

Refitting of HMCS "Bonaventure"

the committee which would support such a statement. Regular production meetings were held at the shipyard. The two deputy ministers arranged to have a monitoring committee composed of officials of the Department of National Defence, the Department of Defence Production and Treasury Board review costs on a continuing basis. A review was made in the shipyard by officials from both departments and Treasury Board staff before the principal increase in the estimates for the project, amounting to \$3,770,000, was approved on December 1, 1966, by Treasury Board. A further increase of \$800,000 was subsequently reported to Treasury Board in June, 1967, bringing the original \$8,000,000 estimate to \$12,570,000. I think it will be clear that every effort was made to keep the costs under control.

At page 788 of the report, in the section on item X-427, the committee states:

It is inconceivable to the committee that representatives of the Department of National Defence and Defence Production would present as facts such false testimony regarding details surrounding the movement of briefing-room chairs.

I wish to deal with this aspect in so far as it relates to National Defence employees. Captain T. W. Maxwell, Maritime Systems Engineering Section of the Department of National Defence, who was not involved in the *Bonaventure* refit beyond the preparation of certain specifications relating to conversion of systems, endeavoured to obtain information for the sub-committee from various sources in the department. The information he gave the subcommittee on the briefing-room chairs was given in good faith and during the course of subcommittee hearings conducted informally and of which no minutes were kept.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I am glad to see we are winning the support of hon. members opposite.

Mr. Forrestall: You are winning nothing. We shamed you into it.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): There are the hon. members who commended the committee for attacking this serving officer.

Mr. Forrestall: Who attacked a serving officer?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Captain Maxwell sincerely regretted that he had given the committee incorrect information, and when

he became aware of his error he reported it to the committee.

Mr. Woolliams: You are confessing your own weakness.

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): Is the hon. member referring to this serving officer as having confessed? I think that is shameful. Reference is made to this on page 532 of the proceedings of the main committee. Further, on page 794, under the item X-1237, the committee reports that evidence was given by Captain Maxwell and Mr. R. D. Wallace that this contract was largely required because of the need to secure lockers in position on board ship. The report goes on to say:

The committee, when visiting the *Bonaventure*, discovered that this information was inaccurate and, in fact, many of the lockers were not secured to their frames and those that were had not been secured in the manner described.

According to the evidence on page 603 of the proceedings, Mr. Wallace did not provide the information referred to in the report. The evidence on pages 603 and 604 given by Captain Maxwell was that part of the reason for X-1237 was to bolt lockers aboard ship. Captain Maxwell stated specifically, and I quote from the proceedings: "I do not think that I ever implied that the locker work was a large proportion of X-1237." The necessity to fasten lockers aboard a sea-going warship should be self-evident notwithstanding the fact that some were temporarily unsecured when the committee visited the ship some two years later in Halifax following its return from a lengthy operational trip.

The minister advises me that he has looked into this very carefully and he is convinced that Captain Maxwell did his best to assist the subcommittee in its investigations. Captain Maxwell did not have personal knowledge of all the detailed items in which the subcommittee was interested. He obtained information as quickly as possible from various sources in the department, and in these circumstances there is always some possibility of error in dealing with detailed questions some two or three years after the work was done.

The report on page 792 made some criticism of Captain Lynch concerning the detailed records on furniture repairs. Captain Lynch was responsible for overseeing the whole refit and in the matter of furniture repair he concerned himself with the over-all operation rather than the details. The committee reports that Captain Lynch cancelled