

Standards Council of Canada

extent practicable, make use of the services and facilities of existing organizations in Canada engaged in standards formulation, testing and certification in the fields referred to in subsection (1)."

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Motion No. 2 (Mr. Pepin) agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now proceed to the consideration of the motion in the name of the hon. member for Selkirk.

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk) moved:

—That Bill C-163, An Act to provide for the establishment of a Standards Council of Canada, be amended by adding to Clause 4, subclause (2) thereof a new paragraph (n) as follows:

"(n) make recommendations to the Minister, such recommendations to be included in the annual report of the Council, in respect of standards which, in the opinion of the Council, should be made compulsory."

He said: Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to make any long argument in respect of this suggested amendment. During the course of its consideration in the committee, I believe the minister was substantially in agreement with it. The only thing that prevented it from being adopted at that time was a ruling by the chairman. I would be pleased to defer to the minister at this point to allow him to indicate whether or not he is in agreement, and if he is there is no point in my continuing.

Hon. Jean Luc Pepin (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I wish I could be my usual generous self on this occasion but I cannot. The whole bill is based on voluntary standards. This bill is for the establishment of standards voluntarily arrived at and voluntarily implemented. It would be giving a wrong indication to provide for the possibility of this council having a major influence in the making of mandatory standards. We would keep voluntary and mandatory standards cleanly divided.

My hon. friend knows, and I agree, that if the council decided to recommend to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) or to provincial or municipal authorities, mandatory standards it could do so. It does not have to ask for my permission. It might not be a good idea to put this in the bill, knowing full well that this can be done.

Mr. Rowland: Mr. Speaker, would the minister submit to a question? Would he not agree that it is always handy for legislators to be given a club, such as a recommendation in annual report of the Standards Council, in order to use it on a government that will not act?

Mr. Pepin: That is exactly what I am saying, putting a club in the bill is the wrong thing to do. This bill is about voluntary standards and having a club in a bill on voluntary standards would probably give a bad impression.

Mr. Rowland: What about the recommendations the Standards Council is going to make in respect of the adoption of the metric system?

Mr. Pepin: The metric system will not necessarily be adopted on a mandatory basis. As far as the Standards Council is concerned, what it will do with regard to the metric system is try to foster as great a voluntary consensus as possible.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I rise to make one of my brief speeches. It seems to me that the answer of the minister is not really very satisfactory. May I point out to him that the amendment proposed by my colleague, the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Rowland), does not seek to turn the legislation itself into something compulsory, but merely gives to the council the right and the opportunity, as a result of its studies, to recommend to the minister that there are areas in which there should be compulsory standards.

The minister, in what I thought was a case of arguing both ways, turned around a moment later and said that the council has the authority to make such recommendations if it wished to do so and, therefore, we do not need to clutter up the Act with these extra words. I point out to the minister that the clause which my hon. friend seeks to amend is the clause which gives the council its terms of reference. Unless those terms of reference include this right, I submit there will be people on the council and people over the council who will say they do not have that right.

Therefore, if I may use language that we sometimes get from the President of the Privy Council, let us exercise an abundance of caution. Let us see to it that we have, as part of the terms of reference of the council, the right which all of us feel it should have,