

Metric Conversion

the responsibility of bringing that corporation and other Crown corporations before it each year with a proper audit requesting proper information so that the types of things I have just described would not be allowed to exist.

● (1600)

I have put questions on the Order Paper requesting information of this company. They have been on the Order Paper for over two months and have not been answered. If a Member of Parliament does not get proper information, it is impossible for him to even look into the company on behalf of the taxpayers of the nation. That is why one of the recommendations we are making is so important. That recommendation is for the establishment of a joint committee. I hope to continue my remarks on accountability when this Bill comes up again in the near future.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order, please. It being four o'clock, the House will now proceed with Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS— MOTIONS

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Shall all orders and items preceding No. 99 stand by unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Stand.

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[English]

METRIC CONVERSION

IMPERIAL AND METRIC DUAL LABELLING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should permit, on a voluntary basis, the dual labelling in both the imperial and metric systems of all goods and products used in the production of agricultural commodities.

He said: Mr. Speaker, until the Clerk read the motion I had not realized this was Motion No. 99. That is a pretty significant number in Canada. It is the number which Wayne Gretzky, the very prominent hockey star of the Edmonton Oilers, wears. I hope I will be as successful in achieving the passage of this motion as he is in scoring goals.

I believe the motion before the House is logical, realistic, practical and makes a lot of common sense. There is a farmer from Montreal here who is sniggering. That is about the

mentality of the Members across the way. It is the mentality of the people who disregard the agricultural community and shove these things down our throats without any consideration, knowledge or understanding of the facts. I suppose the Hon. Member will pose as an instant expert in the agricultural industry in a few moments. I appeal to all Hon. Members of the House to consider what the motion does and to support it.

We have had far too many costly experiences caused by confusions and complications which have arisen in the conversion from imperial to metric. They have resulted in the loss of crops and severe damage to production in the agricultural industry. This ought not to be ignored. I appeal to all Members of the House to consider this motion seriously, a motion which, I repeat, is realistic, practical and makes common sense.

The key word in the motion, Mr. Speaker, is "voluntary". In this Party we have never believed in the forced imposition of metric in the country. We do not believe that the imperial system should be outlawed. We believe there is room for both, particularly during the transformation from imperial to metric. We are really saying that there is room for freedom of choice, Mr. Speaker. In my view there is no justifiable reason for refusing dual labelling. It would be convenient, it would enhance safety, and it would be much more economical for the producers. As I have said, there have been some very huge crop losses as a result of confusion due to metric conversion. I will support this statement later on in my remarks.

With the exception of one Bill having to do with the conversion in the grain industry, there was never any legislation to bring about metric. It has all been done through Order in Council. As a result, many of the worst fears of Canadians have been borne out by the result of the forced implementation of metric. It has caused confusion, uncertainty and costly mistakes. Altogether it has imposed a very costly burden upon the economy of Canada.

This is particularly true in the agricultural sector and particularly in the use of agricultural chemicals. With today's farming methods producers have come to rely very heavily upon fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides to enhance crop yields. These chemicals are very expensive and complex. It is important that they be applied properly. There is simply no room for trial and error. If the chemical is applied too lightly, it will be ineffective. If it is applied too heavily, it will burn the crops. There is no room for error.

There have been many examples of the results of confusion in the conversion from the imperial to the metric system. The *Farm and Country* magazine of July 20, 1982 carried the headline, "Metric Goof Takes Toll". This article reads:

Stratford-based ministry crop specialist Pat Lynch says 200 acres of "dead alfalfa" resulted from farmers in his area using the recommendations. He estimates that there are about 50 to 100 mistakes in the book.

This was a result of the conversion. About 50 per cent of the year's barley crop in a particular area was damaged as a result of a miscalculation in the application of weed spray used on the crop. There are many other examples.