

Metric System

spoken tonight. The NDP government in Saskatchewan has beaten this government in the race. Perhaps St. Laurent was right that members of the CCF were only Liberals in a hurry.

I have in my hand the Saskatchewan *Gazette* for April 30, 1976. Under "Regulations Under the Regulations Act" it says:

All plans submitted for registration purposes in any of the Land Titles Offices shall be subject to the approval of the Chief Surveyor—

Nobody complains about that.

—and all surveys, performed on or after July 1, 1976, plans of which are intended for registration purposes, shall be drawn with Metric measurements . . .

What a pitiful situation for the farmers. They are only now waking up to this. The only reason farmers and city people know what is happening today is that there has been a week of debate. The farmers do not want this, and neither do city people. Members of the NDP are Liberals in a hurry. Whether the provincial government will enforce metrication without this federal legislation, I do not know.

I see that someone has called the Minister without Portfolio, and I hope the minister from Crowfoot will take a position because he did not speak in the House on the metric system when he was a member of my party. I hope he speaks tonight, and I hope he speaks in cabinet. I want the Minister without Portfolio to call the deputy premier of Alberta, who is a great personal friend of mine, Hugh Horner. I want the minister to tell him that he supports what I am saying.

Mr. Marchand: He is a good friend of Jack's, too.

Mr. Woolliams: I am sure he is.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Not politically.

Mr. Woolliams: I do not know about that. I am not getting into that subject.

Mr. Fox: Let's keep politics out of it.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Let brotherly love continue.

Mr. Woolliams: I underestimated what this is going to cost the country, but apart from the cost, surely the history of western Canada, which was started by my own family in one area, is important. Mr. Coldwell from Saskatoon-Biggar was part of that history. I have records here from the Muirland School District 2196, and they show quarter sections being sold for \$8. All the settlers' names are here. They came from Ontario, from Quebec, from Europe and from Asia. We all started out together. They raised their sons and daughters. Now the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren are on the land. That land is measured in acres, quarter sections and sections.

The minister scoffed. He said it was logical to do this. It is the most illogical thing I have seen put forward, and although the political philosophies of the Minister without Portfolio differ from mine today, I am sure he will speak in cabinet and in this House and lend his voice and all the ability he has at his command to fight this kind of legislation.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

● (2050)

I should like somebody to explain why we must have a metric system. Surely the farmers could be exempted and the lots and blocks in the cities could be exempted from registration. Can we not go that far? If ever there was a justifiable and reasonable motion it is this one which calls on the House to send this bill back to the committee for further study.

I want the people of western Canada to know that the Progressive Conservative Party stands alone in opposing this legislation tonight. I want western Canadians to know where the minister from Saskatchewan and the minister from Alberta stand—I want them to stand against this bill.

Just because the Minister without Portfolio crossed the floor does not mean we are not still friends. I admire him and I want him to stand in this House now and tell us that this is one thing he will not sacrifice for a cabinet post—the destruction of the historical background of our country. I want him to stand for the farmers, but I do not want him ever to stand on a platform and claim he spoke out the way my colleagues did this afternoon and as I am attempting to do in my own inimical way tonight.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woolliams: We hear a lot of talk about national unity these days, Mr. Speaker. Is there anything that would destroy national unity in the prairie provinces faster than this bill? It is a short and simple bill but is very destructive of everything for which we stand.

This is an historic night because there is an election going on in Ontario, Mr. Speaker, and I can understand that members want to know how things stand there. When I finish my remarks I will go and see for myself.

Mrs. Holt: It is a minority.

Mr. Woolliams: We do not know that. Even if we are a minority we stand against this kind of dictatorial authoritarian government that wants to destroy the fabric of our country. From the bottom of my heart I plead with the government to drop this bill. Get it out of the way. Even voting Conservative should not be such a crime that the fabric of our history and traditions is to be destroyed. That is my plea.

In the early 1900's the President of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association addressed that body in Regina. He said:

In referring to this subject in my address to you a year ago, I made the statement that what was wanted was "a general recognition by all classes of the importance of agriculture, and an honest endeavor by all to place it in the position to which it belongs." The importance of agriculture is now fully recognized, it being admitted by all that only thru the prosperity of agriculture can our country as a whole be prosperous. What is being done in the way of permanent assistance? Very little. However, there is an abundance of advice from almost innumerable sources, and no doubt of good intention, yet of such a conflicting nature that the farmer has about come to the conclusion that he had better follow his own dictates. Mixed farming has been the cry—raise hogs, etc. What do we find in connection with the marketing of hogs? Exactly the same conditions as with wheat.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his allotted time has expired.