowledge of the procedures required under the Act. After a meeting with civil defence controllers in his region, Captain Herrick had concluded that many had not even read the Act.

The conference adopted a proposal by Brigadier Burrows that the word 'disaster' should be replaced in the Act by 'emergency', on the grounds that local authorities would be more willing to declare a state of emergency than a state of disaster. Although under existing legislation a civil defence organisation could be activated without such a declaration, members would not be protected against liability for damage or receive compensation for injury or loss of property. This problem, it was felt, could be overcome by extending existing provisions of the Act.

The other major amendment to the legislation arose from the demand to make civil defence planning by local authorities mandatory. On 31 March 1968 some 30 of the 262 local authorities still had no civil defence plan. All but one of these bodies was in the North Island. Given the renewed concern for civil defence, it seemed an opportune time to force the recalcitrant to accept their responsibilities.

Thus, in October 1968 a Civil Defence Amendment Bill dealing with these matters was introduced into Parliament. The Minister, D.C. Seath, informed the House that the bill aimed

at ensuring that action is taken promptly in an emergency or threatened emergency; that all local authorities have plans for an emergency; and that those serving in the various civil defence organisations are adequately protected against injury and loss during civil defence work and training.

April/May 1968 was a significant watershed in the history of civil defence in New Zealand. The civil defence organisation was put to the test on two occasions, each of which served to point up both deficiencies and strengths. The two emergencies also helped to establish more firmly in the public mind the connection between civil defence and natural disaster, and emphasised New Zealand's vulnerability in this area. This may have had some impact on generally apathetic attitudes toward disaster preparedness.

Brigadier Queree remained as Director until August 1970. The latter part of his term saw both the aftermath of the 1968 emergencies and the planning of new civil defence operational headquarters, to be built in the basement of the Beehive extension to Parliament Buildings. Work on the first stage of the Beehive project began in 1969.

MAJOR-GENERAL ROBERT DAWSON'S DIRECTORSHIP

Major-General Robert Dawson succeeded Brigadier Queree as Director of Civil Defence in August 1970. A graduate of the Royal Military College, Duntroon, he had served in the 2nd NZEF. After the war he held a range of military appointments, including those of a senior planner in the SEATO Military Planning Office in Bangkok and commander of a brigade in Malaysia, before becoming New Zealand's Chief of General Staff in 1967.

During Major-General Dawson's term as Director there were 25 declarations of civil defence emergency, most of which were a result of flooding. The greatest interest was perhaps aroused by the six-day declaration in Parnell in 1973, which was made after drums leaking cotton defoliant were unloaded from the ship *Good Navigator* in Auckland.

The problem came about because of storm which the *Good Navigator* encountered en route from San Francisco to Sydney via Auckland in February 1973. During the storm some of the drums of chemical carried as deck cargo were crushed by a displaced container, and labels warning that their contents were toxic were washed off. When the vessel berthed at Auckland on 26 February, some 25 drums, both damaged and undamaged, were unloaded and taken to two storage areas in Parnell to await disposal.

The following morning it was discovered that the drums were leaking and fumes were affecting people in the vicinity. The fire brigade, police and other emergency services were called in, and a state of civil defence emergency was declared on 28 February. Part of Parnell were evacuated, and several hundred people needed medical treatment.

A Commission of Inquiry subsequently set up to investigate matters arising from the incident found that several factors were important causes of the emergency. These included actions by the captain and ship's San Francisco agents, the lack of appropriate labels on the drums, and the removal of the drums from the wharf contrary to the instructions of the Customs Department and the Department of Health. However, in relation to the management of the emergency, the inquiry found that the reaction to the chemical leak had been effective, and that those involved had played the parts expected of them.

The inquiry also recommended the setting up of a system of co-ordination between emergency services in situation which might not warrant a declaration of civil emergency. Subsequently, emergency services co-ordinating committees were established in the main cities.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s the staffing establishment of the Ministry of Civil Defence grew slowly. The position of Deputy Director provided for in the Civil Defence Act was filled in 1970, and a Training Officer was employed at headquarters. Assistant Regional Commissioners were appointed in Auckland, Palmerston North and Christchurch, as were Regional Training Officers.

Some legislative change was also occurring. The Civil Defence Amendment Act of 1971 made the Secretary for Civil Defence the Chairman of the National Civil Defence Committee in the place of the Director of Civil Defence, who remained a member. Thus the unusual situation whereby the Director reported to a committee which he chaired was corrected. A further amendment to the Civil Defence Act in 1975 made civil defence a mandatory function for regional and united councils, and brought accident compensation provision applying to person engaged in civil defence operations and training into line with the provisions of the Accident Compensation Act 1972.

1976 saw the ministry involved in a new aspect of disaster preparedness. Two nuclear-powered cruisers, the USS *Truxtun* and the USS *Longbeach*, visited New Zealand in August and October respectively, sparking public debate and protest. On each occasion Civil Defence was required to set up and operate a public safety headquarters for the duration of the visit. An operations room at the northern regional headquarters was also staffed for the visits of the submarines USS *Pintado* in 1978 and USS *Haddo* in 1979.

