

Supply—Trade and Commerce

here to exhibit their wares, to find out what the market was in Canada for their goods. I should like to hear what the minister has to say about the possibility of this international trade fair being continued, and whether he has definitely decided to discontinue it. If so, will he give us the reasons for so doing.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Mr. Chairman, I gave a complete statement on the subject on Wednesday, June 8, at page 4530 of *Hansard*. Briefly, we felt that the trade fair has served its purpose. It was instituted immediately after the war to offer an opportunity for firms in other countries such as England, France and Belgium to establish their goods in the Canadian market, and also to examine the business opportunities in Canada.

I think the fair was a success from the start, though there was one year when there seemed to be some slipping away. I believe last year was also a successful year. I attended it. I think it was very well conducted; but it was quite obvious that some of the customers who had made the fair successful at first were no longer with us. The British exhibit was much smaller. There were a greater number of prestige exhibits from such countries as Czechoslovakia and other European countries that were never big traders in this market. There was also a falling off in the exhibits by Canadian firms.

I may say that some effort was exerted to get the larger Canadian firms to exhibit. I felt many of them were doing it reluctantly. It is the view of my officers, in which I concur, that it is better to wind up the fair when it is a success than carry it on for a year or two and wind it up as a failure. That is the decision that has been taken, and that decision cannot be changed. There is an item of \$100,000 to clean up the accounts of the fair, and that will be the last appearance of any item for the international trade fair.

Mr. Hamilton (York West): Mr. Chairman, I think there have been statements made about placing the facilities which have been accumulated by the government in connection with the fair at the disposal of either the municipality of metropolitan Toronto or the provincial government. I wonder if the minister might confirm that some such arrangement as that might be made, if either of those two authorities wished to carry on this fair.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Yes, I made that offer in the house. If either authority wishes to carry it on we shall be glad to turn the appurtenances over to them.

Mr. Hamilton (York West): Would the minister answer just one more question. Did he

[Mr. Hees.]

receive any representations by any groups of people at all to have the fair discontinued?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): No, there were no formal representations. I talked with a number of individuals, and my officers did the same. A thorough survey was made of Canadian business before we reached the decision. The decision was arrived at as a result of conferences with a great number of individuals. We have had no official representations from any organized body.

Mr. Hamilton (York West): In connection with the minister's undertaking about the physical facilities, is there a chance that the services of some of the people who have been formerly employed full time on this project may be made available to the other authorities who might carry this on, or will they be discontinued completely by the dominion government?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): No, the senior officers who operated the trade fair are officers of the government in the exhibitions branch. Their services will be used in trade fairs elsewhere, perhaps some at the world's fair at Brussels and others at various exhibitions throughout the world.

Mr. Hamilton (York West): Would their technical assistance still be available to either the province or the municipality that is prepared to carry on?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): I would not like to make any decision on a question of that sort. If a specific case were put up we would try to be helpful. I would not like to promise at this time any particular help.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): Mr. Chairman, would the minister tell us this? Are the items in the estimates for 1955-56 in respect of the trade fair just completed, which ran from the end of May to the 10th of June; or are they in respect of a trade fair which might have been contemplated at the time of the preparation of the estimates, to be held in 1956?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): These items cover everything that takes place in the current fiscal year, from the 1st of April this year to 31st of March next year. As the fair was held in that period, the cost of the fair is probably included.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): The point I have in mind is that perhaps the minister might want to give some consideration to some reduction in certain of these amounts. I am not attempting to argue here that I am at all pleased to see the end of the Canadian international trade fair, because I am not. If the government, as the minister