

● (1650)

[English]

OLD AGE SECURITY ACT**AGREEMENT TO AMENDED ROYAL RECOMMENDATION
RESPECTING BILL ON ORDER PAPER**

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the recommendation appearing on today's order paper, under introduction of the bills, to amend the Old Age Security Act, to repeal the Old Age Assistance Act and to amend other acts in consequence thereof, is not in accord with the provisions of the bill and therefore a new recommendation will be required. As the House leader, may I suggest that the present recommendation be replaced by a new recommendation and that the introduction of the bill be delayed until tomorrow or Wednesday.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement to the suggestion of the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Sharp)?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: It is so ordered.

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

(Questions answered orally are indicated by an asterisk.)

Mr. John M. Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 1,606, 1,733, 1,897, 2,212, 2,369, 2,427, 2,428, 2,447 and 2,454.

Mr. Speaker, if question No. 556 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

I ask, Mr. Speaker, that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

[Text]

METRIC CONVERSION

Question No. 1,606—Mr. Schumacher:

1. Does the government have available an economic impact analysis of the effect of conversion to the metric system and (a) if so (i) on what date was this analysis done (ii) by whom (iii) from what areas was the data gathered (b) if not, for what reason?

2. What facts does the government have to ensure that metric conversion is the best interest of the Canadian economy during the current recession in North America?

3. (a) Will standardization benefit Canada in the long run (b) what information is available, and what analysis has been done, regarding the implication of our trade position in the short term?

4. What steps has the government taken, if any, to provide (a) low cost loans (b) technical assistance (c) education for small businesses?

5. What steps has the government taken, if any, to provide for protection for smaller manufacturing firms against the effects of the heavy financial outlay conversion will require from them in competing with imports from historically metric countries?

Order Paper Questions

6. Has any data been gathered and, if so, what is its nature to ensure that conversion to metric will not broaden the gap between presently imported and exported finished products?

7. Will government purchasing policies maintain a viable level of goods from domestic firms over metric European goods and what form will such protection take?

8. What funds have been set aside and what plans have been made for public education?

9. What is the projected cost for conversion to metric system?

Mr. Gaston Clermont (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): 1. (a) The White Paper on Metric Conversion in Canada contains the government's analysis of the effect of conversion to the metric system. It states in part:

The Government accordingly accepts eventual conversion as a definite object of Canadian policy, and proposes means of study and consultation whereby the pace and methods of change may be determined in the national interest.

The White Paper on Metric Conversion in Canada of January, 1970, pointed out that "each industry sector must weigh the benefits of an internationally uniform and coherent system of measurement against the costs of changing from the existing system and that metric conversion consists of "a variety of programs extending over periods of years as determined by the needs and problems in different sectors of the economy. Therefore, the supporting data necessary for any additional analysis could only be compiled gradually at the industry and sector level. To attempt to integrate such data as may be made available by individual economic sectors would be relatively expensive in money and manpower resources and the *ex post facto* result would not be significant in the light of the conclusion of the White Paper that metric conversion in Canada should be acknowledged as inevitable and in the national interest. (i) This analysis was tabled in the House of Commons on January 16, 1970. (ii) The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. (iii) In the White Paper on Metric Conversion in Canada, representative national organizations put their views on metric matters before the government. Among those who expressed support for conversion were: The Consumers' Association of Canada, The Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation, The Agricultural Institute of Canada, The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, The Canadian Pharmaceutical Association, The Canadian Council of Professional Engineers, The Chemical Institute of Canada, The Engineering Institute of Canada, The Canadian Standards Association, The Canadian Hospital Association, The Canadian Construction Association.

2. The White Paper spoke of the "vital importance of foreign trade to Canada especially the need for growth in exports of manufactured goods." It specified "the overwhelming world trend to the metric system as a powerful argument for Canadian conversion." It stated that "there is no precise means of assessing the effects on trade of differences in the measurement practice of Canada and foreign buyers," but "it is the practical judgment of many of those concerned with Canadian trade in established metric regions that the unfamiliar standards significantly hinder Canada's penetration of the market." The eventual costs of not planning and scheduling in 1975 and 1976 for subsequent implementation could be large in terms of missed opportunities for rationalization and increased ef-