

Standards Council of Canada

He is assuming, first, that the bill will pass, and second that there will be an estimate to cover the situation later on. I think that if he has a point, he would have to wait, first, for the bill to be passed and then for the matter to come up, again before the House. At this time he may suggest that we are being asked to consider for the second time a question on which a decision has already been reached. So, my suggestion to the hon. member is that he is anticipating the situation. I am not ruling that his point of order would be acceptable if it were raised later on, but I respectfully submit to him that it cannot properly be submitted at the present time.

[Translation]

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, if I am allowed to say a few words on your comments, I undertake not to spend the \$190,000 if the bill is not carried. I think that this would be agreeable to everyone.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the bill now introduced in the House is to establish a corporation to be known as the Standards Council of Canada. It will be responsible for promoting and co-ordinating the role of existing organizations involved in voluntary standardization in Canada. It would also be responsible for Canadian participation in international voluntary standards organizations.

Before we have a look at the bill, let us ask ourselves a few basic questions about standards. Not long ago I acquired some knowledge on the subject and I should like to share that knowledge with my honourable colleagues.

What are standards? Mr. Speaker, standards permeate all aspects of life. A standard is a basis of comparison. It can be anything used to measure, to measure in its broadest sense: length, height, time, colour, utility, performance of products, beauty, virtue, tolerance—and so on.

Let us have some examples:

Building codes or zoning regulations, established by municipal governments, are standards. Regulations defining membership in a club are standards. School examinations are standards of academic excellence.

In the present bill however, we are naturally concerned only with the industrial standards of products and their manufacturing process.

In industry and commerce, standards may define how something is to be produced or how something should perform. For example, a standard might define a kind of steel by

stating its composition and heat treatment or again its strength and hardness.

A standard can also define size and shape, for example, the size and shape of a cassette for a tape recorder is standardized to permit interchangeability, that is to permit their use in recorders of different makes. Plywood and wallboard are produced in standard sizes to facilitate design.

Standards also can define the brightness of a light bulb, the power of an engine or the durability of paint. Mr. Speaker, I am cutting this short, but this gives an idea of the nature of industrial standards. Every day, each member of the House undoubtedly comes into contact with industrial standards, whether he drives a car that meets certain performance requirements, uses a home appliance subject to safety conditions, eats meat of a certain quality level or buys Canada Standard Size garments for his children.

Mr. Speaker, there are two types of standards. First of all, there are voluntary standards. In most free enterprise economies the identification, formulation and usage of many standards is based on voluntary participation arising from a recognition of a common interest on the part of producers and consumers.

There are also mandatory standards. In some areas, such as public health, safety, or welfare, it is not sufficient sometimes to leave the enforcement and the development of standards to voluntary action. In the food and drug industries, for example, or even in the construction industry, no variation in minimum quality levels can be permitted if the public is to be fully protected. Mandatory standards are therefore established by legislation, at one or another level of government, making compliance a legal obligation.

Penalties are imposed upon individuals, associations or companies that do not adhere to the requirements specified in the legislation. There was an illustration of this in the House yesterday with the bill providing for mandatory standards with regard to motor vehicle safety.

I underline that Bill C-163 is concerned exclusively with voluntary standards. I repeat that there is nothing in it about mandatory standards.

Why do we need standards? First of all, it is in order to improve the quality of goods. Standards provide also for the interchangeability of parts which makes possible, of course, mass production techniques. When a part is standardized, it is possible to manufac-