

United Nations

problem and the technical people in every field of scientific and technical research have been devoting more and more attention to the need for the development of compatible computer systems using a common language.

As we all know, there is not just one system of computers. There are many different systems. These systems are used in the various industries and in different countries. It is essential that the information, if it is to be of value and capable of being exchanged from one country to another, must be stored in such form that it is compatible to the computers in other nations. I think all members of the house understand this. What I am trying to outline, Mr. Speaker, is what has already been done in the general field of standardization of technical words, terms and phrases. These steps to which I have referred have been initiated in international organizations and associations such as the international committee for pure and applied chemistry and by United Nations organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency or the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Since 1962, in fact, UNESCO, in co-operation with other member countries, has been engaged in the development of a long term, long range program for improving and co-ordinating scientific and technical documentation. The International Council of Scientific Unions, which I mentioned previously, in conjunction with UNESCO is meeting next month, in fact, in order to consider whether, taking into account the great diversity of scientific disciplines and the many differences in approach by member countries, it would be feasible to establish a world wide scientific information system. These and similar steps are I understand being taken in other scientific disciplines by other international scientific organizations.

• (5:30 p.m.)

Quite obviously, Mr. Speaker, there are inevitably going to be national jealousies in this field. For example I think that if today a United States scientist and a French scientist were working simultaneously on some new development each would, in the main, tend to use his own terms and it would be very difficult indeed for any international body to persuade them to use some other terminology. I say this because that is the way mankind deals with matters, when men and women are in the process of developing something to which they have devoted their

lives and their talents. They are somewhat naturally averse to allowing the knowledge they have achieved through their own efforts to escape beyond their own realm of work, and to be captured, if I may use that expression, by a scientist in some other country who is working in the same field.

I think we have to accept the fact that there is such a thing as national pride, pride in one's own language, which goes very deep, even among men wholeheartedly devoted to the cause of science. For example, Mr. Speaker, one cannot imagine the Russians ever giving up the word "sputnik" because it represents to them, and quite rightly so in my humble opinion, a very great scientific achievement by their people.

Mr. Ryan: We should adopt that word.

Mr. Knowles: We already have.

Mr. Groos: That is what I am getting at.

The hon. member proposes that the Canadian government take the initiative at the United Nations to form a committee to work for the standardization and internationalization of scientific and technical words, terms and phrases. UNESCO, which would be the United Nations agency in which any such initiative should be taken, has already taken steps to encourage the development of standardized bibliographies and terminology. Scientists in UNESCO are already working on these problems through the various international scientific unions, and I am wondering whether we really need to set up one more large body to co-ordinate this work.

It would seem to me to be much more desirable to leave this problem at this stage in the hands of a scientific organization that is already working upon the problem, a view which I believe is strongly held by most scientists. Encouragement should be given, and assistance provided when requested of the governments concerned, to carry forward programs of standardizing scientific and technical terms in the various disciplines I have mentioned and in joint scientific bodies. If at any time the job is found too heavy for their resources, or the program of work too expensive, or if roadblocks appear which governments might help in removing, then through UNESCO let us press for a more active and extensive program. I would have no hesitation whatever in supporting such a proposition.

[Mr. Groos.]