A further development during Major-General Dawson's term was the occupation of the new National Civil Defence Headquarters in the basement of the Beehive on 17 November 1972. Replacing temporary premises beneath Broadcasting House, the new headquarters were designed specifically for the monitoring of events arising from the declaration of an emergency, the co-ordination of resources as required, and in necessary the control of the overall civil defence effort in a major disaster.

Shortly after the opening of the National Civil Defence Headquarters, a change of government occurred and T. M. McGuigan took over as Minister of Civil Defence. In 1974, towards the end of his term as minister, Mr McGuigan published work towards introducing civil defence studies into the secondary schools' curriculum that was being undertaken by the Ministry of Civil Defence. It was to be another three years before this goal was realised.

MAJOR-GENERAL ROBIN HOLLOWAY'S DIRECTORSHIP

Major-General Dawson retired early in 1977, and was succeeded by Major-General Robin Holloway, who was to remain Director until May 1983. Like Major-General Dawson, Major-General Holloway had graduated from the Royal Military College at Duntroon, and came to Civil Defence after a distinguished military career, which included three years as Chief of General Staff from 1973.

Declarations of states of emergency were made on 22 occasions during Major-General Holloway's term as Director. The covered areas ranging from Kerikeri to Stewart Island, and situations as diverse as a landslide and an LPG leak, although the majority were due to flooding.

Although Civil Defence was altered on many occasions over these years (including the re-entry to the earth's atmosphere of 'Skylab' on 11/12 July 1979), the Abbotsford landslip in August 1979 is perhaps the event most clearly remembered by the public. Like the Parnell civil defence emergency, it led to a Commission of Inquiry.

THE ABBOTSFORD LANDSLIP

Abbotsford is a suburb of Green Island, just west of Dunedin city. In June 1979, signs appeared that beneath its streets and houses, the hill had begun to move. Ten weeks later 69 homes wrecked some 640 people had been evacuated.

From early June the local Civil Defence Officer, Ken Fraser, had joined other local authority staff monitoring the situation. In mid July an emergency services co-ordinating committee was convened by the police to organize a response to the developing to the developing problem. At 8.00 am on Monday 6 August the Mayor of Green Island declared a state of local civil defence emergency. Residents in the area of active movement were advised the same day that they should arrange accommodation elsewhere and prepare to leave their houses. Civil defence headquarters were established in Green Island, and an evacuation plan which involved all houses at risk being vacated by the following Sunday was adopted.

Inspection at the site continued, and there were indications that the situation was worsening. Then, at approximately 9.00pm on 8 August, major movement occurred. Seventeen residents initially marooned on a moving block of land were later brought to safety without injury. The main movement was over in less than an hour; in that time a block of 18 hectares in area and with a volume estimated at five million cubic metres had slid some 50 metres.

The report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Abbotsford Landslip produced a number of recommendations for legislative and procedural changes. Among these was a recommendation that the Civil Defence Act should be amended to make it clear that an emergency could be declared where there was potential, as well as actual, loss of life, injury or disaster. It was also recommended that consideration should be given to establishing a fund to aid local authorities faced with a disaster situation. The inquiry considered, however, that civil defence should remain a community rather than a professional responsibility, and particularly on the night of 8 August when a major evacuation was carried out in very difficult circumstances and without warning, was a remarkable achievement and one for which the highest praise is due'.

There were also important legislative changes in relation to civil defence during 1979. Local government re-organisation in that year 'led to a re-appraisal of every aspect of civil defence to assess its capability to deal with major disasters'. Up to this time the co-ordination of civil defence by the ministry had taken place through its three regional divisions. This mechanism was seen increasingly as inefficient, detached as it was from the organisation of local government. In 1979 a Civil Defence Amendment Act made each regional unit of local government a Civil Defence region. The three existing Regional Commissioners were each to be responsible for a number of these regions. Major-General Holloway described the effect of the legislation as 'the most significant changes to civil defence since it was instituted in its present form in 1962'.

The new regions were charged with responsibility for reviewing and approving local civil defence plans prepared by local authorities (a task which had been fulfilled by the ministry's Regional Commissioners). This was to be done within six months of the regions being constituted, and thereafter at three-yearly intervals. It was hoped that this would strengthen civil defence by giving 'a more practical means of coordinating...resources' and thus reinforcing the ideal of community self-help. E.J. Babe was appointed Secretary for Civil Defence in 1982, taking over from J.N.L. Searle, who had been Secretary since 1978.

THE CIVIL DEFENCE ACT 1983

More comprehensive legislative reform was to follow that of 1979. There were several reasons why a new Civil Defence Act was necessary. First, the Civil Defence Act passed in 1962 had been amended six times by 1979. Consolidation was needed to transform the legislation into a coherent and workable whole. Second, a new Act was needed to define more clearly the tasks of the new regional and united councils in relation to civil defence. Finally, it was hoped to take account of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into the Abbotsford Landslip.

