

Standards Council of Canada

Mr. Pepin: It is not an unfair statement. I am sorry, I am moving into English. I could give a list of 50 sectors in industry within which the CSA has not been fully operative or operative at all.

Mr. McGrath: You are not perfect either.

Mr. Pepin: That is exactly my point. But the way hon. members opposite speak of the CSA, it is as if they are speaking about God or the Bible. The CSA is only one of the standards organizations in Canada; there are many others. The CSA is the most important one and has done wonderful things, but there are many other things it has not done.

The hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) asked me what was the philosophy behind this legislation, and the philosophy is simply that. We observe that we have a number of standards-making organizations in Canada; we observe that there are some areas unstandardized; we observe that there is no really national standard policy-making organization. There is no one to decide, for example, in which area a greater effort is needed. This is exactly the reason we have brought the bill into the House.

I think this procedure is quite rational and has been done in other areas of activity. For example, we have a Canada Science Council. I suggest it is quite desirable and normal to have a Canadian Standards Council that is representative of all interests, of consumers, of all levels of government, of all types of groups concerned with standards. Each of these will be represented so that a truly national policy on standards will be evolved. It will be the focus for the forum, the umbrella, under which all those concerned with this sphere of Canadian activity will meet. I think this is a most desirable objective.

• (4:30 p.m.)

Mr. Hales: Would the minister accept a question.

Mr. Pepin: Yes.

Mr. Hales: Would the minister not agree that the Canadian Standards Association has done a very commendable job in the past on a national basis? Is there any reason that organization should not be allowed to continue in this way?

Mr. Pepin: I have already said that I have great admiration for the Association and certainly it will be allowed to continue. At the same time I also said that in my estimation—

and I hope it will also be in the estimation of most members of this House—this organization has not satisfied fully the criteria which I believe should be met by an organization representing the total Canadian interest in matters of standardization. I do not think it has.

I have received letters from many people, Mr. Speaker, and I, like the hon. member, will read some of my correspondence in a few minutes.

Mr. Hales: That is the only point on which we differ.

Mr. Pepin: I do not think so.

[*Translation*]

I would like now to come back to the French language Mr. Speaker.

The hon. member's reaction was very interesting. It is quite typical I think. The official opposition usually adopts the "Why change" attitude. It is going to cost more, they say. Why create something new when there are already well established organizations which apparently are quite satisfactory?

On the other hand, the NDP's attitude is exactly the opposite. If the new Standards Council is not—

[*English*]

Mr. Lundrigan: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the minister would get around to reacting to the fundamental questions raised by hon. members rather than again philosophizing on how he agrees or disagrees with various members.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pepin: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, but I did not get the question if there was one.

An hon. Member: There was no question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pepin: I was precisely talking about those two attitudes. One, conservative if I may say so, wishing to keep what we already have regardless of its numerous imperfections and the other, from the New Democratic Party, which consists in abolishing what we already have in the hope of getting the ideal thing.

So, as a good Liberal, I suggest a compromise between both extremes. I am pleased to see that the hon. member for Champlain seemed also in favour of a Standards Council of Canada while using the Canadian