

*Standards Council of Canada*

The metric system is simple, involving multiplication and division by tens. It is easy to train young people in its use. In fact, at present many Canadian industries use it, but for domestic purposes have a conversion system to the English measurement system. All measurement in the pharmaceutical industry is done according to the metric system. Hospitals, doctors and scientists operate according to the metric system, and I am glad that the government is now making a detailed study of the subject.

A change to the metric system need not be made overnight. It is not like the recent experience in Sweden, where a change was made from driving on the left hand side of the road to driving on the right hand side of the road. That change had to be implemented overnight, but the adoption of the metric system could be spread over a much longer period of time.

I have been informed that the Canadian construction industry has done a study on the metric system and is prepared to adopt it. That industry needs only a little encouragement from the minister to do so. I believe there are many other industries that would be interested in gradually adopting the metric system, and thus better serve world markets.

It is inevitable that we will adopt the metric system, and I commend the minister for having announced, as reported in the *Ottawa Journal* on January 16, that the government believes adoption of the metric system of measurement is ultimately inevitable and desirable. I am quite pleased with the development that is taking place in this field. I suggest that we start with industries that are now willing to adopt the metric system, and encourage others to do so as well. This standards bill is broadly based, and in the last few months we have had three bills of this nature.

• (4:40 p.m.)

The other day we had a bill on the standard of textiles and not long ago we had a bill on the standard of sizing for children's clothes. We have considered a number of these standards, and they seem to be haphazard. I suppose the CSA was administering those as well. Size two clothes would fit a child aged two or one aged six or maybe one in the cradle. We have not established standards and it seems to me we are going to be hard pressed in making trade agreements with other countries unless we do.

A standard has to consider the consumer in my opinion. If we set standards that raise the

price of the commodity 30 or 40 per cent artificially then, of course, the establishment of those standards is too expensive. It is more than we can afford and will not serve the purpose. Standards should be properly administered and uniformly developed so that they can be applied in the trade. The housewife should be able to pick up a can and know whether it contains 11 ounces or 14 ounces. It is very interesting to look at the shelves in a grocery store where the cans appear the same size but examination will reveal perhaps an ounce difference in the contents, and the price of one will be a fraction of the other. It would take a mathematician to figure out if one is cheaper than the other.

We will have to establish and enforce standards, and that is why I am opposed to the minister saying that his job is to promote voluntary action. I do not think the Canadian public is interested in the fostering of voluntary standards if that means they will be established a long time from now. The general public is interested in standards being established now so they know what they are buying. We should know exactly what a standard means.

So much depends on the company that is producing food products, for instance. One company will maintain that its soap is 99 or 100 per cent pure. I do not think this claim has ever been challenged. Pure what? Pure soap? Pure lye? Pure fat? Pure what? It is hard to say what it is, but nobody complains. We have so many things that are "select", "first grade", "pure" this or that, that are not pure at all. The reference is to something that is not a commodity in itself but is a combination of commodities. It cannot be pure unless it is free from impurities and "pure" would have to be defined.

This country is demanding very strongly and rapidly a more complete knowledge of products on the market. For example, if you went to Europe and bought a bag of Canadian flour you would know the protein content of the flour and what grade it was. You might even know where it came from because of certain standards that must be marked on it. But if you go downtown in Ottawa and buy a bag of flour it will be marked as "finest grade", "household flour", "cake flour" or some designation that has nothing to do with what is in the bag. You would not know whether it was fifth grade northern or frozen wheat or general purpose flour. You would not know anything about that particular flour