

Defence under attack

BY MARGARET VAUGHAN 23/11/83

THE "P" is a growing revolt among island's local authorities against the Government's new civil defence regulations. Both Labour and Conservative councils have united in fierce criticism of the measures. They are impossible to implement, they claim.

The regulations include forcing councils to plan for the evacuation of civilians in the event of nuclear attack, providing fall-out shelters for the public and conscripting council staff to take part in training exercises. They are designed to bring to heel the rebel councils which forced the cancellation last September of the Hard Rock exercise.

After dropping the war game plan when the majority of Labour-controlled councils refused to participate the Government announced its intention of tightening regulations and compelling local authorities to plan for and take part in civil defence measures.

The regulations will be laid before Parliament next month, by which time all councils in Scotland will have made observations on them.

The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities' Labour-dominated policy committee last week rejected a draft of the new rules as "hypocritical". A defeated amendment by the Conservative group called for central government to take responsibility for civil defence.

In Conservative-controlled Grampian Region convener John Sorrie launched a scathing attack on the plans: "We believe precautions should be coming from central government rather than foisting responsibility on to local authorities," he said.

Another convener Dr William Fitzgerald said that while the

council supported the Government in principle problems were anticipated in persuading staff to train for civil defence.

Central Region has expressed its total opposition to the proposals.

In Lothian, the council's emergency planning officer, Colonel Ian Cameron, last week told a meeting that, for the first time, reference was being made by the Government to the transfer of population. He said: "Evacuation I can only imagine is a contingency regional. Strathclyde Regional Council's deputy leader Charles Gray said: "There is no way we will be providing public defence shelters. The Government plans to make £2.3m available to Scottish local authorities this year for civil defence."

Trench war stepped up on nuclear critics

By Paul Brown 31/11/84

The Home Office is making a new attempt to force local authorities to prepare plans for civil defence. It has appointed a Civil Defence Adviser who will have the task of bringing recalcitrant authorities into line.

The new appointment — a £20,000-a-year post — has gone to Mr Eric Alley, emergency planning officer of Humberside County Council. For months the Government has been preparing to tackle the 150 or so local authorities which have declared themselves nuclear free zones and see no point in preparing for a nuclear war.

The circular advising councils of the new appointment comes at the end of the parliamentary session, which will give local authorities the summer to think over their position.

The Government is also clearly trying to defuse the reaction the new move is bound to have.

In another unusual step the Home Office has not issued the press with copies of the circular. For guidance, the Home Office says local authorities should make plans for civil defence which are "flexible enough to deal with problems arising in a period of international tension or during conventional war, as well as in the remote event of a nuclear attack."

The nuclear free local authorities, however, will see this as a back door way of getting them to appoint the emergency committees and find the dangers which the Government wants in the event of a nuclear attack.

Plans for government at regional level when central government breaks down and war emergency planning for the fire brigade are the subject of two more circulars covering aspects of the same ground. The Fire Brigades Union has already objected in principle to the idea.

In a Commons written reply, Mr Leon Brittan the Home Secretary has announced the appointment of Brigadier John Bryan Bettridge, as principal of the Civil Defence College at Easingwold. He is currently Commandant of the Royal School of Artillery, Larkhill.

Stone nuclear victims, says doctor

NEWS

they might pollute water supplies of cause disease. Dr Williams dismisses suggestions that he has a black sense of humour by saying: "The Government does not think it has been guilty of black humour when it recommends that people should learn to treat themselves with herbal remedies after a nuclear attack."

He had produced the leaflet in response to a Home Office request to doctors to draw up contingency plans for dealing with the aftermath of a nuclear attack.

Another of his suggestions is that those about to die should not do so where patients to whom he had given the leaflets so far had felt offended or upset, and the universal reaction had been one of saying thank you.

"Another retired, but formerly extremely senior member of the armed forces, said he had already given clear instructions to his family on how they were to kill themselves in none of the 200 to 300 Dr Williams, 44, said

people dying in pain is a crack on the head with a large stone. Dr Williams said: "When a nuclear attack takes place there will be large numbers of people suffering from burns, compound fractures, crush injuries and radiation sickness who will be in a lot of pain, very shocked, and very ill."

Dr Barney Williams has produced a controversial plan for survival which he has been handing to patients at his surgery in Chippenham, Wiltshire. Survivors are advised that the best treatment for

ing that victims of a nuclear attack should be stoned to death to put them out of their misery.

83/8/3