

Metric System

involved in a continual struggle to make ends meet. He cannot afford the energy, time or expense needed to learn a new system which offers him no tangible benefits. The metric system will not make his land more productive, nor his cattle healthier, nor gain him a single extra dollar on market day. Is it any wonder he is resentful?

In previous debates the government attempted to slough off the concern of my colleagues about the effect the proposed change from acres to hectares will have on the land titles system in western Canada. The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain dealt with some of those effects. It has been argued that provincial and municipal officials will not necessarily need to change their system of land measurement, to keep in tune with Wheat Board changes. However, such changes are already discussed in provincial legislatures.

I agree with my colleague for Vegreville who said during the committee hearings on this bill that if a farmer will have to use hectares in his quota allocations and in his dealings with the Canadian Wheat Board, it only follows suit that the municipalities and the countries will use the same measurement to be consistent. I say that the cost of such changes will be enormous, and the end results extremely confusing. As land is sold, new titles will have to be drawn up in terms of hectares. A patchwork system of land registry will be the outcome, some parcels of land being measured in acres and others in hectares. This will lead to unnecessary confusion.

The grid system of land measurement, with its sections, square miles and acres has served us well for many years. It is a simple system which all of us in western Canada understand. We all know our roads are laid out in distances of one mile by two miles, that each square mile encompasses 640 acres and each township encompasses 36 sections. The hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) during the second reading debate discussed the origin of this system of land measurements. The benefits of its simplicity have been apparent over the years. Its worth has been shown time and again. I might add that the western land titles system is the envy of a number of other Canadian provinces—indeed, of some other countries.

It would be foolhardy if the government, for the sake of consistency, were to replace a tried and trusted system with one which bears no relationship to the existing method of land registry. What are the benefits of the proposed change? I am having a hard time discovering what benefits are to be gained from such a system of land measurement as the government proposes.

We should consider the very idea of change most seriously. Before we cast out old methods and introduce new ones we should evaluate carefully the costs and benefits involved and ask ourselves: What price are we paying for this change? True, in much of the history of the western world it has been held that change is inherently good in and of itself. Today we are re-examining this idea, calling it in question. Environmentalists have argued that the ecological costs of some industrial innovations are prohibitive. Educators have begun to discard so-called new teaching methods and are reverting to the old, tried and true system.

[Mr. Schellenberger.]

That the new system is a failure is demonstrated by the fact that today some students can hardly read or write even when they seek to enter university. We now know that hasty, ill-advised change can hinder, rather than hasten, progress. That is why I urge the government to accept the amendment proposed today by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain and thereby do the Canadian people a great service.

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, since I was unable to participate in the debate on second reading by reason of attendance at committee meetings, I am particularly pleased to have the opportunity to speak on third reading of this bill. As hon. members know, the constraints of committee attendance sometimes make it impossible for members to participate in debates in this House.

Since first introducing this legislation the government has paused, has delayed, as it were. That delay has been to the good for it has enabled grain producers, especially those in western Canada, to let their members of parliament know their gut reaction to this bill. I have been made aware of the reaction of constituents as a result of correspondence and personal visits. I point out that nearly all this reaction became evident after the second reading debate, after news of these changes had become known to constituents and to the shirt-sleeved grain farmers of western Canada.

May I call it one o'clock?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. It being one o'clock, I do now leave the chair until two o'clock p.m.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

INFORMATION

REASON FOR FAILURE OF COPIES OF TORONTO "SUN" TO APPEAR IN OTTAWA—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Tom Cossitt (Leeds): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 to move the following motion seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie):

That the government advise the House of the whereabouts of 700 copies of the Toronto *Sun* dated June 9, 1977, placed on an Air Canada flight to Ottawa early this morning, and, in particular whether or not anyone in the government or in the Liberal Party, acting on behalf of the government had anything to do with this paper not appearing on Ottawa newstands, and, finally, whether or not the reason was that the newspaper contained an article which might be embarrassing to the Liberal Party and damaging to its campaign director, Senator Keith Davey.