

Supply—Industry

and then there would be enough provided to maintain the council for the rest of the year. This is why I do not propose to say any more, in an effort to be conciliatory.

• (9:40 p.m.)

Mr. Peters: I am sympathetic to both positions, but I do not want to get into the position of supporting neither one. Even if we have some money left over from last year, it does not seem to me it can be directed for a specific purpose. I believe that the establishment of a standards council is worth while, but I agree also that the minister should be more specific about what it is going to do. I have a very definite direction in which I want to see this council progress. I am sure that the hon. member for Trois-Rivières agrees that we want to see this council directed toward international trade. This will involve some compromise at least with the metric system, and the standards we have been using for our trade. We may have enough money to carry on this year, but I think the argument made by the hon. member for Wellington will be repeated next year. He probably wants some declaration as to the purpose of that item. I believe this is really all that is being requested.

Mr. Pepin: I did not want to get into a big quarrel about this because it seemed to me to be a tempest in a teapot. The hon. member for Wellington asked me to cut it out, so I said all right and I would bring it back when the bill is introduced. Nobody is suffering, any way you look at it. I would have preferred to let the item remain, but by hon. friend on the other side, who is a keen defender of public finance, feels that it should be out. I do not want to quarrel with it so I am suggesting, in the spirit of Advent and in the interests of advancement, that we agree.

Mr. Gleave: Perhaps I can get the \$36,000 back for rapeseed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mongrain: Mr. Chairman, my colleague, the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters), mentioned my name several times and once again I will agree with him. I would not be very happy if that item no longer appeared under that credit, especially if we were not assured that it would not hurt in any way that standards office which would provide for the changing of our measure system, as far as the eventual adoption of the decimal system is concerned.

[*Mr. Pepin.*]

Like the hon. member for Timiskaming, I am one of those who are convinced that we are even a little late here in adopting the decimal system. England set up a commission which studied the problem and decided that the decimal or metric system, if you wish, would be applied over a certain number of years; it is a change which takes 7 or 8 years. France has been using it for a long time as well as almost all the countries of Europe. Australia adopted it recently. The United States also have set up a commission which is studying the problem and we are told that it is preparing a report and will recommend that the system be adopted.

This means that we, in Canada, will have to follow, but to be able to do so, some organization will have to establish a *modus vivendi*, a program enabling us to adopt the decimal system within a given number of years, and according to methods prepared in advance. Such an organization, and I refer to what the minister said earlier, should have a minimum budget enabling it to undertake studies and report later.

I said that we are behindhand and the minister stated that he would prefer that this be included in that item. If he prefers it, it is precisely because he has foreseen the adoption of a piece of legislation which will have to be considered by a competent commission.

I had the opportunity to receive from the minister some quite enlightening information in that connection and I think that the house should not cut that item, because it is quite important for the modernization of our weight system and also the combination of our measure system with that of European countries adopted by most commonwealth countries, including Australia and soon to be adopted by the United States.

Now, I think that the amount provided should be left to the minister, because it is a rather small amount and there is no likelihood of any scandal or squandering. We would be foresighted if we gave to that commission the means to report to the government in the shortest possible time and suggest the measures to be taken in order to apply the decimal system. I support the suggestion of my friend the honourable member for Timiskaming and I think that the house should also approve it.

[*English*]

Mr. Hales: I was in hopes that we would pass these estimates tonight, and I do not want to delay them. However, a principle is