

Metric Conversion

the project, having progressed to the present stage, should be maintained. The consumer has seen the effects of metrication appearing around us day by day, for instance, the road signs, the weather reports, and some consumer products.

Representing a riding having a large number of persons born outside of Canada brings me in contact with perhaps a degree of metric acceptance that is not present in some locations.

The Canadian General Electric plant in Guelph, I am told, uses the metric system completely and it owes many of its invasions into the world of commerce to that fact. One of our large freezer plants in the city of Guelph, the Woods Company, owes a lot of its invasion into the export market because they too are completely metric.

When I was listening to my opponents on the other side I had a feeling that I was in the past. I felt somewhat like Edison when people wanted to keep the candle and he wanted to bring on electricity. I felt somewhat like Henry Ford when he was trying to produce the motor car, and I also felt somewhat like Orville Wright when people were standing around telling him that his machine would not fly.

With respect to the definition of the voluntary system, I think their definition is to be able to volunteer not to be able to do something. The voluntary system that we want to see is the voluntary system to do something which we have all agreed upon, but to be able to do it gradually and in consultation. I believe that is the system that we have been trying to put in place.

The first aim was to introduce the metric system and to interpret it in relation to terms that are relevant to daily living. But the older measurements will be with us for a long time to come and, of course, it will be of some inconvenience to make these conversions. I do not want to sound like a put down to those people who will have difficulty making those conversions. But where there is a will, there is a way.

I have been making conversions for some years. Most of the international scientific world deals with the metric system. As

the world becomes smaller, we must be able to communicate in a universal language. About 90 per cent of the people in the world use metric measurements for everyday purposes. So it makes sense in the interests of uniformity that Canada should adopt metric measurements.

I am not one of those metricators who is filled with evangelic zeal nor, I hope, are my honourable opponents ferocious anti-metricants, but I am sure that we are all trying to attain the same results. I have said that the hon. member opposite and I have different ideas about the voluntary system and I will not go into details about that again.

For eight years now people have been asking why are we going metric? The simplest answer is that it makes a lot of sense. Every nation in the world—with the exception of some so small that they are not really significant in terms of international trade—is on the metric system or is committed to converting to it. In spite of what hon. members on the other side of the House say, it is simpler. There are seven base units of measurement in the metric system. With the old imperial system there are 53.

In the United Kingdom some of these imperial units, such as the furlong and the bushel, are no longer legal. The situation in Britain regarding the use of metric measurement has been the subject of a lot of speculation.

● (1700)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I wonder if the House would excuse me if I recognized my mother, who is 91 years old today, and is in the gallery.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired.

[*Translation*]

It being five o'clock, this House stands adjourned until Tuesday next at two o'clock pursuant to Standing Order 2(3).

At 5.03 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.