The bill introduced into the House in December 1982 set out the respective civil defence: the planning and preparatory steps to be taken before an emergency, and the powers and functions required to deal with an emergency situation.

The specific provisions of the legislation were many. It separated the civil defence powers and functions of regional and united councils from those of territorial authorities, and gave an emphasis to regional civil defence absent from the 1962 Act. The process of authorising a civil defence emergency was simplified, and civil defence responsibilities were extended to a wide range of organisations classified as government agencies, to alleviate some of the burdens which had fallen on local authorities under the 1962 Act. The role of the National Civil Defence Committee was changed from one of the consultancy to one of responsibility for planning and the preparedness of the civil defence organisation. Finally, mention was made for the first time of the recovery period after an emergency. Provisions in the Act enabled the appointment of a Disaster Recovery Co-ordinator, one of whose tasks would be to bridge the gap between the emergency area. The first Disaster Recovery Co-ordinator was appointed soon after the new Act came into effect on 1 December 1983. On 29 January 1984 the Minister of Civil Defence appointed R.T. Baines of Ministry of Works and Development to this position in the aftermath of the Invercargill floods of that month. Some 5,000 people were evacuated during the emergency, and Baines was tasked with ensuring that the needs of the flood victims were met once the state of emergency was lifted.

THE NATIONAL CIVIL DEFENCE SCHOOL

The National Civil Defence School at Marton was opened in 1983. While this marked a new stage in the development of civil defence in this country, it would be incorrect to view it as the beginning of training for civil defence personnel. Training had been of primary importance to the organisation since its inception. But the idea of a national training facility could not become a firm proposal before the late 1970s, given the slowness of the development of civil defence. Up to that time training was undertaken within each zone, with some personnel being sent to the Australian Counter Disaster College at Macedon in Victoria for specialist training. As we have seen, this policy had originated in 1959, when the first Civil Defence Officer in the ministry, C.A Sharp, visited Australia to examine that country's civil defence organisation. His visit led to an arrangement under which many New Zealanders received civil defence instruction at Macedon. From the mid 1960s until the late 1970s about two dozen New Zealanders attended Macedon each year.

The first step in the development of a New Zealand component in civil defence training came in 1976, when agreement was reached on the secondment of a New Zealand civil defence officer to the National Emergency Services College, as the Counter Disaster College was then known. It was difficult to find an able teacher with substantial knowledge of civil defence who could be readily re-employed in New Zealand, and the first such instructor, Ken Baird, did not join the College staff until January 1979. He had previously held a range of civil defence appointments, as well as positions in the Dunedin office of the Institute of Management. After a three-year term, Baird returned to New Zealand, where he was to become Chief Instructor. He was replaced by Ray Black, previously the Assistant Commissioner in the Northern Zone.

The Cabinet Committee on Civil Defence reported in 1980 that the organisation needed to be strengthened in almost every aspect of activities. One of the ways it believed this could be achieved was by the establishment in New Zealand of a training school to prepare those involved in civil defence for their emergency role. A policy statement from Major-General Holloway in 1982 expanded on the reasoning behind this idea.

Deficiencies in the recruitment of volunteers, the doubtful capability of controllers and the indifferent performance of civil defence organisations, can be attributed to the generally poor standard of training. It is essential that a school be established to teach standard and well researched methods of dealing with problems common to most disaster situations.

Major-General Holloway also suggested that there should be an exchange of instructors between Macedon and any school established in New Zealand. While discussions continued, Ray Black stayed at Macedon. Eventually the proposal to exchange instructors was replaced by a suggestion that the New Zealand instructor at Macedon should be offset by the stationing of a representative of the Australian Natural Disasters Organisation in Wellington. In late 1985, however, a decision to terminate the New Zealand instructor's position was reached, and Ray Black returned to New Zealand in January 1986. Thus a reciprocal posting never eventuated.

During 1981 the Police and Civil Defence discussed the possibility of establishing a civil defence school at the new Police College at Porirua. However, when Major-General Holloway outlined Civil Defence's training needs, it became apparent that facilities at the Police College would be unable to cope with them. It was decided to investigate instead the possible use of the Girl Guides National Training and Conference Centre, 'Arahina', in Marton. Central Zone used this venue in the past for some of their courses. The Cabinet Committee on Expenditure authorised funding for the establishment of the National Civil Defence School on this site.

The first course, held from 11 to 14 April 1983, was a conference for ministry staff. It was marked by attendance of the Director designate, Lieutenant-Colonel Wira Gardiner, the Acting Director, Lieutenant-Colonel Bill MacAllum, and the recently retired Director, Major-General Holloway.

