

organizations across western Canada have condemned the minister and the government with respect to its inability to state clearly what it intends to do with respect to this legislation.

● (2140)

There are a number of articles which have been written in western newspapers and various agricultural newspapers across Canada. I would like to refer to the most recent article, which appeared in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* on June 3, 1977, entitled "Grain Men 'Fed Up To The Teeth' With Ottawa's Delay Over Metric". Mr. Bruce MacMillan, the chairman of the Canadian Grains Council, is highly critical of the way in which the government has dealt with this particular matter. This gentleman is the chairman of a group which has been set up by this government.

Mr. Marchand: Why don't you let it go through?

Mr. Hnatyshyn: If the hon. minister would only listen and stop talking, I would appreciate it. As a member of parliament I expect to be treated with the same degree of respect that I give the minister on every occasion. I want to know what the minister is going to do with respect to the implementation of this bill. For him to say that it will be all right and for me to trust him is not acceptable. As much as I like the hon. minister, I am not going to accept that type of proposition from him. I would not expect him to accept that from me, as logical and as reasonable a person as I am, in all modesty.

Mr. Paproski: Hear, hear!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I would not expect the minister to accept that kind of *carte blanche* undertaking from me without having some idea. One has a responsibility to explain to his own constituents what is happening in parliament and what is going to happen with respect to any particular piece of legislation. My constituents are going to ask me: what has the minister got in mind? According to the minister, I am to go to my constituents and say that he says to trust him, that it will be all right and there will be some consultation. Who is he going to consult with? Is he going to consult with a group of Liberal supporters? Is he going to consult with a group of Liberal farmers? Is it going to be a group of Conservative farmers? Is it going to be a group of farmers from the Kamloops district? Is it going to be a group of farmers from Saskatoon-Biggar? I have no idea. I am not in a position to report to my constituents exactly what the minister has in mind. I do not think that is an unreasonable request.

The minister wants to know exactly what we should do to get this bill through. What time frame has the minister in mind? Is he going to consult for a week, a year, or ten years? I am interested in finding out what is going on. That is the reason I am speaking tonight. I am not simply standing up and talking to prevent the passage of this bill. On the contrary. I am speaking on an amendment which is a responsible amendment on the part of our party, as represented by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain.

Metric System

I should like the minister to have the opportunity of consultation which he said will take place. What is a more appropriate vehicle than a standing committee of this House of Commons going out to western Canada to hear the rank and file and give them an opportunity to bring forward their points of view with respect to this particular bill? That would give the standing committee an opportunity to digest this information and report it back to the House. There could be recommendations with respect to amendments to the bill, or conceivably there could be no amendments to the bill. We may be satisfied, after going out, that the bill in its present form is quite satisfactory. I do not reject that possibility. For the minister to sit in his place and wonder why we are not passing the bill is not acceptable, as far as I am concerned.

When this whole process started the farm organizations came forward at the request of the government and co-operated. Often at their own expense they allowed senior management personnel from these organizations to be seconded to the Metric Commission for the purpose of the implementation of the metric conversion in the farm industry. I can understand that sense of responsibility when requested by the government to come forward and serve. They are prepared to do so at their own expense in many instances. Those organizations were helping to talk about metric conversion, as far as the farm segment of our society is concerned.

I think, and the minister might agree, that they thought the government would be taking initiatives through the Metric Commission to deal with the average farmer and whether he would be represented by the farm organizations in question or not. Was this to happen by some process of osmosis? Was it thought that everybody in Saskatoon-Biggar comprehended completely, by the process of mental telepathy, what was going on in Ottawa? Was it thought that they understood and accepted the fact that these people were speaking on their behalf? It does not take a very large intellect to understand that it was clearly the responsibility of the government to undertake an educational process and let people know precisely what was in store.

The original date for the implementation of the metric system was to be February 1 of this year. *The Western Producer*, which is a newspaper published by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, carried an article on January 27, 1977, entitled "But Are The Farmers Ready For It?" The article reads as follows:

Two spokesmen for the grain industry say their only concern about the Feb. 1 metric conversion in the grain industry is that farmers are not ready for the change.

That is an indication at the beginning of this year of the failure of the government to inform, educate, and apprise western farmers of what was involved in metric conversion. The government should have indicated to them what type of expenses would be incurred and what relief would be available in terms of tax, if any, for metric conversion.

The article goes on to say:

"Our impression is that things are pretty well ready to roll; what we're wondering about is how much discussion there'll have to be with farmers," says