

Refitting of HMCS "Bonaventure"

The motion deals with the refitting of the H.M.C.S. *Bonaventure* which normally would have cost \$5 or \$6 million but which has cost \$17 million to the treasury. This is why the parliamentary committee carried out an investigation on these expenses which are but a pure and simple squandering of public monies.

When this matter was considered by the parliamentary committee, a check was made of the works carried out on the *Bonaventure*, as evidenced by the proceedings of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts No. 20, chaired by the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Hales).

In October 1966, 52 chairs were removed from the deck of the ship and transported to the naval overseeing store for survey. A little further in the report we can see pictures of those 52 chairs. They are arm-chairs which look very much like airplanes seats.

• (5:00 p.m.)

I quote from the Minutes of Proceedings of the committee:

On completion of repairs or renewals, chairs are to be transported from store to ship and resecured to deck in briefing room.

The price quoted to perform the work of this serial number was 1,040 man-hours at \$3.95 an hour with a labour charge of \$60. plus a 7½ per cent mark-up on materials used, for a total of \$4,173.

In the early stages of our investigation prior to visiting H.M.C.S. *Bonaventure* in Halifax, the Committee was led to believe that the job description contained on this serial number was, in fact, an accurate description of the work to be done.

The justification for this large expenditure of funds was, according to testimony, due to the fact that the chairs were bolted to an inclining floor.

When the *Bonaventure* was visited, the members of the committee—

—found that this previous testimony was totally inaccurate and grossly misleading. In fact, the chairs were not bolted to the floor, and were neither unduly heavy or awkward. Further evidence on board the ship indicated that there was a short route to the deck.

As I said a while ago, certain photos were published, as well as fairly accurate estimates of the cost of repairs to that famous ship.

For instance, renewal of two drawer pulls on a wood secretary cost \$123.10. The cost of renewal of two hinges on the drop-leaf of the wood secretary—a small board which is dropped to make a small secretary—amounted to \$186.60. Hinges are expensive these days! Refinishing the drop-leaf of the same secretary cost \$530. It therefore cost \$839.70 to repair a nice little wood secretary. It must have been some beauty, Mr. Speaker.

And the government complains about inflation! This is a shameless waste of public funds.

\$96.50 were spent to renew the mirror of a small medicine cabinet, of which we have a photo and which we see in very ordinary houses. To renew a door-knob cost \$61.90. The total cost of repairs amounted to \$258.20. Such waste is unbelievable.

The lock of a wardrobe was repaired; material cost \$6 and labour, 28 man-hours, \$146.80.

A berth drawer was also repaired—a bed with a drawer underneath it, as we have often seen. Here are the details of the repairs: one missing drawer to be replaced, \$300.40; two drawers to be refinished, \$346.40; one drawer handle to be renewed, \$61.90. The total cost amounted to \$708.70.

The committee found out all these things while visiting the *Bonaventure*. Repairs cost \$17 million and I believe the government is willing to sell it for \$250,000. And even at that, a buyer has yet to be found!

The expenditures amounted to \$17 million, which means the Canadian people were robbed of at least \$8 or \$10 million. And I must say it is not only in the Defence Production Department that such things happen, but in other departments as well.

Let us take for instance the Department of National Defence. A few years ago, it was discovered that our servicemen had a supply of fatigue clothes for 1,000 years to come, paid by the Department of National Defence and the Defence Production Department.

Mr. Speaker, at that time the Auditor General of Canada had warned the government against such extravagance, but the government never paid heed to those warnings. Why? Because by negotiating such purchases and awarding repair contracts, the government indulged in patronage in order to help friends not only of this government but also of previous governments, of 1965, 1963 and 1962. Indeed such patronage existed when I first came here, namely from 1946 to 1949.

No wonder people are seen to stick to the government and to act as its propagandists or publicists. Such things went on in the two political parties which succeeded each other in power since Confederation.

In the broadcasting field for instance, the Auditor General did not beat about the bush when it came to making recommendations to the government. The Glassco Commission did exactly the same thing. For instance, in para-