

This immensely decreases, in the most vital point, the power of the council. The so called heads of departments are to be present at the opening of tenders, and the city solicitor may be, if required. The heads of departments may take part in the discussion at the Board, but not vote. The council cannot alter the award of the Board of Control except by a two-thirds vote. This is a venturesome step, and with a dishonest Board of Control, it might be productive of serious abuses. But the danger is not, perhaps, very great. If any palpable abuse, in which the council was not concerned, were attempted, a two-thirds vote should not be difficult to obtain; and then, if anything was clearly wrong, the offender or offenders could be required to resign by another two thirds vote.

In the nicely poised system of checks and balances, the Board of Control is to nominate for appointment all heads of departments and sub-departments, and to "recommend" the salaries to be paid to all permanent officers, clerks or assistants; and no person not so nominated can be appointed by the council without a two-thirds vote of the members who vote. But the council may refer back to the Board of Control any such nomination. Before any nomination can be made, it must be backed by a favorable report from the head of the department. The responsibility of the heads of the departments is secured by the right which the Board of Control has to dismiss or suspend them, but the council can restore a dismissed officer on a two-thirds vote. The heads of departments have, in turn, the power to dismiss members of the staff, officers whom the Board of Control nominates under conditions that must often make nomination the certain precursor of election, and whom the council, under restriction, appoints. The chain of responsibility has several links. Members of the Board of Control, other than the mayor, are individually removable by a two-thirds vote of the council; heads of departments are removable by the Board of Control; subordinates are liable to dismissal, always presumably for cause, by heads of departments. Dismissal by the Board of a head of department is not necessarily final, since the council has the power of restoration by a two-thirds vote; but the dismissal of a subordinate by the head of a department is not subject to a similar appeal. The Board may prescribe the conditions of the dismissal of certain subordinates, and vest the power of dismissal in whomsoever they will, but this provision is not to deprive the heads of departments of the right to dismiss any subordinate which they possessed at the time of the passing of this Act. All the duties heretofore discharged by the Board of Administration will henceforth fall to the Board of Control, and the council may assign to it other duties. The Board may propose the amalgamation of departments or sub-departments. It would be along the lines of the present Act hereafter to propose the abolition of the School Trustees, a bill to accomplish which in the city of New York has been passed at Albany, and there is a movement in the same direction in London, England. The prospect of getting on the Board of Control ought to improve the quality of the material of which the council is made.

THE METRIC SYSTEM FOR THE UNITED STATES.

Custom is a powerful factor in the life of a people, and it is too much to expect that a nation's customs are to be easily changed, even though it be shown that the change would be to their advantage. Efforts have been made at different times and in different ways during the last forty years to have changes made in the English system of

coinage, and of weights and measures, that would approximate them to what may be called the French and American methods of reckoning. But the English people have been too firmly wedded to the pounds, shillings and pence mode of reckoning money, and to the long ton, the quarter, the rood, the perch, &c., in measurements, to permit them to be easily converted to what appear to us, on this side the Atlantic, to be much simpler forms of computation.

Four different schemes have been proposed, within some forty years, for the alteration of the British system of coinage to a decimal basis. The details of these are too minute to be given in this article; but the first of them proposed to retain the pound sterling as the unit of value and to divide it into 10 florins, the florin into 10 cents and the cent into 10 mills. It is admitted, by a high authority discussing the pros and cons of the scheme, that "the advantages of a decimal system seem considerably to preponderate"; while the objections to it certainly seem to us, who are used to it, not serious, with the exception of the difficulty of getting people to attempt the change. However it is something to have the authority we have mentioned acknowledge that "the introduction of the decimal system is merely a question of time."

In the French metrical system the unit of length is the *metre*, equal to 3.281 English feet. The unit of weight, the *gramme*, 15.434 English Troy grains. The *are* is the element of square measure, equalling 3.955 English perches, and the *litre* the element of all measures of capacity, being equal to 2.1185 English pints. Further, the *stere*, used as the element of cubic measure, contains 35.317 cubic feet English.

We are all familiar with the American system of coinage: the cent = 10 mills; the dime = 10 cents; the dollar = 10 dimes; the eagle = 10 dollars. In France the standard of value is the franc, equal to 100 centimes. It is many years since the Belgian and Swiss monetary systems were assimilated to the French. And in 1865 Italy joined France, Belgium and Switzerland in a treaty for the maintenance of a common system. Germany has more recently altered her currency in a decimal direction; her mark being equal to 10 groschens, or 100 pfennige. In Russia, too, they observe decimal proportions: the ruble = 100 kopeks; in Holland, the gilder = 10 dubbelts = 100 cents; and in Portugal, where the milrei = 1000 reis. There is thus a formidable aggregation of established custom, which must exercise great and continuous pressure on Great Britain to make some change.

It is much to be hoped that the United States Congress will pass the bill now before it, providing for the introduction of the metric system of weights and measures into that country. For, if this be done, and the Great Republic brings the system compulsorily into common use, Great Britain will be more likely than ever to use it also; indeed she will be, in a measure, compelled to do so.

At the same time this change cannot be made in a day, nor a year; indeed five years is too short a time in which to expect that the hundred years' commercial usages of a nation embracing so many varied interests as the United States, can be entirely altered, even by the force of law. Of course we in Canada are deeply interested in the matter, for the adoption of the metric system by the United States would help us to adopt it.

WEIGHTS.	
Milligramme equals.....	0.0514 grains
Centigramme "1543 "
Decigramme "	1.5434 "
GRAMME "	15.434 "
Decagramme "	154.34 " or 5.64 drams avoirdupois
Hectogramme "	3,527 oz. avoirdupois
Kilogramme "	2 lbs., 3 oz., 4.652 drams avoirdupois
Myriagramme "	22.048 lbs. avoirdupois
Quintal "	1 cwt., 3 qrs., 25 lbs., nearly