

Dissolution of 1967 Expo Corporation

fair thing for Winnipeg and Manitoba, where we made a major contribution to the celebration of 1967 through the very successful Pan-Am games that were held in my city in Canada's Centennial year. As I have already said, all we are asking for is fair play, and that is why I believe this request is germane to this bill.

Mr. Steven Otto (York East): Mr. Speaker, I will take only a moment of the time of the house. I speak now because I do not think the remarks of the hon. member for Calgary Centre (Mr. Harkness) should pass without comment. What he said was that we have an awful hangover. We had a good time at the party and, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said—

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I had a good time, but no hangover.

Mr. Otto: The hon. member for Calgary Centre said we had a good time and an awful hangover because we ate and drank too much. He did not suggest that he was at that party, he just said that we should not have eaten or drunk so much. Surely, he will recall that he was here at the time we encountered difficulties and a threatened labour strike. Members of his party and he himself said we should get the '67 exposition on the road by 1967, not 1968, and the devil take care of the cost.

Questions were being asked daily as to whether we were going to complete the building on time. We finally had to get the late Hon. Robert Winters to take over. It was suggested there was only one way to finish the job on time and that was by working 24 hours a day. We were lucky to finish on time. For one to say now that there was mismanagement is completely out of order. He was one hon. member, along with others, who encouraged this government to get this exhibition ready on time in spite of the cost.

● (4:40 p.m.)

[*Translation.*]

Mr. Valade: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add some comment concerning Bill C-6 being introduced by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin). I would like to say that the previous speaker made uncalled for remarks when he repeated an expression which seemed to come from this side of the House, i.e. "The devil with the cost". Mr. Speaker, I do not feel that this is a case of inaccuracy, but rather a gratuitous assumption by a member looking for an excuse for

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

a lack of precision on the part of the minister himself.

In any case, I do not want to deal with this question at length here. I would merely like to take advantage of this introduction, Mr. Speaker, to express the most sincere sympathy of all members, and even of all Canadians, to the families of the great builders of Expo, namely the late Senator Mark Drouin and the late Pierre Dupuy, who, in my opinion, have been the cornerstones, the foundations of what has been done at Expo. I take this opportunity to extend to their families my most heartfelt sympathy.

Mr. Speaker, Bill C-6 is very specific in its request to Parliament. Indeed, hon. members are asked to agree that the government write off the deficits accrued during the operation of Expo '67. I think it appropriate for me to state, Mr. Speaker, that in my own opinion and in the opinion of the majority of Canadians, Expo '67 has really been the event of the century for Canadians. It enabled us to celebrate adequately the centennial of our Confederation, and to become aware of our Canadian environment, with its differences, its requirements, its greatness and its variety.

On April 7th 1965, the former Progressive Conservative prime minister, the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) said, speaking of Expo: "The reputation of the Canadians is at stake". To my mind, that was true: that colossal undertaking, we were staking the reputation of the Canadians.

Obviously, today we agreed to pay the bill, to pay the losses. Parliament is responsible for the moneys entrusted to it by the taxpayers, and it is responsible for giving them an account of the way in which those funds were managed.

It is certainly not encouraging for the public to be told that the government must make up \$225 millions in losses. Nor is it pleasant for the citizens of Montreal, and elsewhere in Quebec, to have to pay, in addition to their share of the cost of the undertaking, additional expenses in municipal and provincial taxes.

But Expo was more than a regional achievement. It brought renown to Canada throughout the world; it focused attention on the many talents we had to offer in the fields of engineering, architecture and industry.

I feel that we proved to the whole world that Canada knows how to do things, that we are capable of competing in every field with all the countries in the world.