

Statistics Act

The hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Hales) said he felt the reports were coming out too late. These are matters of a technical nature but they are being improved. I want to assure hon. members of the House that Statistics of Canada is constantly improving its ability to provide statistics of a more up-to-date nature and to provide them more quickly. It has an enviable record in this regard. If you consider these statistics provided on any subject by Statistics of Canada, you will find that reports are coming out more frequently and earlier after the completion of the gathering of that information than they have in the past.

Mr. Harkness: What is Statistics of Canada? We have no Statistics of Canada at the present time.

Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary): The hon. member has referred to the change of the name of the organization from DBS to Statistics Canada. He has suggested it is going to be confusing for those of us in western Canada who are familiar with the initials "SC", meaning Social Credit. I know when he goes to the airport at Calgary and gets on Trans-Canada Air Lines, I mean an Air Canada aircraft to come here he must find it difficult to leave behind those confusing views we get from the Social Credit government in western Canada, but I am sure even he has become used to the name Air Canada.

An hon. Member: We won't juggle the books the way they have.

Mr. Howard (Okanagan Boundary): An hon. member says, "We won't juggle the books the way they have". I am sure the hon. member has not yet found the wrong airline since they changed the name from Trans-Canada Air Lines to Air Canada, and I am sure he has found it quite useful and easy to be serviced by that excellent airline. I am sure he will get used to the idea of Statistics Canada. This will not be an earth-shaking change but an improvement and a streamlining.

In concluding, let me concur with the remarks of the hon. member for Waterloo who said his experience with the people of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics has been most satisfactory, that they are most competent in their work, are co-operative and have performed an excellent service to Canada. I want to endorse that view and say that these changes we are proposing today will make it possible for them to do their work even better.

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

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the motion agreed to?

Mr. Baldwin: On division.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

[Mr. Howard (Okanagan-Boundary).]

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACTPROVISIONS RESPECTING UNITS OF MEASUREMENT,
INSPECTION, OFFENCES, ETC.

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs) moved that Bill S-5, respecting weights and measures, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I know there is a feeling in the House to deal with legislation rather quickly and get it to the committees before the Christmas recess. I will be very brief in what I have to say on this bill, leaving the details to be discussed by the committee.

The bill before the House this afternoon should be regarded as a companion piece of legislation to the consumer packaging and labelling bill, Bill C-180, which is part way through the second reading stage and which we hope to discuss in a very short time. The remarks made in respect of one of these bills would apply to the other.

Federal responsibility for weights and measures is clearly set out in section 91 of the British North America Act. Just let me give a short history. The first weights and measures act passed by this Parliament was passed in 1873, and the present act which is being revised or replaced by this legislation dates from 1951. Legislation of this kind is very basic to consumer protection and the purpose of this act is to ensure that the purchaser shall receive just measure, whether he is buying a commodity that is sold by weight, by volume, by length, by area or even, by time.

The units of measure used in Canada have been established by several different pieces of legislation, and many of these provisions and units established under them have been and are now in need of redefinition. It is considered more practical and efficient, while making these changes, to bring them all up-to-date, and to bring all of the units of measure used in Canada under one central piece of legislation, namely Bill S-5.

Accordingly, this bill sets out to repeal the Electrical and Photometric Units Act, the Length and Mass Units Act, and the Weights and Measures Act of 1951. All of these measurement acts will be incorporated under this one bill, as well as all the special features of these three acts. They will be incorporated, we hope, under the new weights and measures act of 1971.

The bill sets forth all the units of measurement which are legally in use in trade in Canada. It defines these units in scientific and legal terms in accordance with the latest internationally accepted system, the *Système International*. This system is a set of precise measurements adopted by the last general conference on weights and measures, and is now in use throughout the world. It represents a considerable improvement since the days of long ago when the yard, for example, was measured by the length of King Henry's arm, and the time of Confederation when the legal yard in Canada was a piece of metal manufactured in England and deposited with the Speaker of the Senate. I do not know whether he was