The official opening of the National Civil Defence School came on 24 May 1983 during the second course, which was for controllers. The Minister, Allan Highet, spoke of the significance of the year for Civil Defence: it would see both the opening of the school and the passage of the Civil Defence Bill. The establishment of the school enabled the fulfillment of two important objectives: 'the development, testing and proving of standard procedures and the development of a higher degree of professionalism.' His words summarised what civil defence officials hoped would be the outcome of the establishment of a national school. Overall, the intention was that the school provide a uniform training approach suited to New Zealand conditions. It was hoped that this would lead to an increased professionalism in civil defence work which would serve to increase both the numbers and the calibre of volunteers, as well as enhancing public perceptions of civil defence activities. It was also intended that the school should increase co-operation between the community and central, regional and local governments in the operation of civil defence.

Although the introduction of a new Civil Defence Bill and approval of the national school were highlights of Major-General Holloway's directorship, it was also marked by a prolonged struggle for more staff. A new policy proposal which envisaged an increase from 19 (including three part-time) to 41 staff was first submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Civil Defence for proposed national school and a second Assistant Director to supervise planning, policy, research and public information. Additional Assistant Regional Commissioners were sought for Auckland, Rotorua, Palmerston North, Nelson and Dunedin, as were further staff in the areas of training and administration.

There was initially no agreement to fund any positions other than the instructors at the national school. This led a 'cry of pain' sent by John Flavell, Assistant Director of Civil Defence, to his Deputy Secretary on 31 January 1983.

Today is the 76th working day in which I have no Director here; no Assistant Secretary is available until after the Royal Visit; the National Civil Defence School is to open 18 April 1983; the new civil film goes into location for the main filming by National Film Unit for 11 days from 20 February-1 should be present; I am to be Chairman of a Volcanic Hazards Seminar at Taupo 16-18 February; all civil defence training handbooks are being reviewed by working parties under my supervision before April 1983; the financial system in the department is being completely revised as soon as possible; no monthly activity reports have been done since September 1982; the Civil Defence Act 1983 is coming; the Official Information Act must be studied by me this week; the Tsunami Warning System changes completely on 1 March 1983 and we must revise our whole system.... An urgent requests is made for staff to assist.

In his own comments to the Deputy Secretary, the Director supported his subordinate:

I share Mr Flavell's concern and was surprised to learn that you were unaware that my extension of service runs out in a little over three weeks time. I have discussed the various matters raised by Mr Flavell and have commented below.

For some years I have pointed out the situation that would arise if the running of this office devolved upon a single Asst Director without a planning staff. I left with you a copy of my minute CD 140/0 dated 1 December 1982 which again outlined the parlous state of planning. So far I have had no invitation to discuss the matter further.

This final shot from the retiring Director may have struck home, because authority was given for the appointment of a planning staff of two. These positions were filled later in 1983. Although Major-General Holloway could achieve only an increase of five rather than the 22 sought, he left a firm base on which Directors could build.

WIRA GARDINER'S DIRECTORSHIP

Following Major-General Holloway's retirement at the end of February 1983, Lieutenant-Colonel McAllum acted as Director until May 1983. The new Director, Lieutenant-Colonel Wira Gardiner, continued the tradition of military experience in Civil Defence. A graduate of the Royal Military College in Duntroon, he held a wide range of posts and served in South Vietnam, Malaysia and Singapore during his 20 years in the army. He had also obtained an MA History from the University of London in 1980.

One of the new Director's first tasks was to secure 'Arahina' as a long-term site for the National School. In May 1983 the New Zealand Police reopened negotiations on the possible use of the Police College. Wira Gardiner continued discussions with the Police, and held a trial seminar at the Police College in March 1984. While praising the College's 'excellent' facilities, he recommended that Civil Defence make a commitment to use 'Arahina' for a defined period, since this location was both cheaper and provided a better atmosphere. This arrangements, he suggested, would allow time for the school 'to develop and gain experience and maturity'. After negotiations, a five-year tenancy agreement was signed by Civil Defence and the Girl Guides Association in 1985.

Wira Gardiner's term as Director saw a considerable lift in operational readiness as well as a continuing fight for more staff and resources. The appointment of George Preddey as Assistant Director in charge of research and planning underlined the ministry's concern for information and publicity. In July 1983 the first issue of *Tephra*, the ministry's newsletter, was circulated to civil defence officers, local government administrators and other interested people. It was hoped that *Tephra* would facilitate improved communication between civil defence officers, and publicise ideas and events related to civil defence.

All the civil defence emergencies declared during Wira Gardiner's directorship resulted from flooding. The first were Marlborough floods of July and October 1983. These emergencies, which were declared following serious flooding of the Wairau River, were Wira Gardiner's first opportunities to assess the civil defence system. After the July floods he criticised a lack of information from the emergency area. Following the October floods, he reported to the minister as follows:

I carried out a partial activation of the National HQ to monitor the situation and to test the effectiveness of the headquarters to receive sufficient information from the disaster area.

