

Standards Council of Canada

In June, 1968, the Canadian Standards Association annual meeting approved a resolution supporting the creation of the Standards Council of Canada. In July, 1968, 258 organizations selected by the federal government-CSA steering committee were sent detailed information of proposals concerning the establishment of the standards council of Canada. Each organization was asked to indicate its reaction and replies indicated an overwhelmingly favourable reaction. I do not know what those who did not reply would have said, of course.

In June, 1969, the unanimous support of the steering committee proposing the establishment of the standards council of Canada was submitted to the government. The government decided, then, to proceed on the basis of the committee's recommendation. After four years of careful consideration and consultation with standards writers and users, the time had come indeed for us to take concrete action. Thus, in December, 1969, this House gave first reading to the present bill.

• (3:30 p.m.)

What is in the Bill? The objects of the council are defined. Those objects are to "foster and promote"—and I do not know how many times I shall repeat those words before the close of my presentation. Nowhere in the bill will one see the word "replace". The objects are to foster and promote in Canada the voluntary standardization of weights and measures, quality and performance of goods and industrial and commercial methods and practices not expressly provided for by law. I am not trying to invade the domain of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford). We are creating here a voluntary organization dealing with voluntary standards, voluntarily arrived at and voluntarily implemented.

Mr. Peters: Why is this bill being introduced?

Mr. Pepin: Mr. Speaker, the intention of the bill will be to advance the national economy, benefit the health, safety and welfare of the public, assist and protect consumers, facilitate domestic and international trade, and further international co-operation in the field of standards.

Mr. Peters: But what does it all mean?

[Mr. Pepin.]

Mr. Pepin: Some reaction is coming from the NDP side of the House: the voluntary approach is not considered strong enough. I must, therefore, repeat that standardization can be achieved by two different methods, one that is voluntary, and the other that is mandatory. These are two different means to the same objective; they do not contradict each other, they complement each other. There is no reason to believe that the voluntary way is not productive; neither are there reasons to believe that the mandatory way is always unnecessary. It sometimes is necessary. We are talking about two different ways of doing a good thing.

To reach its objective, the council will foster and promote co-operation between all interested parties, manufacturers, commercial interests, service industries, government, and consumers. As I said, the council will speak to and for the whole population of Canada.

The council, I repeat, will be concerned with voluntary standards only. I have already said on two occasions that the standards developed on a voluntary basis might later be adopted by governments and become mandatory. That will be a decision for the different levels of government to take. The council will have no power to enforce standards. As I said, the standards referred to in this bill are to be voluntarily arrived at, voluntarily adopted—

An hon. Member: Why repeat?

Mr. Pepin: I am repeating because I am expecting to face some lack of understanding on these points, and I should like to prevent it.

Mr. Peters: We will vote against the bill, anyway.

Mr. Pepin: If hon. members on the other side of the House want to oppose the bill, they ought to know what they are opposing. That is why I am repeating some of my remarks.

An hon. Member: I suppose we are all stupid.

Mr. Pepin: The standards council will make maximum use of existing capacities and Canadian organizations concerned with standardization. The demands placed upon existing organizations for developing new standards are expected to increase. The increase will come about partly as a result of the creation of the national council, because of the great deal of interest it will generate.