

Closing Expo 1967 Corporation

could be attributed to Expo. I am trying to make the point that as the actual costs of Expo grew, because of the demonstrated enthusiasm of people all over the world, and Canadians, the benefits also increased. In other words, Expo in 1967 was not what the government of the time had in mind in 1963; it was very much bigger.

With regard to the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton), may I say first that I am rather surprised he moved it because I thought I had charmed him out of it, in the committee. I thought the promise I made that I would bring his views to the attention of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) would have been sufficient. I thought the hon. member, having said this was only a bookkeeping operation, would have chosen another forum in which to debate the issue which I assume is an interesting one.

His first grudge is that the financing of Expo '67 took place in the form of loans rather than in the form of grants. Had it been done in the form of grants, I suppose someone else would have a good reason for saying it should have been done by loans. Since it has been done by loans, I presume there are good reasons for saying it should have been done by grants. I explained in the Committee the reason it was done by loans; time was of the essence. I do not think this is a major issue. I believe the hon. member for Regina East said so himself, before the committee even if he did not say so in his speech in the House. As I said, the loans were the subject of parliamentary appropriations in the year in which they were made. That gave them parliamentary sanction.

The hon. member's other point, is in respect of how the "bookkeeping transaction" should appear in the financial books of parliament. This is debatable also. Mr. Speaker, we have two sets of books on expenditures, as you know better than I do. One contains the estimates of expenditures and the other contains the accounts of Canada. I want to underline for the benefit of the hon. member for Regina East the fact that these figures will be included in the accounts for Canada; that is, the share of the deficit to be borne by the federal government will appear in the accounts of Canada. This is the document on which the Auditor General can comment. So, if he wishes to comment again he is free to do so and the Public Accounts Committee will be free to look at that again. I was not sure

whether or not the hon. member for Regina East was aware of this.

Mr. Burton: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I do not think it is fair, and I do not think there is any justification, for the minister to attempt to leave the impression that I would not be aware that this matter would come to the attention of members of this House through the report of the Auditor General and the subsequent reference to the Public Accounts Committee. The point I was making was that this matter is not being reported to the people of Canada in the form of an expenditure, which it is.

Mr. Pepin: I had not finished my commentary, but I am glad to know the hon. member was aware of the point I was making. I regret having made it now that I know he was aware of it.

Mr. Burton: I hope the minister is aware of it also.

• (4:20 p.m.)

Mr. Pepin: I just became aware of it today! I am no authority on procedure, as is my hon. friend, so this is why I looked into this personally to make sure that the right procedure was followed, and being proud of my newly acquired knowledge I may have tended to be too keen to pass it along.

Mr. Baldwin: This is a very dangerous thing.

Mr. Pepin: With respect now to the other side of it, that is estimates; the deficit could not be included in the main estimates for 1969-70, although it was mentioned by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) during his budget speech, because the exact figures were not known then.

The other possibility, which was mentioned by me in the committee, was to include it in a supplementary estimate. There are arguments both in favour and against that. One of the arguments against is that supplementary estimates are introduced usually for the purpose of covering unforeseen expenditures. This Expo deficit can hardly be considered to be an unforeseen expenditure. I see the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) smiling at that thought. So, apparently this matter did not fit too well into supplementary estimates, either.

Mr. Burton: May I ask the minister a question? Can he state that all supplementary