The activation confirmed my view that it is timely to conduct a major exercise to test the full operation of the National HQ. You will know that it is now seven years since such an exercise was conducted. As I indicated in an earlier report, it is my intention, with the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Civil Defence, to conduct a major in mid-1984.

In spite of the tardiness of the local civil defence authorities to surrender information, the National HQ was able to build up a reasonable picture of the situation. It would seem to me that there is a requirement for a major shift in civil defence philosophy. Far too many people involved with civil defence are reactive or force. An anticipatory philosophy; acquisitively seeking solutions is, in my view, a more appropriate stance.

The Southland emergency of 27 January to 15 February 1984 was at that time probably the country's most disruptive, and certainly most expensive, flood. More than 1,000 houses were inundated in Invercargill and the towns of Otautau and Tuatapere. It was necessary to evacuate some 5,000 people, half of whom required temporary housing. This emergency was marked by the fortnight-long activation of Headquarters and, as we have seen, by the first appointment of a Disaster Recovery Co-ordinator.

There was also serious flooding at Thames in February 1985 and at Gisborne in July of the same year. Heavy rainfall, which struck the Auckland, Waikato and Coromandel areas, caused the Thames emergency. The subsequent flooding was not serious enough in the Auckland or Waikato regions to warrant civil defence measures, and was handled by the emergency services. But in the Thames/Coromandel district severe flash floods caused four deaths, serious property damage, and the declaration of a state of civil defence emergency, at first in the borough of Thames and later over the whole Thames Valley region. Three people from the same family were killed in Te Aroha when floodwaters inundated their home. At Waiomu, on the coast north of Thames, an elderly woman died when a flash flood destroyed her house.

In Gisborne, heavy rain and flooding began on 25 July and a state of emergency was declared next morning. Although no casualties were reported, some 100 people had to be evacuated from their homes. Electricity, gas, telephone and sewerage systems were disrupted, and about 65 homes needed civil defence assistance with cleaning up. Rural areas were badly hit, and much damage was done to fences, farm buildings and roads. More than 100 houses in Cook county suffered serious flood damage, and about 50,000 hectares of rural land were affected.

Wira Gardiner had made a bid for increased staffing in August 1984, when he requested 12 new appointments: three at National Headquarters, including a Deputy Director, and nine in the regions,

including two Assistant Commissioners for the Northern and Southern Zones and one for the Central Zone. The Director also sought to upgrade four existing staff positions, purchase extra vehicles and equipment, and increase overseas visits and training.

A report from the State Services Commission appears to have been decisive in determining the response of the Cabinet External Relations and Security Committee. This report, which was not produced until 2 April 1985, recommended an increase of seven staff, including a Civil Defence Commissioner (rather than a Deputy Director) at National Headquarters, and six Assistant Commissioners or Advisory Officers. The SSC report did not recommend any more ancillary staff. These new appointments brought the establishment of the ministry to 32.

A major innovation of the Gardiner years was the creation of Commissioner's Support Teams. After negotiation with local and regional civil defence organisations, it was agreed that selected experienced civil defence officers could be moved into an emergency area to assist the controller, or carry out other tasks, under the direction and organisation of the Civil Defence Commissioner.

Upon becoming Director in 1983, Wira Gardiner had called for a greater central government commitment to the organisation on both the financial and the political level. Similarly, he was distressed at the 'patchy' commitment in local government circles. In some places civil defence was treated seriously, but in other areas it was 'hidden somewhere in "other business" on agendas and accorded least priority in county and municipal affairs....' Because of this, 'people involved in civil defence had low esteem and had difficulty promoting their image'.

Wira Gardiner's dissatisfaction with this situation culminated in his resignation with effect from the end of July 1985. Newspaper reports detailed his 'frustration's the lack of political commitment to, or support for, civil defence.

The ministry has a vote of just on \$2 million and a staff of 25, and my people are trying to do a job, under the terms and requirements of an act, which is patently impossible to do.

Gardiner summarised his years as Director in his final editorial in *Tephra*:

As I look back over the years of frenetic activity as Director of Civil Defence, my view is clouded somewhat by the lack of progress in some areas. You are all aware of my public statements on the state of civil defence and the need for a greater commitment of political will at both local and central government levels.

However, he also drew attention to the progress that was being made, mentioning specifically the improving calibre of civil defence personnel and their efforts to become more informed on civil defence matters, notably through the National Civil Defence School.

EDWARD LATTER'S DIRECTORSHIP

Wira Gardiner's successor as Director of Civil Defence was Edward Latter, a farmer and part-time soldier who had become a Brigadier with his appointment as Advisor on Territorial Army matters to the Chief of the General Staff (by coincidence his Chief of General Staff in 1973-4 was Major-General Holloway). In 1975 he was elected as the MP for Marlborough, but he retired after one term in the House. In 1980 he became New Zealand's High Commissioner in Canada and to the Caribbean. He became the Director of Civil Defence on 1 August 1985.

