

I hope hon. members opposite are listening, Mr. Speaker.

—this course of action will be pursued. You would have every farmer in Canada behind you. If you agree, now is the time to start working on it. Thank you for listening.

The editorial referred to, which appeared in the *Western Producer* on December 2, reads as follows:

**METRICS: BRITONS DIG HEELS IN**

Britain learned that it would go metric in 1965. It has been 11 years since then and the Weights and Measures Bill—as it is called—is still battling its way through the House of Commons.

How has it fared? What can Canada learn from their experience which spans many more years than does our journey toward metrication?

According to a story in the Business Section of *The Sunday Telegraph*, November 7, entitled, "Metrication Muzzled and Delayed", a number of changes have been made to the bill as it fought its way through house committees. In order to ensure its progress the British government has conceded one major point: it has agreed that the mile, the inch, the pint and the gallon will be preserved and exempted from statutory metrication. Apparently the Common Market rules and regulations make it clear that such exemptions can be made.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, what provision has the Canadian government made in this regard; what dialogue has it had with Great Britain in this regard?

The editorial continues:

Some members of parliament on both sides of the House were concerned lest metrication increase consumer problems, already vexed enough by inflation, and they asked for a delay in metrication of four basic foodstuffs until after 1979. The foodstuffs were bread, cheese, tea and butter. However, the government offered to prevent metrication of any foodstuffs before April, 1978. The members of parliament accepted the broader alternative.

The government also agreed that fish, meat, vegetables and fruit, which in Britain are usually weighed out in front of the consumer in smaller shops, will not be subjected to compulsory metrication until after 1980.

Canada is not faced at present with the problems confronting the British economy but it is possible we might find it useful to consider their experience with the legislation to see if it could have any application in this country.

This is why I say the Minister of State (Small Businesses) should have given some consideration to small business when he was speaking.

Some time ago the Retail Council of Canada estimated that it will cost at least \$50 million to convert measuring scales in some 28,000 retail outlets, particularly food stores, to the metric system. My note on this says that the council wrote to finance minister Turner as well as provincial treasurers. It is some time since the Hon. John Turner was minister of finance, so that is how long the government has known about the problem. The cost to the small retailers is going to be tremendous. I think the minister should have given consideration to this problem before going ahead. We know what inflation has done and we know that the profits of the small business people are not great; we also know that any increase in their costs will be passed on to the consumer. Once again, the consumer pays.

Just today I spoke to a fairly large retailer of building products who told me that his increased costs will have to be passed on to the user. Therefore even in the construction industry it is going to be a problem. People buying a home today find it costs enough already.

**Metric System**

I feel greater consideration should have been given to the problems associated with this bill. I was quite interested that the minister did not mention football but I see the Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) (Mrs. Campagnolo) in the House so perhaps she will have some comment. I wonder if that game will be played as "first down and eight and three quarter metres to go".

There should have been more dialogue on the Canadian scene about this whole metric system. Canadian people are intelligent and can adapt to circumstances over a period of time. Certainly farmers, mechanics, and all those people who will be hit hardest should have been considered. There should have been provision to protect them and not all of a sudden subject them to this situation. I hope the minister will give some thought to that. Mr. Speaker, I see you are ready to rise, and I want to thank you for the opportunity of speaking on behalf of those people about whom I am vitally concerned.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** The hon. minister on a point of order.

**Mr. Marchand:** Mr. Speaker, there was some discussion earlier with spokesmen from the other parties to the effect that we might complete all stages of the bill tonight. I wonder if I may inquire whether we might not see the clock and have the other speakers make their contributions and complete the bill as we agreed earlier.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Mr. Speaker, there certainly have been discussions about dealing with this matter, but it was my impression that if we reached ten o'clock with all those who wished to participate in the debate having done so, we might have been able to complete the bill. In canvassing my colleagues—as I always do to make sure we have a consensus on this side of the House—I find that a number of members still wish to address themselves to this important legislation. I also understand that another member of the NDP may wish to speak.

● (2200)

**An hon. Member:** We don't want to speak.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** It is ten o'clock. Perhaps he has gone home. At any rate I am afraid we cannot go along at this point with the suggestion made, owing to present circumstances.

**Mr. Paproski:** Try again, round about February 1.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. There is not unanimous consent to adopt the suggestion which has been made.