

Standards Council of Canada

dards organizations move, I think it is in the national interest that the Standards Council of Canada should have the power to create an organization that will do so or to ask an existing organization to do what is needed. I believe this is in the national interest. After all this is our responsibility in this House. We are not here to do what the Canadian Standards Association believes is right.

• (4:40 p.m.)

We are here to decide, with all the facts before us, what is in the interests of Canada. As Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, I am not here to defend the interests of industry; I am here to defend the interests of the people of Canada, and I think it is high time that all of us here concentrated on this particular matter. I add that the Standards Council will not operate inspection or testing laboratories; it will not invade the revenue sources of the Canadian Standards Association or those of other organizations.

The hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Hales) is particularly concerned about the finances of the Council as he has to live up to his reputation in these matters. I might say to him that the Standards Council's expenses will be paid out of moneys appropriated by Parliament, so that it will not encroach on the revenues of the Canadian Standards Association or of other organizations. The Canadian Standards Association has its own money which is derived from the services they render to industry. In addition the funds voted by Parliament for its own operation, the Standards Council will have funds to assist the CSA and other standards organizations. When the Standards Council of Canada becomes fully operational in two or three years' time, the annual expenses of the Council and of its staff are expected to be about \$400,000. It is also expected that grants to assist the other standards organizations will be determined by the Council on the basis of need. However, it is expected that initially upwards of \$200,000 will be required for this purpose annually.

The point was raised that in this time of austerity this was too expensive an item. I believe the hon. member for Wellington, whose intelligence can only be compared to his responsibility regarding public funds, should bear in mind that possibly millions of dollars are not being earned, are in fact being lost, because of deficiencies in our standards operations. I think this should be taken into account at this time.

Mr. Hales: Would the minister permit a question at this point? Could he advise the House on what budget the Canadian Standards Association operates?

Mr. Pepin: I think it is about \$4 million to \$5 million, but, if my memory serves me correctly, most of this is derived from revenues for services, the very direct services it renders to industry, for example, in the form of testing and inspecting. As the hon. member knows, the federal government provides \$51,000 to help the CSA fulfil its international responsibilities. Of course, this will be part of the \$200,000 which I already mentioned.

It has been mentioned that the staff of the Council would be very numerous. The Council will be responsible for determining what it needs to do and in the light of appropriations by Parliament and the size of the staff it will require to do it. At the time that the government and the Canadian Standards Association steering committee met, it was estimated that a staff of 13 professional people and 11 support people would be required. Since the Council will not engage in standards writing, testing and inspection activities, it will not need to hire or steal away personnel from CSA or from any other standards organization.

I should like to comment on many other points but my time is almost exhausted. One subject which was raised very often in the House has to do with a comparison between what the bill we are introducing now proposes to establish and what exists in France, Great Britain, the United States or elsewhere in the world. I have a series of comparisons before me now and the conclusion is simply that we have created something *sui generis*. In some ways it is like the British Council and in other ways it is unlike it. In some aspects it is like the French standards organization and in other aspects it is not. What is wrong with that? We are creating something that is typically Canadian, and personally I am all in favour of that. I understand that some Americans disagree with the way it is done in the United States, and this would only confirm that we should do our own thing.

There is one more point I would like to mention, especially in the light of what the hon. member for Malpeque (Mr. MacLean) said regarding the importance of conversion to the metric system. I am very concerned about the delays that this bill is encountering in the House because it was our intention,