This new appointment marked a change in emphasis for the organisation. Whereas Gardiner had stressed the importance of an operationally ready force, Latter saw the function of Civil Defence differently:

Civil defence is an activity starting with yourself, looking after yourself in your home, then looking after your family, the people next door, then others up the street. The professionals, fire, police, welfare, military are the players who supply the answers for you to bring it together.

After the negative publicity of the previous few months, Latter chose to emphasise the positive aspects of the organisation. Upon assuming the position, he had several favourable impressions. Overall, he found Civil Defence to be 'in much better heart than media reports indicated', and that 'staff morale was good despite shortages' in some areas. He also believed there was 'a great deal of latent support in the community' which civil defence must find ways of tapping. However, there were also things he hoped to improve during his time as Director. Most important was the lack of any plan to attack public apathy regarding civil defence through a publicity campaign, and the fact that 'full use was not being made of other possible teaching agencies - in particular schools and employers.' Finally, planning was not sufficiently advanced. There was 'little or no progress . . . being made with National Plans'.

The new direction was reinforced by the Minister of Civil Defence, Peter Tapsell. Speaking to participants at a National Civil Defence School course, Mr Tapsell said that :

civil defence public relations efforts should be directed more towards educating people about individual responsibility and about making their own preparations, at home, to cope during emergencies.

We need too improve family understanding of the importance of providing for emergencies. . . . From there, it's a short step to improving community civil defence.

Public apathy was the primary target of the new Director. In his first report to the National Civil Defence Committee, Edward Latter identified this as being at 'the base of all problems relating to lack of motivation or funding at local authority level', and advocated a strong approach.

It can only be altered by attack. We must sell ourselves. I believe that we must work at two captive audiences - school children and employees in the workplace. . . . If we achieve success in these areas we will obtain a feedback into most families in the country.

The ministry devised a three-pronged approach to this problem. The first area targeted was the education system. It was realised that schools would need help with teaching resources if civil defence issues were to be successfully included in the curriculum. To achieve this, civil defence kits were distributed to primary and intermediate schools and later upgraded for secondary schools. Originally conceived by the Wellington Regional civil defence organisation, the kits were amended after advice from the Education Department. More than 2,000 kits were issued in 1987, along with a large number of classroom safety posters. The purpose of the new classroom resources was to 'increase children's awareness of civil defence, and hopefully improve their chances of surviving a major disaster. Through them, we can perhaps educate the parents'.

The second major area targeted was the household. More money was needed to cater adequately for this sector, and private sponsorship was sought. The provision of sponsorship by the AMP Society permitted a significant increase in publicity and information dissemination, utilising radio, television and newspapers. The television advertisements included appearances of prominent citizens led by the Minister of Civil Defence and aimed at teaching simple survival skills. Safety posters and pamphlets were also revised and made available to the public. In 1988, a major publicity effort was mounted through the AMP Roadshow. The Roadshow consisted of a truck and trailer unit, accompanied by an earthquake simulator on a separate trailer. Those attending the Roadshow could read about issues related to civil defence and ways in which they could prepare themselves for an emergency. Through the use of the earthquake simulator they could also experience at first hand the potential effects of such an emergency. The display visited more than 50 New Zealand towns, and was seen by large numbers of people.

The third main focus of attention was the workplace. With the co-operation of the State Services Commission, instructions were issued regarding equipment needed to cope with emergencies. These instructions also set out the responsibilities of management in this area, and guidelines for staff. During 1987 some 18,000 booklets were issued to departments under SSC control. Later they were also supplied to other organisations covered by the Civil Defence Act, and to private sector employers. Civil defence in the private sector was given a considerable boost in March 1988, with the launching of 'Project P', which was initiated by the New Zealand Chambers of Commerce with the assistance of the ministry. It was intended to increase the preparedness for an emergency of private sector employers.

The approach taken by the Ministry of Civil Defence in the late 1980s thus showed a considerable commitment to public awareness. However, in his report to the National Civil Defence Committee in December 1989, Edward Latter acknowledged that there was still much to be done, and called for 'a re-assessment of the target areas selected in 1986'. The Director also expressed concern that, in the event of a national civil defence emergency, a 'lack of preparedness, lack of disaster management experience and lack of co-operative system' would become apparent at the chief executive level of government departments, state-owned enterprises and major private sector businesses. He outlined a national exercise to be held in March 1991 to tackle this problem.

When Edward Latter became Director, no major exercises had been held since 1976. Wira Gardiner's recommendation that one be conducted in mid-1984 had not been followed up because of staff shortages. The new Director planned for a major exercise each year and a national exercise every three years. This programme produced in mid 1987 'Ru Whenua', a national exercise set against a scenario of a major earthquake in the Wellington area, in 1988 'Akarana', an exercise with high public awareness content based on an assumption that a volcanic eruption in Auckland was imminent; and in 1989 'Pegasus', an exercise for the Canterbury region based on the premise of a major movement along the alpine fault. 'Pegasus' incorporated the first ever National Rescue Competitions.

