

## SOMETHING ABOUT THE METRIC SYSTEM.

THERE is a good deal of talk about the metric system coming into vogue in the United States, and in Great Britain too. There are strong agitations in both countries, and a bill is actually before Congress, but in the meantime a compulsory change is not likely. That its adoption may come soon is not improbable, and then Canada would have to fall into line with the Mother Country and the States, her two biggest customers.

A Boston reporter has been asking various authorities how the metric system would work. Dr. Gould, of Cambridge, stated: "To-day the metric system is generally understood in the United States. Everybody who has had a grammar school training should know it by heart, because no intelligent person has dared to say that it is difficult to learn. Of course, it is not common in every-day life; that is, a housewife would be looked upon as an ignorant foreigner or a person of unsound mind if she should ask her grocer for a kilogram of tea or a litre of milk, or inquire at a dry goods store for the price of two metres of blue ribbon, a decimetre wide and all silk.

"The decimal system, you know, originated from the fact that there are ten figures, ten digits, in a man's hands. The United States used the decimal system first, as the basis for its coinage formula. Then France took the hint, and put it into tables of weights and measurement. But the metric system is not, as some encyclopedias say, the 'modern French system.' It was never exclusively French, but an international system. It belongs to the whole world.

"Its use is now obligatory all over the world, excepting in Russia, England and the United States. Russia is ready to adopt it whenever we do. And England, usually conservative, is agitating the subject with considerable liveliness. I should be exceedingly mortified," said the doctor, smiling, "if England should get in ahead of us. But I think there is no likelihood that the British will take up the metric unit before we do. The Hurley bill will pass; it must pass. Then we should have but one legal system of weights and measures. We shall no longer have thirty or forty different kinds of pounds and miles, but one universal pound and one universal mile.

"The people of this country should take to the system easily. It is now understood so well throughout the country that it will come into use without serious trouble. We have had thirty years' training, with no serious opposition. Ten or fifteen years ago the people knew the system better, but because it has been slow in coming they have inclined to forget it. It is perfectly clear in all its simplicity to-day to all reputable scientific men, to persons who have traveled in Europe, to druggists and many Government employes, and to European immigrants—not to speak of people in general who are well educated.

"The changes, you see, will be in favor of the people every time. A kilogram is more than two pounds, and thirty grams is more than one ounce; and the labor and liability to error in calculating are unspeakably less. The only thing worth considering in the way is the long names; but we shall have English equivalents of them in spelling and pronunciation, and with our high rate of intelligence, higher than that of Europe, we should take to the metric system easily.

"I won't take to it at all," said a butcher. "I was brought up to talk hundredweight, pounds and quarters. You might as well try to make me leave off English and talk Dutch."

"The Hurley bill's a joke; that's what it is," observed a dry goods dealer. "But I'm not running the Government. If it

wants to adopt this new-fangled system, why, let it go ahead. Only there's no Government on earth that can compel me to measure cloth and such stuff by any other system than that which my customers use. And I think it will be a long time before the people stop talking as they do now."

Another person was logical and to the point in his answer: "Nations are very careful and slow in radical reforms," said he. "People are not evenly enough educated to adopt new systems for everyday use, to think in metres and litres and kilograms, as if those terms were second nature to them. Consider the case with the French. They abolished their money piece, the sou, a hundred years ago, and substituted the 5 centimes piece. But the sou is as common to-day in France as it ever was. So if the metric system were introduced here, we should keep right on talking in quarts and feet and inches."

## NOTES.

Mr. W. R. Brock and Mr. B. B. Cronyn, of Toronto, have returned from Europe.

A special purchase of print blouses for retailing at 50c. has been made by W. R. Brock & Co.

Ladies' parasols and sunshades in special lines to retail at 50c., 75c., \$1 and \$1.25, are noted at Wyld, Grasett & Darling's.

Japanese glove baskets, open and folding fans, toothpicks, are some of the new Japanese goods shown by John Macdonald & Co.

Mr. A. J. Meharg, buyer for S. Greenshields, Son & Co.'s mens' furnishing and notions departments, has just returned from Europe.

John Macdonald & Co. report a full range of striped dimities, linen effects. The season's odds and ends in fancy and plain silks are being cleared out, as well as various lines of dress goods. A special line of dimity striped and print blouses in all colors, to retail at 60c., is noted.

"There is another point," said a man to THE REVIEW, "about your timely article on underweights in yarns. I hear that some makes guarantee 16 oz. to the lb., which looks all right, but they don't guarantee 6 lbs. to the spindle, and when you weigh them you will find about 5½ lbs."

Repeats in laces are reported to hand by Wyld, Grasett & Darling. The sale for all the fine makes in valenciennes, etc., in white and butter is very good. Lines of ladies' ribbed underwear, bleached and unbleached, the latter retailing at 10c., are reported. Fast black cotton hosiery, which is a specialty with the house, is in demand. A 2-inch black belt ribbon, retailing 15c. per yard, is a feature.

## REDUCTION IN AMERICAN PRINTS.

The chief feature in the United States market for prints last week was the reduction in price of the American indigo blues to 4c. per yard, a lower price than these goods have ever touched before. The general effect upon the market has not been important. It will allow jobbers to sell these prints ½c. per yard lower than before.

## OVERMAKES AT INTERESTING PRICES.

John Macdonald & Co. are offering several lines of overmakes in overalls, underwear, negligé shirts, half-hose, braces, etc., which will be specially interesting to the trade.