

Dissolution of 1967 Expo Corporation

of us from Manitoba—I am sure I can say all of us—that just as the government by this legislation is helping Montreal and Quebec to meet the deficit incurred on Expo, so the federal government should assist Winnipeg and Manitoba to meet the deficit of the Pan-Am games.

May I point out without hesitation or qualification that the federal government did in fact pay the full amount in respect to the Pan-Am games that it contracted to pay. Therefore, any request that is now being made for additional money is a request that is made in light of subsequent experience, but this is experience that is precisely the same as that in the case of Expo. The government has stated that what it is doing in the case of Expo is simply writing off debts that are on books; that it is not turning over to anybody any extra dollars or pieces of paper. The bills have been paid and the money has been spent. The federal government is simply saying that it will not require Quebec or Montreal to pay back the debt owed to Ottawa.

The Winnipeg situation is slightly different. The debt is one that is owed by the city of Winnipeg, and if Ottawa is going to assist Winnipeg it means that some further dollars, some further cheques or pieces of paper, will have to be turned over to Winnipeg. But I submit that difference is a pretty technical one. In the long run, it is a matter of dollars and cents, a matter of balancing the books. I further submit that the case for Winnipeg with regard to assistance of this sort is on all fours with the case that is being made by Montreal and Quebec with regard to Expo.

I speak with feeling and concern about this matter. But I am not manning the barricades or shouting at the top of my voice because I dare to believe that the views I am expressing are shared on the government side of the house. I know they are shared by private members of the Liberal party from Manitoba. Back home in Winnipeg, we understand there have been exchanges of correspondence between the mayor of Winnipeg and the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Richardson). It is also our understanding that the Minister of Supply and Services, who is a member of the government from the province of Manitoba, is as concerned about this question as are some of the rest of us. It is my hope that just as some of us are making the case here on the floor of parliament, so is he making the case inside the cabinet.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

May I point out that although I talk about a case that is on all fours, a case that is parallel, with that of Montreal, when it comes to the amount of money involved we are talking about two completely different kettles of fish. In the case of Montreal, as indicated in the speech that the minister has just made, we in this House are being asked to write off \$120 million odd; in other words, Ottawa's share of a deficit of \$240 million, if my figures are roughly correct. In the case of the Pan-Am games the deficit facing the city of Winnipeg is only a little over \$1 million. We are talking about peanuts, on the one hand, compared to what is being handed out on the other.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but I must say I am having some difficulty seeing how the remarks he is now making are really relevant to the bill before the House. Bill C-6, in its preamble, states that it is an act to wind up the Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition. It is with some misgiving that I interrupt the hon. member since he is an expert on the rules, but it does seem to me that when he gets into parallel cases—and the instance he cited may well be a parallel—the rule of relevancy excludes that type of argument.

If the hon. gentleman would like to argue the case, I would be delighted to hear him; otherwise I would prefer that he conclude his remarks on this aspect of the debate.

• (4:30 p.m.)

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I am really surprised that you have any difficulty procedurally in respect of this matter. You have read a part of the title of this bill. You read:

An act to wind up the Canadian Corporation for the 1967 World Exhibition—

You did not read the rest of it which states:

—and to authorize the writing-off of certain costs and the deferral of certain payments connected therewith.

I submit with great respect that if we are being asked to write off certain costs of something that was part of our 1967 Centennial celebration, then I have the right to draw a parallel and suggest that the same treatment—equality of treatment in this just society we are now living in—should apply in other parts of the country.

The agreement under which money was paid to Expo was an agreement concluded between the federal government and the