

Standards Council of Canada

witnessed other cutbacks in post offices across the nation. The Minister of Communications (Mr. Kierans) is actually closing out 2,000 post offices in Canada so as to save \$2 million.

I could go on for a week, Mr. Speaker, telling the House about some of the moves the government has made to cut back spending. I have received representations from Canadians who have worked for government departments for 25, 30 years and now are laid off as a result of government cutbacks. We find the government cutting back its spending in all departments. Its attitude seems to be that the economy cannot stand any more government expenditure, that the government has to curtail inflation.

Then, all of a sudden, this year—not next year or in a couple of years' time when the money situation has hopefully eased—we find the government saying that it is now going to involve itself in something that has already been done by private enterprise, though granted perhaps not to the extent that is required. I am not talking about government involvement in the Canada Development Corporation; I am not talking that kind of language. Neither am I talking about promoting across the nation the idea of upgrading people through new start programs. Nor am I talking about trying to improve relations with Britain, the United States and other countries which have been strained to the point where we are now getting anti-Canadian reaction. I am talking about becoming involved in standardization. I should like to inform the House that one association in Canada today is spending \$4.5 million on employing expert technical and administrative assistance, and other expenses of this nature, to try and promote standardization. In Rexdale, Ontario, I believe it is, something like 300 people are employed by the Canada Standards Association.

In addition to that, we have across the nation—if I am wrong the minister or the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour will correct me—about 3,000 people who voluntarily are assisting in projects similar to the schemes now being devised by the government. These 3,000 people sit on God knows how many hundred committees. These people are taken from the consumer section, from government—many are officials from government departments—from industry, from the universities, from the professions, engineers, industrial experts and so on. All of them are volunteers.

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

I should like to ask whether these people are going to volunteer their services to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. If the government throws in the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) as well, then that might make it attractive enough for the volunteers to stay. But I predict that if, as appears to be the case, the government takes over the work of existing organizations—

Mr. Pepin: No.

Mr. Lundrigan: The minister says no, but the government will have the power to do so; and if it does do so it may be that the government will do the sort of work that has been done by the expenditure of the \$4.5 million to which I referred. This work has not been totally effective, because I think \$6 million would be required to make it completely effective, but doubtless the government will spend \$20 million instead of \$4.5 million; that seems to be what will happen.

For the life of me, I cannot see how the interests of consumers will be enhanced or protected by this legislation. I suggest that the basic consideration in examining the legislation is the interest of the consumer. Is there going to be a greater effort made to standardize products so as to provide more safety, better quality and more economy in purchasing for the consumer? I suggest that if the government becomes involved in this sort of thing, the price of ordinary, commonly-used goods will take quite a leap. Having seen the government's efficiency during my brief experience as a Member of Parliament, I cannot see what the effect of this bill will be except that the consumer is going to pay a lot more because the government is now going to spend a good many millions of dollars to do something which is now being done effectively by the existing establishment.

• (4:10 p.m.)

The minister talks about this council being completely independent of government. I am interested in that and I just want to raise this point for the consideration of the members who are going to speak later. Clause 6(1) of the bill indicates that:

Each member of the council who is employed in the public service of Canada shall be appointed to hold office during pleasure.

Is that the pleasure of the hon. member for Gander-Twillington, or is it the pleasure of