The years 1985 to 1990 saw considerable change in the ministry's activities, partly due to outside influences. The transformation of government departments into state-owned enterprises produced serious problems for the ministry. Whereas all departments of state were subject to the Civil Defence Act and responsible for meeting their own costs during a state of emergency, the SOEs had no such responsibilities. The ministry's wish for SOEs to be classed as 'organisations' in terms of the Act was not accepted by Cabinet, but there was a compromise whereby SOEs agreed to carry out their normal corporate functions free of charge during any emergency, and to provide other services on a contractual basis.

The massive re-organisation of local government in 1989 resulted in some greatly enlarged districts and regions. To assist regional co-ordination and local control, amendments to the Civil Defence Act 1983 were sought. The Civil Defence Amendment Act 1989 granted regions the power to contract out civil defence services across boundaries, and to appoint sub-regional controllers. Districts were given authority to appoint local co-ordinators.

The system of conferences for civil defence officers, first started by the Regional Commissioners in the 1960s, was formalised. Each Civil Defence Commissioner now convenes two conferences annually. These conferences provide civil defence officers with an explicit way of contributing to the development of training doctrines. Civil Defence Commissioners attend bi-monthly conferences convened by the Director, thus fulfilling a corporate management function. From 1988 the ministry has produced an annual strategic plan.

A National Resource Centre comprising a library of research and training materials has been established in Palmerston North. This facility is used by ministry staff but is also available free of charge to support regional and local civil defence. The ministry has moved towards the professional production of videos and other training and publicity resources, and in 1990 produced its first bilingual instructional material. In 1989 ministry staff were introduced to computers.

The period 1985-90 also saw several changes in office accommodation. In June 1985 head office in Wellington moved from the Bowen State Building to the State Insurance Building. In April 1988 the Northern Zone shifted its headquarters from Vincent Street in Auckland to the Bledisloe Building. The Central Zone headquarters was due to move from Princess House to new purpose-built accommodation in Cuba Street, Palmerston North in July 1990.

Contacts with overseas organisations have developed remarkably since 1985. There have been visits to, or visitors received from, civil defence bodies in the following countries: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Singapore, Thailand, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Zimbabwe, as well as the United Nations.

National planning reached a new level over these years. The national civil defence plan now consists of 12 parts, each related to a different aspect of the organisation. Each year four of these parts are updated, and thus the entire plan is revised every three years. The issuing to all regional and local civil defence organisations of a planning guide has helped the preparation of plans at those levels.

Another important development has been a closer relationship between the scientific community and the Ministry of Civil Defence, principally through the formation of a committee to advise the Director on scientific matters. The Scientific Advisory Committee, formed in 1989, comprises representatives of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, various universities, government departments and the Ministry of Civil Defence. Their task is to help with planning and disaster management and, during civil defence emergencies, to provide advisers with expertise in dealing with particular hazards.

Most civil defence emergencies during Edward Latter's directorship, such as those at Nelson and in Aorangi in 1986, and at Palmerston North and Greymouth in 1988, have been due to flooding. However, this period has also seen the first declaration of emergency resulting from an earthquake for 18 years.

THE BAY OF PLENTY EARTHQUAKE AND CYCLONE BOLA

In the early afternoon of 2 March 1987 a major earthquake centred just north of the town of Edgecumbe struck the Bay of Plenty area. It was the largest quake to hit the region for 120 years. Despite its severity (6.3 on the Richter scale) there were no fatal injuries, although one person died of a heart attack which may have been associated with the quake. Some 25 people needed treatment for serious injuries or medical emergencies.

The civil defence response was rapid. After the main shock, information relayed via the civil defence communications network led to the activation of the Regional Civil Defence Headquarters in Rotorua, the Northern Zone Headquarters in Auckland and the National Headquarters at the Beehive in Wellington. By 3.00pm it was feared that the Matahina Dam was seriously damaged, and the tiny settlement of Te Mahoe was evacuated because of the threat of the dam failing. In Whakatane most essential services had been disrupted, while in Kawerau buildings had been damaged and plant had been destroyed at the nearby Tasman Paper Mill. Several highways were impassable and many bridges were damaged. As a result of the reports of widespread damage a state of civil defence emergency was declared over the entire Bay of Plenty region. The Minister and the Director of Civil Defence travelled to Whakatane that day to survey the situation.

The first priorities for civil defence were to locate all the people in the area and begin assessing the damage caused by the quake. These tasks were made more difficult by continuing tremors and deteriorating weather. The exercise of accounting for people was a major one; there were initially several reports of deaths. Large numbers of people had evacuated themselves to areas such as the Onepu Marae, where at one stage nearly 5,000 people were camping.

