

of interest to WOMEN

It Provides Leadership:

Civil Defence Defended By Two Women's Groups

Two of Montreal's most influential women's groups came out strongly yesterday for the maintenance of the city's Civil Defence Organization. The city executive committee's decision to withdraw financial support from the organization, announced this weekend, has aroused controversy throughout the city.

"Our civil defence organization may not be adequate, but that's no reason why we should have nothing at all," Miss Jean Bovey, president of the Women's Voluntary Services, said.

"The money that has been spent on civil defence has been used to provide communications and leadership in the event of an

emergency," said Mrs. H. S. Morton, chairman of civil defence for both the W.V.S. and the Montreal Council of Women. "Trained leadership is invaluable in an emergency."

Views Expressed

Miss Bovey and Mrs. Morton yesterday expressed their views in a letter to Mayor Drapeau.

Civil defence has proved its value time and again in natural disasters, they said. "It is by no means true that it is useful only in war. If there had been a civil defence organization in Toronto when Hurricane Hazel struck, lives would have been saved."

The Montreal organization has been barely started, they explained. Its main contribution will be in the provision of trained leadership in the case

of disaster, "an essential to prevent the population from becoming prey to hopeless panic." Arrangements have been made to set up first aid stations with St. John Ambulance Brigade and a welfare project is under discussion with the Red Cross. A total of 43 sirens have been installed in the city, although they have not as yet been tested.

Montreal's civil defence has been costing the city \$100,000 a year, which was described by civic officials as "money down the drain" as it was said to be totally inadequate to provide for the real needs of civil defence.

Choice Needed

Miss Bovey and Mrs. Morton agreed that a choice must be made as to how much should be spent on civil defence. However, they pointed out, a certain sum of money has already been spent, "and if everything is discontinued most of that money will have been wasted. The main control centre, already equipped and opened a year ago, should not be allowed to go to waste, nor the sirens."

Finally, they continued, "all those volunteers who have given of their time and effort to train themselves to help their neighbors in any type of emergency should not be overlooked and their readiness nullified by removal of the necessary direction."

Civil defence has proven that it is, if anything, more valuable in peace than in war, Mrs. Morton said. Its worth has been demonstrated in the United States and Europe, where it has been well organized. This effectiveness has been enhanced by liaison between civil defence organizations in different cities; when disaster strikes in one, rescue teams from the other are flown in.

Concluded Miss Bovey: "It seems to me that this decision of the city's was sprung quickly; it can't have been given much thought. It needs careful consideration."