

Closing Expo 1967 Corporation

noted in certain accounts, where this is shown, that the total that has to be borne by the Government of Canada is some \$142.9 million. To be deducted from that is the grant that was made by the Government of Canada, leaving a net figure of \$122.9 million. We have on the one hand \$20 million which was granted to Expo Corporation in the form of a grant, which is quite properly shown as an expenditure of the Government of Canada and, on the other hand, we have the other \$122.9 million that will be contributed to Expo by the people of Canada. This latter figure will simply show up as an addition to the national debt and no record of that will show up in the expenditures of the government. So, the total amount is really a grant to Expo Corporation and, in my view, it should be shown as such.

When this bill was before the committee I moved an amendment which I should like to place on record. I moved, "that clause 7 sub-clause 1 be deleted from the bill and that this committee recommend that consideration be given to a parliamentary appropriation as a more appropriate means of effecting the objective of writing off the item 'accounts receivable, Expo, guarantees' as shown on the accounts of the Government of Canada."

I must say, Mr. Speaker, that there was some response from the minister when I presented this amendment. Possibly he was embarrassed at having this matter raised, because he had suggested before that possibly he would place this matter before the Minister of Finance. I certainly appreciate that suggestion by the minister, because it shows that he is somewhat embarrassed at having to deal with this subject in this way. I thought he would like to find some other way of handling what is certainly a rather awkward problem for him in winding up the affairs of Expo. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, when the vote came all government members voted against my amendment. They were quite happy to see the proposal placed by the government before the House presented to the people of Canada, and to have public funds dealt with in this entirely inappropriate way.

The amendment I have now placed before the House, Mr. Speaker, carries forward the first part of the motion I moved in committee. It is not possible at this time for me to place a motion before the House which would give effect to the second part of my motion moved in the committee. I refer to the recommendation to the government and the House of Commons. Certainly, one consequence of the

approval of the amendment I have placed before the House at this time would be to require the government to bring an appropriation before Parliament, as recommended in the second part of my motion in committee.

I commend to the House the amendment I have moved and hope that hon. members will approve it, that the government will reconsider its actions and that it will choose, instead, to bring forward a parliamentary appropriation to deal with the problem we are confronted with at this time.

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, the amendment before us deals entirely with the writing off of amounts of money up to \$125 million. These consist of loans made to Expo which are uncollectible. Actually, an amount of \$122.9 million appears on the books of the government as an asset. It cannot be collected and, of course, must be deleted in some way if we are to get any sort of true picture.

What we are really discussing at the moment is, what is the best or preferable method of dealing with this write-off; is it best done by introducing and passing a clause like clause 7(1) of this bill, or would it be better to deal with it by means of an appropriation bill.

I will not repeat the arguments of the hon. member who introduced the amendment. In my view, and I expressed my view in the committee, the more usual method of writing off uncollectible debts of this sort is for the government to bring in an appropriation bill. That is also a preferable method. I will, therefore, support the amendment.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I had not intended speaking on this matter until I read the gratuitous remarks of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin). I, therefore, feel that the circumstances connected with Expo should be placed on record so that it will be clear and definite.

Often it is asked: What were the circumstances connected with the beginning of this great project? Expo brought Canada to the attention of all the world. It was a tremendous project. Where did it have its beginnings?

My records show that the first person who brought up this matter and suggested that a world exposition would be a means of Canada's being known all over the world was Hon. Pierre Sevigny. He went into considerable