Whakatane and Kawerau were able to return to something approaching normality within two days after the main earthquake. However, in Edgecumbe and Te Teko, where damage had been more severe, the recovery period was much longer. Major problems included a lack of water, severe damage to the sewerage system and breakdowns in the electricity supply. In addition, many houses had suffered significant damage. On 5 March, Muir Coup of the Ministry of Works was appointed as the Disaster Recovery Co-ordinator.

The Bay of Plenty earthquake provided a real test for the civil defence system.

As in any emergency, not everything worked perfectly. Different parts of the civil defence system were not in as high a state of readiness as they could have been. Some communities near the centre of the earthquake undoubtedly had their ability to respond slowed by the shock of the earthquake. It is, nevertheless, a tribute to the people of the area that they were able to get on top of the earthquake so quickly and with the minimum of outside assistance.

Almost exactly a year later, in March 1988, civil defence organisations were tested again. This time the emergency was due to the effects of Cyclone Bola. The strong winds and heavy rain associated with the cyclone were felt in many parts of the country, but particularly in eastern areas of the North Island. Thus the geographical spread of declarations was wider than for any previous emergency. Emergencies were declared in Taranaki, East Cape, Thames Valley, Hawke's Bay and north Kaipara. Most of the damage was the result of flooding or strong winds, but in the East Cape region damage was also experienced from landslips which considerably affected roads and farmland. Problems resulting from the cyclone were severe enough here for a Disaster Recovery Co-ordinator to be appointed. Within the organisation there was a positive response to its performance in the emergency. 'Overall the civil defence system performed very well indeed. There appears to have been little or no criticism. There was good media support and involvement'.

These emergencies, along with several others over the past few years, have been important both for the 'hands on' experience they have given civil defence officials and for the effect they have had on public perceptions of the organisation. While the latter are difficult to assess, the successful response to emergencies such as the Bay of Plenty earthquake and Cyclone Bola has meant that the public are more aware of the role of civil defence in the community and how it is carried out.

INTO THE NINETIES

February 1990 saw the appointment of Margaret Austin as New Zealand's first female Minister of Civil Defence. As she had been a volunteer within Christchurch civil defence organisation before becoming a member of Parliament, Margaret Austin's promotion to Cabinet was most beneficial to civil defence.

At the end of the period covered by this history, Peter Boag retired as Secretary for Civil Defence and was replaced by Perry Cameron.

CONCLUSION

The development of civil defence in New Zealand from the early attempts to respond to natural emergencies has been considerable. Since the 1930s it has grown from an idea on paper to a sizeable organisation involving large numbers of people. However, it is not just the size of the ministry that has changed. The entire emphasis of civil defence is now considerably different from that in earlier years. Initially, civil defence work was associated with the Second World War, while during the first few years of the ministry there was considerable debate regarding its role and likely effectiveness in the event of a nuclear attack. By the mid 1960s, however, the ministry had developed its present emphasis on preparation for, and recovery from, natural emergencies. Since that time the concerns of the organisation have been many.

One major issue, which led to the opening of the National Civil Defence School in 1983, has been the training of staff and volunteers. By July 1990 the school had run 114 courses and trained more than 7,000 students. The ministry has also been involved with the preparation and maintenance of an adequate legislative framework for its work. These efforts culminated in 1983 with the passage of the revised Civil Defence Act. A related issue has been the re-organisation of local government. The ministry has been concerned with the effect on its work of changing structures, particularly with respect to regional civil defence plans. Finally, Civil Defence can be seen to have developed a primary focus on the preparedness of the individual to face natural emergencies. A great deal of emphasis has been placed on this area over the last few years. Recent surveys indicating that fewer than half of all Wellington households maintain survival kits or have a household plan suggest that many have not heeded the civil defence message.

In recent years the ministry has developed a more specifically local orientation. Although it was initially based on overseas models, particularly the British one, the Ministry of Civil Defence is today very much a New Zealand organisation. This can be seen particularly in the work of the National Civil Defence School, which has developed training methods for local conditions. While the ministry maintains links with other similar overseas organisations, it is set firmly in a New Zealand context.

Many New Zealanders remain unaware of the nature and extent of the work of the Ministry of Civil Defence, associating it only with the immediate aftermath of a natural emergency. The contemporary challenge for the ministry is to widen public understanding of its work and its importance, so that the impact of future earthquakes, floods and other natural emergencies is lessened.

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A NOTE ON SOURCES

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The major source for the first half of this publication was Martin Rawlinson's MA thesis, 'Organisation for Disaster; The Development of Civil Defence in New Zealand 1959-1970' (University of Canterbury, 1971). This was supplemented for the war years by Nancy Taylor, *The Home Front* (Wellington, 1986).

Material for the period since 1970 was derived principally from interviews with retired Civil Defence personnel, head office files, and the annual reports of the Department of Internal Affairs printed in the *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*. For the years since 1983 the Civil Defence publication, *Tephra*, and the Director's reports to the National Civil Defence Committee were useful. The booklet *National Civil Defence School: The Formative Years* (Wellington, 1988) provided information about the school.

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