

Standards Council of Canada

law without building in certain powers; however, we do not intend to use these powers; we just want to have them. Let me return to a point upon which I touched briefly a few minutes ago. One of the sound, basic arguments in favour of establishing any sort of council is that in doing so we might improve Canada's reputation as a member of international standards committees. An international standards organization is now in existence, and numerous committees have been established to deal with the setting of standards for various products, consumer goods, electrical goods, mechanical devices, and so on. All of these are represented at the moment by the Canada Standards Association. As a matter of fact, Canada is on no fewer than 80 committees of the ISO, I understand. I think that the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour corrected me on that.

On the other hand, I think Canada sits on 22 other committees of an international nature. I am sure the government, the council and the provinces would be quite eager to agree that our role at the international level is not aggressive enough; that perhaps we are not as well represented or as aggressive as we should be. One of the limiting factors, as the minister has pointed out, may be that the CSA and other existing organizations in Canada do not have the resources to become involved, to be as aggressive as we would wish and to take the kind of initiatives that we would like them to take. I should like to ask the minister why it is that consideration is not being given to doing what other countries in the western world do, namely to assisting the existing organizations, at least for the time being until we get a clear description of exactly how far we want to involve ourselves in standardization.

I should like to know why we cannot assist existing organizations. This question has been raised before and has undoubtedly been given some consideration, but I should like the government to reconsider that point. Why is it that in this respect Canada is so different from other western nations like the United States, Britain, France and West Germany? If the minister would take the time to consult his learned officials—he must have done so already because I can see evidence of it all through his speech—he would ascertain that much of the legislation in other countries in this regard is supporting legislation. The role of this legislation is that which the minister says is also the role this bill will perform. Other countries, such as the United States, Britain, France and West Germany, have

standards associations. I forget the actual designation of the American institute, but it does play a supporting role, one of promoting and fostering. Certainly, it does not play a role of usurpation; that is not its function. As I say, other countries in the world have similar institutes.

This is the reason I ask why we cannot now assist our existing organizations in order to enable them, as they are attempting to do within their limited budgets, to refine their procedures and change their structures? The minister knows that during the last year the Canada Standards Association really went overboard in trying to redirect its energies and restructure itself in order to meet an ever-growing need and fulfil the function it is designed to perform. Why cannot the government try and give a little more assistance, even on some sort of trial and error basis, to help promote the CSA and other organizations internationally, instead of granting us power to stick our parochial noses into private enterprise and possibly bring about some sort of restriction under this legislation. When the minister gets an opportunity to think about this, let him give us some formal reaction to the proposal, instead of pursuing his present course.

There is another point I want to raise, one that bothers me as a Canadian and as a member of the House of Commons representing other Canadians. We are living in a period, as every dedicated member of the House knows, of great stress and strain for the average Canadian citizen as a result of the government's fiscal and monetary policies of restraint and restriction. We are all aware of some of the moves that have been made by the government. The hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) today asked the minister of health why \$50,000 is being taken away from the Canadian Legion sports program. I visited the province of Prince Edward Island last evening and I found the people there very concerned at the lack of federal activity and federal assistance in promoting growth in various regions of Canada. We all know that Prince Edward Island did not get its causeway, even though the government spent \$20 million on it.

Last week I was at a committee meeting at which one member made a very interesting point in connection with a grant given to promote fish markets during the Lunenburg fishing fair, which has been held now for almost 100 years. This year they lost \$3,000 as a result of a cutback in the grant. We have