

Closing Expo 1967 Corporation

1. The records for the first part of the exhibition were never reconstructed;
2. procedures for the handling and destruction of surrendered tickets and passports were unsatisfactory;
3. no detailed audit work on site cash receipts was performed;

Imagine—no detailed audit work on site cash receipts was performed!

4. prompt clearing of differences disclosed in bank reconciliations were not effective; and
5. failure to instal a power line which would have eliminated parking lot power failures that affected control of a number of vehicle entrances by means of total counts.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what lessons are to be learned? This is the subject I commenced with. After reading the report it is obvious that this information should have been before the House long ago. If it was impossible to bring it before the House, the responsibility falls on the minister in charge who with his officials and the corporation was entrusted to see that things were done in a businesslike way.

I know it will be said that the House passed the estimates, but at that stage the House is often pushed for time and cannot get all the details. The estimates for 1968 simply say, "1967 World Exposition" and give six headings, no details, and cover \$6,750,800. There are no particulars, and if we had known then what we know now I am sure we would have held up the estimates. This raises another question. Estimates are now referred to a committee of 20 people, which means that only those 20 members have the opportunity to dig into the particulars. There are in this House many people who would like to ask questions. Some wonder whether we are doing the right thing by sending estimates to a committee for study. I know there are points in favour of doing so, but in this instance many members of the House would have been interested in the expenditure of Expo moneys and there would not have been the same opportunity to sweep the matter under the rug.

Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of lessons to be learned here. I have not mentioned them all. More attention must be paid to the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee. The suggestions and recommendations of the joint auditors of the corporation should have been dealt with more sincerely and with greater respect. This whole expenditure was an exhibition of slipshoddiness and—I will use the word used in the committee—the auditors said it was a sloppy operation.

[Mr. Hales.]

● (8:30 p.m.)

I am convinced it was a sloppy operation. I know the corporation officials were pressed for time in trying to get everything ready, but they were warned long before the show opened that there might be difficulty in the handling and collecting of gate receipts. I know in some ways they could not be flexible; but anyone who runs a business ought to be ready to meet these conditions when they arise. Surely they did not have to wait for two months to obtain a report from a firm of consultants and find out what to do. I will not repeat what I have already said, so I conclude my remarks. I hope Parliament has learned its lesson from what has happened and that the people involved in the Corporation have also learned their lesson. If any official of the corporation is asked in future by Parliament to spend the taxpayers' money, I hope he will treat it as if it were his own and will not wait two months before finding out where the mistakes were made.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

An hon. Member: On division.

Motion agreed to and bill read the third time and passed.

CUSTOMS TARIFF—EXCISE TAX ACT

Hon. H. E. Gray (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-140, to amend the Customs Tariff and to make a consequential amendment to the Excise Tax Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee of the whole.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I think the House will expect me to give some explanation of this bill.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Gray: This bill is based on the notice of ways and means motion which I tabled in the House on October 24. As I said at that time, the notice was substantially the same as Bill C-212 which was given first reading on June 27 in the previous session of Parliament. The main purposes of Bill C-140, therefore, are to implement the proposals in the June 3 budget statement in so far as they deal with the Customs Tariff and related matters. Of course, it is my intention at this stage to comment only briefly on the various parts of