

*Standards Council of Canada*

The bill specifically provides in clause 4(1) that the council is to "foster and promote" standardization—not to write standards—and to promote co-operation between all existing agencies, whether private or governmental. The latter provision is to be found in clauses 4(2) (a) and (b).

In meeting new standardization needs, the council is directed to obtain the co-operation of existing organizations accredited to it. That is to be found in clause 4(2) (f) (i). It is not intended that the council will write standards itself. Its role would be to encourage the identification of needs.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps I ought to add it will please my tough friends of the NDP, that in the event that existing organizations prove unwilling or unable, for whatever reason, to meet an identified standardization need in Canada, the council has the power to promote the establishment of a new organization to see that the need is met. However eager we may be to use available and existing agencies, I do not think it would be acceptable to ask that the council be completely in the hands of existing agencies. That is why, if the council identifies a need for a standard in a certain area of endeavour, whether it be in processing, manufacturing or any other, the council can say, "We want to establish that standard." If existing organizations do not move to introduce the new standards, then it will be the job of this organization, to create a body that will do so.

I have received many letters expressing the fear that we would not respect existing organizations. We will. There is no intention of having the standards council duplicate the work of existing organizations. That would be pointless. In their own fields, existing organizations are performing very useful functions. But if a new need develops, if existing organizations cannot meet the need, then clause 4(2)(f)(i) will ensure that the council can take action that is clearly in the public interest.

Existing organizations will maintain their own freedom to determine their own priorities and policies. Contrary to the statements that have appeared in some newspapers, the establishment of the standards council does not imply a takeover of present independent agencies. The procedures for standards formulation in Canada remain unchanged under the proposed act. Existing procedures employed by major standards-writing agencies such as the CSA and CGSB have performed well. Recent indications suggest an

increased desire by such agencies to secure maximum participation in standards writing by interested parties.

The establishment of the council will extend the principle of consultation and participation to the level of policy formulation at the full national level, so that interested parties may have a chance to be heard not only in standards writing but in planning the whole direction of standardization activities in Canada in the future. I hesitate to use the word "Parliament" in this connection, but perhaps I ought to do so. This will be the Parliament of standards in Canada. Its members might not be elected but will be sent there by their respective associations.

Bringing standardization in Canada under the umbrella of the proposed council is expected to have particular advantages in the realm of international trade. I, as minister responsible for external trade, would like to see the council fully involved in that. The new council, by providing a forum where an overview of Canada's standardization activities can be arrived at, will ensure that competing interests are reconciled and that a balanced posture reflecting all these interests can be taken by our Canadian representatives at those different international organizations I have already mentioned. They will speak with one voice, to use a phrase the Prime Minister used today when talking of another matter. They will speak with a reconciled voice in international matters. The council will also be asked to take responsibility for the development and co-ordination of the planning and preparation for conversion of Canadian industry to the metric system of measurement, including metric standards.

What about the organization and financing of the council, Mr. Speaker? As I have said, a national standards organization must be sufficiently broadly based to take full account of all sectors of interest and all standardization activities in the country. The standards council would satisfy this requirement. Members of the council, all 57 of them, would be drawn from primary and secondary industry, distributive and service industry, consumer associations, trade associations, labour unions, professional associations and from federal, provincial and municipal governments.

• (3:40 p.m.)

In this connection, I should stress that the standards council of Canada will be independent of the government—I emphasize the word "government"—in its policies;