

At the 1977 annual meeting of Kitscoty UGG local a motion was passed that we are against the metric conversion and that we write you and Mr. Runciman in this regard.

Yours truly,

Ernest Lang

Another member of the National Farmers' Union, in a letter to the editor in the *Two Hills County Star* of Wednesday, February 9, 1977, had this to say:

The acre, the bushel, the mile, is Canada's culture, it is Canada's way of life, it is just as important to Canada as bilingualism, let us keep it that way.

Metro Shepansky

He went on to say:

There isn't one farmer in the country who wants to convert to metric, or was asked if he wants to go metric. The metric conversion is just being shoved down his throat. The railways do not want it and will not accept it now. The elevator scale beams which are in pounds, have not been replaced by metric scale beams, and may never be replaced in some elevators. A farmer brings a load of grain to the elevator which is weighed in pounds, then has it converted to tonnes, which is 2204.622 lbs. or 1000 kilograms in order to get paid, the elevator agent has to convert it back to pounds when he loads cars because the railways are not going into metric conversion.

There will be much confusion and distrust, because people do not know the metric system. Why not leave the farmer continue to use "acres", "bushels", and "miles"?

The County of Vermilion River, supported unanimously by the council, sent a wire to me which I want to place on the record. It reads:

Please be advised of the passage of the following resolution by the council of the county Vermilion River No. 24 at a meeting held on February 10, 1977:

Whereas the producers of cereal crops in western Canada have not been consulted to a sufficient degree and thus have not been enabled to express constructive views on the subject of the advisability of converting from the "acre" to the "hectare" in describing the area of prairie farmland;

And whereas the system of describing the area of the vast stretches of farmland in the prairie region of western Canada is somewhat unique, easily understood by those in and being trained for the agricultural industry and is wholly satisfactory to them;

And whereas the definition of an "acre" as used in western Canadian agriculture has no effect on either international suppliers to the industry or the customers for its product;

And whereas the complexity of the industry is so great the balance between the application rates for chemicals commonly used in the industry and the successful production of cereal grains is critical, the penalty for mistakes so great in the loss of food production for an entire twelve months period and the effect of such loss on world population so drastic that human manipulations not even remotely associated with food production should not be permitted to jeopardize the output of even one tonne of grain;

Now therefore be it resolved that the council of the county of Vermilion No. 24 expresses in a most emphatic and sincere manner its opposition to the implementation of the program to convert the "acre" to the "hectare" in describing the area of agricultural land in the prairie region of western Canada.

We have received countless numbers of representations from individuals, from farm union locals, from counties and municipalities. From the amendment that was placed before the House this morning by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton) it can be clearly seen that we in this party have adopted a practical and reasonable approach to this problem. Quite frankly, I think it is no surprise to members on the other side of the House that we sincerely want to see the acre retained and we see absolutely no reason for the conversion of the acre to the hectare under the provisions of this legislation.

Metric System

I might say that I detected some support on the Liberal side during the committee meetings, particularly among urban members. I think some of them were sincerely trying to work out a reasonable solution, but unfortunately farm organizations lost touch with their own supporters, their own memberships and the agricultural community and came out very strongly in favour of the conversion process. However, I think they have now found that they have not reflected the views of the producers, those who will be affected.

We have heard in this debate much about the importance of adopting a pure metric system. We all know that other countries too, are engaged in the conversion process, some of them with a greater or lesser degree of success. But it should be noted that in Great Britain, because of the difficulty they have had in selling the metric conversion program, they have adopted a flexibility that is necessary in order to sell the program. In the *Sunday Telegraph* of November 7, in an article entitled "Metrication Muzzled and Delayed" we are told:

—a number of changes have been made to the bill as it fought its way through House committees. In order to ensure its progress, the British government has conceded one major point: It has agreed that the mile, the inch, the pint and the gallon will be preserved and exempted from statutory metrication.

I think it is fair to say that other countries have adopted a similar stance. We hear from the minister about the progress that is being made in the United States. I am not sure that they will adopt a totally pure metric system either. In a letter that I have received from Congressman Don Fuqua, dated February 7, 1977, he said:

In neither of these cases has it been found advantageous to switch to the English system in the past, and there are not now any plans to switch those measurements or any land measurements elsewhere in the United States to metric measurements.

He was referring to the land system measurement in Louisiana which still employs the French system, and to the California land measure which employs the Spanish system. He indicated that even at this point in time there has not been total acceptance of the Imperial measurement in that great country. The letter is written on stationery of the committee on science and technology of the U.S. House of Representatives. He goes on to say:

In regard to possible changeover to the metric system by the board of trade in Chicago, and the possible effect on grain and other commodity trades, there are, to the best of my knowledge, no plans in existence at this time for a changeover.

● (1230)

There has been a fair amount of debate about final payments and the pricing structure of the Canadian Wheat Board. Forrest Hetland, one of the commissioners, said that his best advice to farmers is that if they want to know price trends, they should follow the price card of the Canadian Wheat Board and the prices set on the Chicago, Kansas and Minneapolis futures markets; that the futures markets are guides for world prices of wheat, and that reality forces the board's prices to bear a close relationship to these prices. What he was really doing was this: while we are transferring to the metric system of measurement and pricing, he was asking farmers to compare prices here with prices in the United States which is going to maintain the Imperial system. What a bunch of