

ENGLISH VS. METRIC.

Editor of the Canadian Journal of Fabrics:—

Sir,—In your editorial, entitled "The Coming System of Weights and Measures," you tacitly assume that the metric is the "coming" system. This assertion is frequently made, but so far I have failed to find any evidence to support the assumption. Because a few autocratic governments in Europe have in the past hundred years forced their subjects to use the Metric System in the stores and market places, it by no means follows that this system is to become the world's standard.

In many industries, notably textile manufacturing, the attempt to drive out the old and drive in the metric standards has failed miserably, even in France. This is true not only in the silk, but also in the cotton, woolen, worsted, linen, hemp and jute industries. I do not ask you to accept this on my authority. You can find the proof in every Continental textile book and journal and in the proceedings of the Paris Metric Yarn Congress of 1900, where the members pictured the present Continental chaos in unmistakable terms.

You refer to this congress as follows:

At the recent International Congress, at Paris, held to promote a universal standard of yarn counts, it was agreed by the British representatives that such a universal system should be in metric terms and no other.

The fact is that the two English representatives were sent to the congress with instructions not to participate in the proceedings nor to commit the English Government in any way, but merely to listen, observe and report.

Further on you say:

Considering the conservatism of British manufacturers, the report of the Yarn Congress, referred to, is a striking testimony in favor of the Metric System.

That statement is rather amusing. That congress, with the exception of these two English representatives, was composed almost entirely of members from the Continent. The congress did not represent nor profess to represent British opinion in the slightest degree.

The thirty questions you refer to were proposed by the American Chamber of Commerce, at Paris, which is strongly pro-metric, and answered by the Societe des Ingenieurs Civils de France, which is still more strongly pro-metric. I ask you to publish both questions and answers to show your readers the damaging admissions they contain regarding the fallacy of the metric contention.

I ask you to note carefully the following statements from metric sources as to the present conditions of textile weights and measures on the Continent of Europe, more than a century after the Metric System was founded:

M. Lamoitier, l'Industrie Textile, Paris, October, 1902: Ah! These Americans are not considerate of our feelings and they are right. We are as much in the anarchy of weights and measures for the textile industry as at the time of the Revolution, for we have the denier of Montpellier and of Milan for silk, with the aune as a unit of length.

M. Lamoitier, l'Industrie Textile, Paris, October, 1902: It (a new metric law), would put a stop to the chaos which the Americans ridicule. * * * In short (this for the Chauvinists and consequently for all of us), they would not ridicule us any more. It is not pleasant to be thus continually ridiculed by foreigners, especially when they have reason for doing so.

M. Lamoitier, l'Industrie Textile, Paris, October, 1902: And what do we find here? The yarn count in the north of France is a length and in the centre a weight. What is more, it is a weight for organzine and a length for organzine waste! I will take my oath that the manufacturer of Rouen, if he has not studied each section separately, has no idea what is the standard of Reims or the denier of Lyons or Milan. And on the other hand the manufacturers of Reims and Lyons are likewise puzzled in making comparisons of the diverse numberings of the diverse materials.

M. Desire Ledville, Paris Metric Yarn Congress, 1900: We hope no new burdens will be imposed on the industry (woolen), but if we look the facts in the face we will find that notwithstanding the decree of 1810, and in spite of the serious efforts put forth by the industrial societies by many districts, we still have the ancient units of weights and measures, and we scarcely comprehend each other when we talk of spinning at Reims, Roubaix, Elbeuf, Sedan or Vienne, where the skein still measures 1,420, 710, 3,600, or 1,500 metres.

M. Lamoitier, l'Industrie Textile, Paris, October, 1902: After having established the Metric System is it not truly ridiculous that more than 110 years later we should be still using the English yard, the old or French pound, the denier of Montpellier or of Milan, the ancient aune, the many different skeins, etc.?

M. Lamoitier, l'Industrie Textile, Paris, October, 1902: And this is the reason why they are right in mocking us when they say we do not use the Metric System for numbering yarn and for weaving calculations. Nothing is more arbitrary than to reckon the yarn by the thousand metres and the width of the cloth and the picks of the filling by the inch. It is nonsense and a derision. Note also that while I speak here only of France, I could say as much of all Europe.

M. Boucher-Feyerick, Paris Metric Yarn Congress, 1900: We Belgians export enormous quantities of linen yarn to England, Asia and Egypt, and we cannot adopt the Metric System without risking the loss of this trade. Our customers in the countries named are familiar with the English system of numbering, and if we do not give it to them our competitors will, and we will lose the market. I speak not alone of myself, but of all Belgian spinners. We cannot change.

Baron Cantoni, Paris Metric Yarn Congress, 1900: It is necessary to remember that nearly all the exports of cotton yarn are from England, and we can do nothing if that country does not adopt the system we favor * * * The difficulty will always be in exporting to uncivilized lands, where the people have been accustomed for a hundred years to English measures and numbers, and where articles of cotton are frequently used as currency.

M. Louis Guerin, Paris Metric Yarn Congress, 1900: It is practically impossible for us (the French), to sell linen by any other than the English standard. * * * If the law of 1810, providing for the metric standard, is enforced, we shall be the first to complain of that which we have asked for.

In the face of such admissions as these, it is useless to deny that the attempt to force the Metric System on Continental Europe has been a failure. The partial success attained has resulted only in confusion. The truth about the