

Closing Expo 1967 Corporation

consequently already appear as such in the public accounts.

• (4:10 p.m.)

On the subject of cost escalation I felt obligated to quote in committee the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) because in my view this figure of \$20 million as being the total federal contribution planned appeared rather unrealistic. I looked at *Hansard* of that time to find out what the facts were. I knew that the right hon. gentleman had said on a number of occasions that his understanding was that the whole thing—I suppose it was irrespective of other federal participation in terms of a pavilion for Canada, for example—would cost the federal government only \$20 million. Having the kind of mind I have I had to find out the truth. So, I went to the record and this is where I found the following quotations from a speech of the right hon. gentleman. I am reading from page 3-21 of the Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence of the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs for November 7, 1969:

We should also have information as to the total expected expenditure to be made on this fair.

The date of the speech is April 10, 1964:

I do not want to reiterate what I have already said, but this fair cannot fail. To allow this fair, representative of this nation, even to enter the spectrum of failure would give to Canada a black eye internationally.

So, I gathered from that the right hon. gentleman wanted to make sure Expo would be a success and was willing to pay the price. This, however, is not the most important paragraph I quoted in the committee. The other quotation I gave—and again this is dated April 10, 1964—was the following:

Canadians as a whole have a great stake in national prestige to assure the success of this project. No one yet knows what the total expenditure will be.

This was rather important to me. The former prime minister who, as everybody agrees was the political creator of this great thing, Expo '67, did admit on April 10, 1964 that no one knew what the price would be. I cannot understand how, on the one hand, the gentleman could say it would cost \$20 million and, on the other hand, that no one by April 10, 1964 knew what the price would be. This was rather disturbing to me.

[Mr. Pepin.]

I was even more disturbed when I read the rest of the paragraph:

There has been an estimate of \$585 million as the total cost, an estimate I think made by Mr. Biennu some months ago.

On the one hand we are told nobody knew what the price would be. On the other hand, we are told it would be \$20 million and, on the third hand—if that is a possibility—we are told it would cost \$585 million. All statements made by the same gentleman.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the minister would allow a question. Does he realize that the \$585 million was the estimated cost for all the buildings erected on these premises by all the countries that participated.

Mr. Pepin: Even at that there would be some \$300 million or more left to be payed, even if we deduct the costs of foreign pavilions. But again, the part of the quotation I emphasized most was the statement, "no one knew". Why was it that nobody knew? Because of the limited amount of time. The Russians had got it first, and we only got the fair when they gave it up. The fact is that the Expo Corporation had to tie together the actual planning of Expo and the actual building of Expo. I have read that from the moment the Corporation obtained the land on which Expo was to take place it took only two years, nine months and 26 days to actually build the fair.

Mr. Diefenbaker: That is wrong.

Mr. Pepin: That is what I am told.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The land was picked out in February, 1963.

Mr. Pepin: I said that from the time they took possession of the land, the Corporation took only two years, nine months and 26 days to build the fair. Anyway, the point I am trying to make is that Expo was not actually created. It grew. The result of this was that the master plan was revised seven times before the opening of the fair and even once after.

I am quite sure members of this House would also like me to emphasize that as the costs of Expo grew the benefits also grew. This is a point I made before the committee. For example, \$480 million of extra tourist revenue in 1967 was directly attributed to Expo. An amount of \$230 million in the form of taxes payed to all levels of government