

*Dissolution of 1967 Expo Corporation*

**Mr. Harding:** If we do not ask for all these explanations, we shall not be doing our job as legislators in the House of Commons.

Since hon. members who preceded me covered matters in the report I had wished to bring up, I will not repeat what has been said. May I direct a question to the minister. I expect he will answer me when closing the debate. Why did the government not insist that Expo Corporation establish and maintain an adequate system of internal financial control?

**Mr. Pepin:** How does the hon. member know it did not?

**Mr. Harding:** The minister seems to imply that it did establish such a system. I suggest that this procedure was recommended both by the provincial Auditor of Quebec and by the Auditor General of Canada.

**Mr. Pepin:** It was not.

**Mr. Harding:** I suggest that, in the end, a financial control system could not be set up because the finances of Expo had reached such a state that the Auditor General could not say exactly how much revenue had been received. This merely shows that financial controls ought to have been set up at the very beginning.

**Mr. Pepin:** All this will be discussed in committee.

**Mr. Harding:** All these matters must be aired in committee.

**Mr. Pepin:** They will be.

**Mr. Harding:** Possibly the minister may wish to clear up some of these matters in the House this afternoon. Earlier in this debate an hon. member spoke about building costs running wild. For instance, it was estimated initially that Habitat '67 would cost \$11.5 million. The federal government entered into the agreement, thinking that that would be the cost. Well, Mr. Speaker, eventually Habitat cost about \$22.6 million, double the original estimate. The Auditor General's report lists the reasons for this increase. Nevertheless, that the increase should have occurred does not speak highly of those who were supposed to be the watchdogs over government expenditure. We have the same story with the theme buildings. Originally they were to cost \$9.1 million; they wound up costing \$20.5 million. That is almost a repetition of the Arts Centre story, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Pepin.]

May I refer to some points mentioned by an hon. member before me, Mr. Speaker. Since the Corporation built sewage disposal units, a gas distribution system and set up a telephone service system, I submit that certain items of expenditure were recoverable. The Corporation ought to have collected certain amounts from the utilities companies which put these services in and I, for one, will ask the minister to explain why these amounts were not recovered. Why were not amounts of, say, \$50,000 or \$100,000 collected by the Corporation and applied to the partial benefit of the federal government, the province of Quebec and the city of Montreal? That would have been the proper way to act. Since we entered into an agreement and told the people of Canada about the type of agreement we had with the other interested parties, I submit we should have implemented its terms. There can be no excuse if the minister, the government or any official has let these matters go by the board and so caused the Canadian taxpayer to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars. This is my complaint.

In closing, may I say that I will support the bill, even though its passage will mean ultimately that every man, woman and child in Canada has paid \$6. Although I live many, many miles from Montreal, I visited Expo. I realize its value in unifying this country. By the same token, there is no reason for financial laxity on the part of the government or Expo Corporation. That is the point I wish to make in the House this afternoon, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. D. W. Groos (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for me not to repeat some of the things that have been said this afternoon. Nevertheless, since I come from British Columbia, which was not an original entry into the 1867 coast to coast united Canada stakes, I should like to say a few words today about this bill to wind up the affairs of Expo '67.

Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, you and members of the House will permit me to reminisce for a short while about those great days of our centennial year and refer particular to Expo. Probably the greatest value of that fair, to my mind, was that it provided a focal point for Canadian unity at a time when our national unity was being most seriously questioned. It also proved to be a source of justifiable pride for Canadians everywhere. It would be hard to deny, I suggest, that millions of Canadian hearts beat faster in those