

There is no question that there is a growing lack of confidence in this institution. There was a billboard sign in the recent Ontario election which used the expression "Don't vote, you might encourage them". I think that demonstrates the mood of many Canadians about our parliamentary institution. There is growing dissatisfaction with the manner in which we handle our legislative process and with the way this institution conducts its business.

In that connection I would like to quote from a letter to one of our farm newspapers. The letter comments on the manner in which the metric system is being proceeded with. It is entitled "Who are we to have a say?"

● (2020)

Sir:

It is most difficult to understand the logic of individuals such as some of this paper's recent correspondents. I am referring to those who are encouraging their fellow Canadians to take issue with the "imposition without our consent, of the metric system." I find it most shocking to observe the great number who take this stand.

I say, who are we to actually dare to raise our uneducated and ungrateful voices and blatantly dispute the decisions of our Ottawa bureaucrats?

So what if we as citizens and taxpayers didn't get asked if we wanted our present system of weights and measures tossed in the garbage? Who are we, to have a say?

So what if the changeover will cost us millions of dollars and plenty of confusion? Just because we cannot fathom the undoubtedly sound reasoning of scrapping the imperial system, which has served us so well; does that mean it is not being done in our best interests?

Oh we of little faith. Let not our questioning minds consider rebellion, but rather let us take comfort in the knowledge that our loyal representatives in Ottawa would never dream of ramming anything down our throats that wasn't just what we really needed all the time. Well, would they?

It is signed Dan Riley, of Strathclair, Manitoba. That letter sums up the feelings of western Canadians on this legislation and how it has been introduced and proceeded with. But we must be concerned about other areas of jurisdiction affecting this institution. Not long ago the Auditor General warned us that the government, indeed parliament, has lost control of the public purse, that spending is out of control, that financial management and control systems are below acceptable standards of quality and effectiveness and that our Crown corporations are not being run in a businesslike way. There is evidence to show that financial control mechanisms are weak, ineffective and even inadequate. I ask, when did all this happen? It happened under successive Liberal regimes, under Liberal governments which rule with arrogance rather than with concern, which rule with disregard for our people rather than with consideration. Most of the time the government simply wants to grind out legislation as if it were sausage produced in a sausage factory. It heaps on us reams and reams of unnecessary legislation.

Mr. McKenzie: It's rotten sausage.

Mr. Mazankowski: It is rotten sausage. It is unnecessary legislation and unnecessary regulations heaped on the backs of Canadians. This bill is another example. Is it not time to restore sanity and commonsense to this institution, and to

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restore confidence in it as well? We have a great deal of legislation on this country's statute books.

Mr. McKenzie: Pardon me. I should have said it is baloney, not sausage.

Mr. Mazankowski: We bring in ever more legislation every day. I am told the competition bill will conflict with almost all legislation on our statute books. We need some sort of clearing agency which will vet legislation before this House considers it, so that no bill the government introduces will interfere or conflict with or contradict existing legislation. I talked with a representative of one of the major oil companies who appeared the other day before one of our standing committees. He reminded me that there are some 375 pieces of legislation affecting the oil industry of this country directly or indirectly. And that does not include all the regulations and orders in council various levels of government impose on the industry. Most of them are passed in the middle of the night, so to speak, and we never hear about them.

Is it any wonder that we have an energy crisis in this country, considering that those engaged in energy production are frustrated on every hand by the proliferation of legislation and regulations passed by all levels of government in all parts of the country? Our energy producers are frustrated especially by the inconsistencies of various pieces of legislation which work at cross purposes to one another. Mr. Speaker, the farmers do not want this legislation, because they do not need it. This should be clear to any western member of parliament who has the guts to send out a questionnaire or survey on this bill.

Mr. Woolliams: Including Jack Horner.

Mr. Mazankowski: Western members should do this if they are concerned about the feelings of their constituents—farmers as well as city dwellers, doctors, lawyers, professors and so on. I sent out a questionnaire couched in simple language. My first question was this: Are you in favour of conversion to the metric system? Of those who replied, 29.1 per cent said yes, 65.5 per cent no, and 5.4 per cent had no opinion.

Question No. 2 asked: Are you in favour of converting (a) acres to hectares? Seventeen per cent said yes, 74.3 per cent said no, and 8.7 per cent had no opinion. The second part, (b), had to do with conversion of bushels to tonnes. Here are the replies: Yes, 21.7 per cent; no, 69.2 per cent; no opinion, 9.1 per cent. I point out that not only farmers responded to the questionnaire; answers were provided by a cross section of people in the constituency. Surely, if we are worth our salt, it is our duty, our obligation, to place the views of our constituents on the record of this House.

In this connection I wish to quote a letter printed in *Farm Trends* of April, 1977, on page 10, entitled "Metric Confusion". It says:

For over two years now, I have tried to create a public awareness of the implications of metric conversion, especially as it applies to agriculture. Farmers will be affected by the change more than any other group, so I feel I must still speak out.