

Metric System

What does the government feel? They put the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Horner) in the cabinet. Where is he tonight? When he sat on this side, did he speak out on the metric system? No. His father was made a senator. R. B. Bennett would know, his brothers and his sisters would know. He was supposed to save the west. All I can say is that little Jack Horner sat in his corner playing with his metric system.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): I suggest to the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) that when he refers to members of the House he must refer to them by riding, not by name.

Mr. Woolliams: I did not refer to his riding because at one time I represented Bow River which was half of Crowfoot. I just quoted a little poem and I did not know whether Mr. Speaker would appreciate that I was referring directly to the new Minister without Portfolio who will try to take credit if this bill dies.

The people who will save western Canada from this bill and from this kind of legislation which will destroy our history are creating impossible situations which I will deal with in a few minutes. They said, "If we had a voice from Alberta in the cabinet, what we could do". They are still running over us. As I said, every parcel of land was surveyed. There are 160 acres to a quarter, 640 acres to a section, 36 sections to a township, and nine townships to a municipality. Now we have counties. As a lawyer I can tell you that you can go into any land titles office in western Canada and you can do an historic search.

You can see here that Mr. Wotherspoon from Harris, Saskatchewan, has a south east quarter, section 18, 160 acres. If his name is on that title in the land titles office and nothing is stamped on the back of the title, he knows he has a clear title to his land. Even if someone had a mortgage or a debt, unless he is registered, when that land is transferred, it can be done with ease because by law it goes to whoever the person is to whom the land is transferred. That system has been admired not only in Canada but throughout the world. In fact in Ontario, which has a different system of measuring land, you have to go back 200 or 300 years, and unless you have been practising law that long, you would have difficulty finding the title. Some of the firms in Toronto can tell you that that file contains a historic search of the land title and in 1960 they proved it was clear, but a young lawyer would have to go to the beginning of time to find out how many chains long that land is.

● (2040)

Our system is our history and our tradition. Every farmer and every person who lives in the city knows that if you go to the land titles office, you can check a title in two minutes and make a transfer with ease.

I dealt with how land was surveyed. If you go north or south in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Alberta, every two miles

there is a road allowance. If you go east or west, there is a road allowance every mile. The roads are measured in rods and feet, and land is measured in acres, not hectares. I checked with my son-in-law to find out what he is earning per hour as a surveyor. He earns about \$18 an hour to re-survey western Canada on this new system. I said this would cost \$100 million. I apologize. To change quarter sections, sections, townships, municipalities and counties to the new system would probably cost \$500 million.

The minister, who has left the House, said the new system was logical, but the government says it does not want to upset anybody politically because it now has a new minister from the west. The government wants to create more Liberals for the Liberal party, so it will not force people who now measure in acres and rods to use hectares and metres. That is only to be done when people sell their farms.

I listened to the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt) talk about lawyers. If there ever was a chance for lawyers to make a fortune on estates, this is it. Every time somebody dies in Manitoba, Saskatchewan or Alberta, acres have to be converted to hectares and rods to metres, and what will the legal bills amount to? The governments of the provinces I spoke of are going to have to fork out money, but the man who owns the land will have to pay as well.

Let me go to another problem. The cities of Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Red Deer and others have the same system. There are lots within blocks, the same as with farmlands. The minister said the new system was logical. It is not only not logical; it will destroy the history and the very fabric of what western Canada was built on, and it is going to cost every taxpayer, whether he lives in the city or on the farm in western Canada. It will cost each taxpayer hundreds of dollars just because somebody likes the idea of changing acres to hectares and rods to metres. If ever there was a bill which should be defeated, this is it. There is no reason for it.

In 1928 we produced a great crop, 600 million bushels. Since then, in the 1960's and 1970's we produced 700 million to 800 million bushels, but in 1928 it took hard work to grow that grain. Men worked with horses and small machines and built this country to the point where it is known as the finest breadbasket in the world. Everything is measured in bushels per acre when the cars take the grain to the ports. Nobody has complained internationally.

I hear many cries in this House about culture in certain areas of the country, but it does not matter about our culture in western Canada. People from Ontario, Quebec, Europe and Asia came and settled in the west, and they built the roads. I am told that if we took all the roads in the rest of Canada, there would not be as many as there are in Saskatchewan. All the roads in Saskatchewan are measured in rods and feet, and the land is measured in acres.

I am glad that my friend, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), is in the House. I paid a great compliment to a former leader of his. However, I wish that a farm member from his party had stood and spoken as I have